

Germans on the Western Waters: Artisans, Material Culture, and Hybridity in Virginia's Backcountry, 1780-1830

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Spenser D. Slough

ABSTRACT

This study examines the socioeconomic lives of artisans of German descent who worked within Wythe County, Virginia from 1780 to 1830. It is particularly concerned with how a distinct German-American culture manifests over time as seen through these artisans’ produced materials and structures. This thesis traces this manifestation through a careful examination of Wythe material culture, wills, probates, inventories, court records, account books, receipts, invoices, census records, personal correspondence, and personal property tax assessments. Scholars of early America and the southern backcountry have often narrated German cultural identity transformations along the lines of language and marriages. This work diverts from those tendencies, thereby complicating prior understanding of German-Americans settlement and development patterns in early America. Beginning in the 1780s entire German families, neighborhoods, and communities left their prior American homes and settled within a relatively unsettled area of southwest Virginia. These predominately second-generation German descendants brought with them to the backcountry a culturally-constructed material culture lexicon passed onto them by their ancestors.

This thesis argues that while artisans of Wythe County operated as major agents of economic and social development, these craftsmen also provided a hybridized cultural resource for their neighbors and surrounding Great Road communities. These German families and congregations, composed of farmers, *hausfrauen* (housekeepers), and craftsmen by trade, sought to maintain a familiar and distinct cultural landscape and ethos through the many wares and structures they produced. These German neighborhoods accommodated and diversified their trades to fit within a burgeoning early-American society while still aware of their predominately German community’s cultural character and needs.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledging everyone responsible for the completion of this work is possibly more daunting than the thesis itself. It is the result of over 300 hours of field work, research trips, and field surveys, yet I am greatly indebted to many for the successes of this work. Praise is due to the almighty God: through him anything is possible in the face adversity and doubt. Most of all, I recognize and thank my parents, David Slough and Alisa Brill, whose support, care and encouragement from preschool days at La Petite to the pursuance of graduate work today have left an invariable touchstone on my young career as a scholar and as a human being I love you both very much—also to the rest of my family, especially my sisters Whitney and Hanna.

At the onset of this work I knew I wanted to do something ‘different,’ especially with regards to historical method. I am forever indebted to the most supportive and intelligent faculty at the History Department of the College of William & Mary and its National Institute of American History & Democracy (NIAHD), who first taught me how to think historically through a variety of disciplinary perspectives. Julie Richter, James P. Whittenburg, and Susan Kern facilitated my passion for early and colonial America’s past, while consistently showing me and my colleagues the many rewards of interdisciplinary historical thought. The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation (CWF) is home to some of the nation’s most outstanding scholars. I will never forget architectural historian, Carl Lounsbury’s willingness to provide me with my first opportunities at primary research. Even though I knew nothing about vernacular architecture, Dr. Lounsbury proved to an amiable and supportive mentor and friend. Thank you.

Beginning in Spring 2014, I began to notice an extraordinary amount of documented materials from southwest Virginia. One man’s name reappeared time and again throughout my secondary literature research: J. Roderick “Roddy” Moore: folklorist and director of Ferrum College’s Blue Ridge Institute. Since then, Roddy has been an invaluable component to my understanding of the region’s cultural and historical legacy that scholars all too often write off as lacking any evidence for interpreting its past. For the past forty years Roddy has traversed the region along the ‘Great Road’ and done the unprecedented: collecting, documenting and writing on southwest Virginia, particularly Wythe County, VA, and east Tennessee’s material culture. Through countless phone calls, several hospitable invitations to his and his wife, Sally’s home and the Blue Ridge Institute, sharing and showing his private collections, and laid back friendly banter, Roddy, you have and remain to be an inspiring mentor, scholarly role model, and wonderful friend. Thank You.

In addition to CWF, the people and staff at Old Salem and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA) first provided me access to files and databases that have proved to be critical to my visual evidence and content analysis. Arriving to MESDA first in June 2014, Jenny Garwood graciously guided me through the research center and helped me retrieve every single file pertinent to my thesis’ topic. Daniel Ackermann first gave me a tour of MESDA’s collections and offered some suggestions in my analyses. Finally, Robert Leath and his staff have become great partners and acquaintances in my research efforts through their many suggestions at MESDA, or over margaritas. Thank You.

In July of 2014 I first ventured into the outstanding land that today makes-up Wythe County. The many visits to the Kegley Library at Wytheville Community College (WCC) were successful beyond my wildest beliefs. Cathy Reynolds day after day went back and forth through manuscript collections and never complained when I made additional requests. Her warm, amiable, and supportive, and simultaneously knowledgeable, presence relieved any doubts I had

during my visits. It is a travesty that she has not been retained by WCC as her departure has left a void that is irreplaceable. Thank you, Cathy.

Most importantly however, are the people that I met in the downtown area of Wytheville within the past year. Since the 1960s, Mary B. Kegley, expert local historian and genealogist, has selflessly published materials on the New River Valley and Wythe County for the public's use. Originally with the eminent-late Dr. F.B. Kegley, Mary's *Early Adventurers* series proved to make my work much more doable as I consulted each volume daily. In addition, Mary has in the past months, without hesitation, answered my emails on minor questions and even took the time to read my first draft and provide comments without ever requesting her to do so. Bev Repass, another local gem of erudition, similarly provided all she knew about Wythe's early German communities, their Fraktur tradition, and the history of their ministers. Her private collections proved to be invaluable to my work as a source and beautiful example of folk art. Also, the Wythe County Genealogical and Historical Association's (WCGHA) staff were very supportive and represented everything that makes local heritage and history work so valuable.

While conducting internet searches one day, I stumbled across a Facebook group named "Wythe County Furniture Survey," run by Wythe County Historical Society (WCHS) member and antique gun enthusiast, Michael Gillman. A random post submitted onto the page one year from today has blossomed into a friendship and partnership that to this day leaves me without words to display my gratitude. He soon introduced me to the encyclopedic, goofy, and supportive resident-expert on Wythe County's material legacy, James "Jimmy" Spraker. Coincidentally, WCHS was in the process of establishing an exhibit on Wythe's decorative arts and furniture legacy, and my arrival coincided perfectly as our research interests collided in similarities. Michael and Jimmy have been from day one my go-to guides of Wythe County's cultural, historical, and physical landscape. Michael generously showed and taught me about rifles, chairs, and the Rich Bros. furniture shop, while Jimmy took countless hours out of his days to drive me to Wythe's German heartland on the west end. Their introduction to the resident textile expert, Evelyn Lahman, proved consequential, as her guidance in looking at coverlet weaving drafts allowed my work to make historically accurate claims. You two have selflessly provided me day in and out with everything I have ever requested. Finally, Frances Emerson, Director of Wytheville Museums, and her staff, has been an inspiration as a professional. As one of only a few full-time staff members, she runs three museums and a heritage center through primarily the help of part-time staff and local docents. Frances embodies everything that local, cultural and historical societies throughout the country do daily to ensure communities have access to their local past and its resources. Furthermore, her offering of near \$800 to have manuscripts translated for my use in my thesis is a service I am eternally grateful. Michael, you introduced me to these fantastic people and continue to this day to be a great friend and partner. Jimmy, your sagacious wisdom, kindness, and goofy nature have provided an invariable touchstone upon my work's makeup and its inspiration. Frances and everyone mentioned, you all are the reason why I would drop anything to come visit Wytheville any day or time. Thank you!

I want to recognize my mentors and colleagues at Virginia Tech. First, to Dan Thorp, who agreed to be my research advisor and committee chair in Fall 2013. The many meetings and suggestions he provided molded my arguments, made me a better writer, and more logically pronounced historian. Your patience in reading my rough drafts has especially been greatly appreciated, and your inquisitive demeanor during committee meetings, while seemingly intimidating at first, pushed me to always do better. Anita Puckett has proved to be a supportive and humorous mentor in establishing my work's method. She first introduced me to the concept

of hybridity and its epistemological boundaries. As an expert on the New River Valley's history and culture she offered context and overview to keep my research within the region's larger historical themes. Her many suggestions and discussions guided me through times of uncertainty and doubt. LaDale Winling proved to be the most supportive academic of my pursuance of interdisciplinary means of historical thought. His class on Digital History also taught me invaluable techniques in creating maps, geo-referencing, and above all and a deep appreciation in the efforts and values of contemporary digital humanities. Robert Ekirch provided a big smile, and sagacious commentary at times when I needed extra resources and did not know where to look. I am particularly thankful in his advice in looking at Kentucky newspapers. The entire Department of History at Virginia Tech, I am grateful for accepting me and giving me the many opportunities at pursuing work that I enjoy doing. I particularly want to thank David Cline for his guidance while completing both my thesis and public history certificate, and Mark Barrow for exemplifying the ultimate standard of academia, professionalism, mentorship, and support.

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Memoriam and Dedications

In memory of my grandfather,

Aubrey Slough

(1925-2012)

*In memory of Wythe County's first preserver of
cultural heritage and German historical legacy,*

Lelia F. Huddle

(1898-1988)

Dedicated to the residents of Wythe County, Virginia...

...and to my best friend and love of my life: my wife, Rachel, for

always believing in and being there for me.

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*Objects enable the social world to happen,
and we need to pay attention to what
objects do and how they work.*

-John Styles, Ph.D.

**Department of History
University of Hertfordshire**



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Introduction

Two or three miles before Wytheville August showed me a group of farms inhabited by German speaking Pennsylvanians who had settled here 30 or 40 years ago. They were all born in America and spoke German badly.

-Louis Heuser, 1852¹

This study examines the socioeconomic lives of artisans of Wythe County, Virginia from 1780 to 1830.² In doing so, it will closely analyze the wares and structures they created in order to trace how a distinct German-American cultural orientation manifests during Wythe's early days of European settlement. Because of the universal need for housing, furniture, pottery, metalwork, and textiles, the everyday roles of craftsmen provides commonalities in some of the traditions and societal relations in the southern backcountry before the 1830s. Few historians have looked at craftsmen within early American contexts. Even fewer scholars have studied artisan populations south of Philadelphia. Yet those who have typically do not give any serious analytical and historical consideration to their produced works within socioeconomic considerations. Doing so, this thesis contends, overlooks at how cultural changes operated as a critical component of southern backcountry development.³

This project asks: by examining the life and activities of Wythe craftsmen, how did a German-American culture transform within an early American backcountry community? Who were those craftsmen? What do the materials produced by these artisans tell us about the complex cultural baggage and internal/ external influences of this region? Namely, what

¹ Quoted from Klaus Wust, "Travel Diary of the Immigrants from Baltimore to Southwest Virginia, 1852," *Wythe County Historical Review*, no.6 (Jan. 1974): 1-9.

² Wythe County did not exist until 1790. Before then, it was part of Montgomery County. Today the county's political boundaries are even smaller than in 1790, with lands demarcated for future counties of Bland (1861), Grayson (1793), Carroll (1842), and Pulaski (1839).

³ For studies of early American craftsmen see Carl Brindenbaugh, *The Colonial Craftsmen* (New York: New York University Press, 1950); Ian M.G. Quimby, ed., *The Craftsmen in Early America* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1984); Francis J. Puig et al, eds., *The American Craftsmen and the European Tradition, 1620-1820* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 1989); Howard B. Rock, Paul A. Gilje, and Robert Asher, *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750-1850* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995); Johanna Miller Lewis, *Artisans in North Carolina Backcountry* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 1995).

information lies in the designs and techniques local Wythe craftsmen implemented for their neighbors and customers afar? What do Wythe craftsmen and their products tell us about the complex social and cultural transformations that backcountry communities along the Great Road underwent, and what were the catalysts behind such transformations? This work seeks to answer these inquiries through a careful examination of Wythe material culture, wills, probates, inventories, court records, account books, receipts, invoices, census records, personal correspondence, and personal property tax assessments.

As a study of an early southern backcountry community, the research presented in this work diverts from past scholarship of the region's early history that has focused primarily on its political elite or political culture. In addition it contrasts prior historical works that have examined cultural manifestations primarily along lines of marital connections and language. Instead, this thesis utilizes interdisciplinary methods toward depicting a more sociocultural narrative of Virginia's backcountry. Such a portrayal permits a discussion of the presence of rural artisans, backcountry business participation within local, regional and national contexts, and how and what role culture played within these dynamics.

A fairly expansive literature on the early American backcountry already exists. Recently, scholars have used interdisciplinary means at understanding cultural change in backcountry society. However, this work diverts from more recent scholarship that has misunderstood or overlooked the complexity of southwest Virginia's German population when conducting regional studies. Historians Daniel Thorp, Richard Beeman, Warren Hofstra and Turk McClesky have all successfully shown the importance of localized cultural analysis as the basis for interpreting the development of social relations in frontier zones.⁴ Others, however, have examined backcountry

⁴ See Daniel B. Thorp, *The Moravian Community in Colonial North Carolina: Pluralism on the Southern Frontier* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1989); Richard Beeman, *The Evolution of the Southern Backcountry: A Case Study of Lunenburg County, Virginia, 1746-1832* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1984); Warren Hofstra, *The Planting of New*

residents as indicative of cultural acculturation, while others argue along cultural persistence models. However, this paper does not argue that one or the other could not be a reasonable conclusion based on cultural patterns and identities, rather suggests a different way in looking at complex cultural and social transformations over time.⁵

Donald Lindebaugh's study of Upper Valley Virginia Germans provides the best template for this thesis to operate. Seeking to understand the intermixture of German and English cultures during the early nineteenth-century, Lindebaugh demonstrates the value in incorporating interdisciplinary approaches that include "contextualizing the community to view how internal and external symbols of culture compare and contrast over time."⁶ Through folk art and archaeological assemblages, Linebaugh maintains that an extensive and underutilized variety of German material culture exists for scholars wishing to understand the complex cultural change and interaction in Virginia's southwest backcountry. His call to arms is also keen to note the problematic results of historians who have resorted to acculturation, assimilation, or persistence models. Doing so suggests either an inevitable "absorption of a minority culture" by a dominant one, or that one culture is backward and isolated from sociocultural norms of their time.⁷

In light of Linebaugh's admonition, this thesis maintains that a process of sociocultural hybridization occurred during Wythe's formative years. Postulated by post-colonial scholars, hybridization is a model that maintains the importance of looking at the mutual construction of

Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004); Turk McClesky, "The Price of Conformity: Class, Ethnicity, and Local Authority on the Colonial Virginia Frontier," in Puglisi, ed. *Diversity and Accommodation: The Cultural Composition of the Virginia Frontier* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1997).

⁵ For acculturation models see Edward A. Chappell, "Acculturation in the Shenandoah Valley: Rhenish Houses of the Massanutten Settlement," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society*, no.124 (1980): 55-89; S. Scott Rohrer, *Hope's Promise: Religion and Acculturation in the Southern Backcountry* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 2005); for persistence models see Grady McWhiney, *Cracker Culture: Celtic Ways in the Old South* (Tuscaloosa, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1989); David Hackett Fisher, *Albion's Seed: Four British Folkways in America* (New York & Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989).

⁶ Donald W. Linebaugh, "Folk Art, Architecture and Artifact: Toward a Material Understanding of the German Culture in the Upper Valley of Virginia," in Crass et al, ed., *The Southern Colonial Backcountry* (1998), 201.

⁷ *Ibid*, 200.

culture. Unlike assimilation, acculturation, or persistence models, hybridity does not argue that previous cultural transformations disappear or persevere entirely and distinctly. In order to understand the subtle cultural variations—i.e, borrowing, mixing, or sharing of elements—that exist among different forms over time, anthropologists and scholars alike have identified two hybrid varieties: unconscious (organic) hybrids versus intentional (conscious) hybrids. Intentional hybrids, while not explicitly labeled in past scholarship, are characterized as cultural forms that function to distort set elements of different cultures against each other in a conflictual structure. On the other hand organic hybrids are present in all cultures, which evolve historically through mimetic or semi-mimetic appropriations and adaptations. This organic variation of hybridity best fits the means to analyze sociocultural development in Wythe. It explains the complex nature of identity formation in Virginia’s backcountry. As a model, it reveals how cultural transformations change through time even while maintaining a sense of continuity through commonly understood and appreciated German cultural baggage. Applying this model to this thesis’ historical analysis one witnesses how, according to Phina Werbner, “despite the illusion of bondedness, cultures evolve historically through unreflective,” oftentimes hidden, exchanges and inventions. Hybridity helps explain how German descendants of Wythe County renegotiated, retranslated, and repositioned their socioeconomic involvement due to their new geographic and socioeconomic conditions but were still influenced by their previously obtained cultural identities and transformations brought from Europe.⁸

Within this *modus operandus*, my thesis argues that artisans of Wythe County operated as major agents of economic and social development while also providing a hybridized cultural resource for their neighbors and surrounding Great Road communities. These German families

⁸ Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture*, (London: Routledge Press, 1994); Phina Werbner, “The Limits of Cultural Hybridity: On Ritual Monsters, Poetic License, and Contested Postcolonial Purifications,” *The Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute*, vol.7, 1 (2001): 133-152; Catherine Hall, “History and Hybridity,” *Journal of Victorian Culture* 2, (1997):122-129.

and congregations, composed of farmers, *hausfrauen* (housekeepers), and craftsmen by trade, sought to maintain a familiar and distinct cultural landscape and ethos through the many wares and structures they produced. They also simultaneously sought to participate within a regional, interconnected early American region that exchanged ideas, goods, and beliefs along the Great Road.⁹ These craftsmen engaged in both the utilitarian and aesthetic needs of a burgeoning backcountry community by diversifying their workmanship while simultaneously being aware of regional and national consumer tastes for refinement and neoclassical design. These New World concepts and commercial developments facilitated cultural cooperation and societal inclusion with other ethnic groups. These German neighborhoods accommodated and diversified their trades to fit within a burgeoning early-American society while still aware of their predominately German community's cultural character and needs.

While manuscripts and public records provide a socioeconomic context for this work, the decorative arts, furnishings, and structures produced by Wythe artisans present a historically linked participation in German cultural traditions. Employed with bold designs, colorful decorations, and hopeless attention to detail in body and shape, the arts of early American Germans were also subtle in their presentation of signs and symbols. Material culture specialists for over fifty years have studied Pennsylvania-German arts, and their research points to a thoroughly pragmatic approach to domestic arts. Within Wythe County items, the more colorful painted decorations reflected distinct cultural, decorative traditions of the German Palatinate, southeast France, and Switzerland. Inspired by northern Renaissance traditions in Baroque-Gothic styles, predominately German peasant art forms, underlined by pietistic-religious values, made up the material vocabulary transplanted to German-American settlements. Their English,

⁹ Conversations with J. Roderick 'Roddy' Moore, Blue Ridge Institute Director (Ferrum, VA) August 2014.

Scots, Irish, and Welsh counterparts constructed cosmopolitan and trendy art forms in chests of drawers or bureaus. In contrast, the Continental craftsmen revealed themselves through several constructional idiosyncrasies: wedged dovetails, pegged, butt-joined drawer bottoms, diagonal pegging of mortise and tenon joints, or expanded point twill weave structure in wool and cotton coverlets, in addition to artisans rarely ever leaving their signature on an item.¹⁰

In narrative organization, this thesis is broken into three semi-chronological chapters. To place the artisans' roles and experiences in Wythe County in proper sociocultural historical context, Chapter 1 examines the early European settlement of southwest Virginia. It discusses the huge wave of German-speakers' migration into the region beginning in the 1780s and what roles and resources their artisan population offered in the establishing new homesteads. Chapter 2 discusses how within one to two decades of settlement, early German families and friends created tight-knit Lutheran-Reformed congregations and farms that began to attract artisans more acquainted with the production of luxury items for both utilitarian and aesthetic, culturally pronounced uses. Chapter 3 looks at the expansion of the county seat of Evansham, how its craftsmen played a role in that transformation, and how national consumer trends and beliefs simultaneously flowed into the area. The development of Evansham was directly correlated to many Western Wythe County German artisans' expansion of their trade across the Great Road. They demonstrated through their many wares that even in the midst of pre-industrial development, cultural identity did not dissolve, rather hybridized to fit the demands of a changing populace. In addition to these chapters, a conclusion and a set of appendices provide the bookend for this work. The appendices particularly provide the reader with the definitions of

¹⁰ Phillip H. Curtis, *et al*, *Pennsylvania German Art, 1683-1850* (Chicago & London: The University of Chicago Press, 1984), 5-16.

many craftsmen-oriented terms, in addition to a first-ever produced database of Wythe County artisans working within the area from 1780 to 1830s.

Looking at the craftsmen of early Wythe County provides a lesson in the dynamic change and effect of sociocultural contact, and the adjustment of European regional identities within the southern backcountry's huge melting pot of national and international beliefs. While early church congregations, families, and valley publishers all provided the resources for cultural preservation, no other group provided a more direct and immediate means to reinforce a particular cultural lexicon than local artisans. Wythe County's early residents charged their German artisans with manifesting recognizably European forms within a region wherein families and entire communities or congregations moved to preserve a distinct cultural identity. By historically tracing those artisan's socioeconomic lives and their products' changes over time within the Great Road region of southwest Virginia, this work locates culture at the intersection of mind and landscape. In doing so it demonstrates the importance in looking at localities within the southern backcountry, as not one single settlement or community underwent an exact process of social, cultural, and economic development. In the case of early Wythe County, early American tastes in neoclassical design and public refinement did not eliminate cultural identity, nor vice versa. Instead, as a cultural resource, German craftsmen hybridized their craft over time by accommodating and diversifying the designs and processes used in their work without doing so at the expense of their own cultural identity.



Figure 1: Umberger Blanket Chest, ca. 1820-1850, made by William Brunner, owned by Catherine Umberger, Wythe County, VA, Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.



Figure 2: Birth Certificate of Catharina Umberger, ca.1822, attributed to the "Wild Turkey" Artist (1790-1822), Wythe County, VA, found underneath top lid of accompanied blanket chest (Fig.2), also owned by Umberger, Courtesy of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.



Figure 3: Punched-Tin Pie Safe, ca. 1830-40, attributed to Wytheville cabinetmaker Fleming K. Rich and half-brother, tinsmith Nimrod Rich. Pie safes were one of the most popular furnishings purchased by Wythe residents. While reflective of national and regional trends in Sheraton feet and drawers, it still reflects German heritage in the punched-tin motifs of urn and tulip flowers, Courtesy LiveAuctioneers.com.



Figure 4: Ornate Curly Maple Rifle, ca.1815 and signature of J. Shaffer, attributed to east Wythe County, VA master gunsmith, Jacob Shaffer. Notice the German embellishment motifs like the heart, eagle, star, and flowers, Courtesy of Michael Gillman and WCHS.

Chapter 1

Early Settlements and Communities of Wythe

*New River, so remarkable for the variety of its flowing outlines,
its bewildering mazes, and cloud-suffused precipices, looking down
gloomily on the quiet valley beneath, where flows the laughing,
sparkling waters in which is mirrored as blue a sky as ever shown upon the
eye of beauty, formed one of the attractions in the vicinity of Wytheville.*

-Julia A. Tevis, 1865¹¹

America's first frontier sits just east of the Appalachian Mountains. Its southern half, the southern backcountry of early America, characterized by mountainous ridges, verdant bottom lands, misty swamps, and rushing rivers, stands as a region of rich cultural and geographical contrasts. Beginning in the 1720s, large numbers of land-seeking immigrants predominately from Pennsylvania, and previously Europe, ventured down the Great Wagon Road into the southern backcountry (**Figure 6**). The earliest European settlers came from

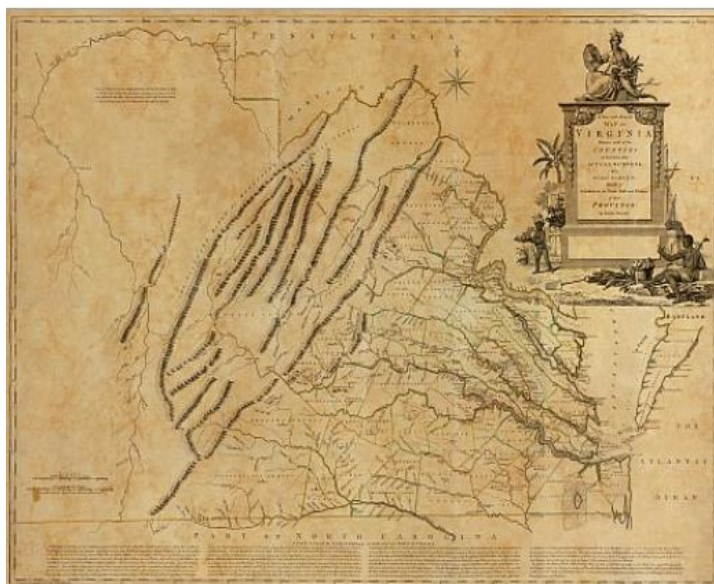


Figure 5: *A New and Accurate Map of Virginia Wherein Most of the Counties are Laid Down from ACTUAL SURVEYS with a Concise Account of the Trade, Soil, and Produce of that PROVINCE*, by John Jenry London, 1770, Courtesy, the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

western Maryland and the northern Valley of Virginia. Soon new land opened in the southern and western valleys and the upper regions of Carolina. Market towns grew and traded with another and with the large coastal cities that then serviced larger rural populations. Germans, Swiss, French, English, Irish, Welsh, Ulster-Scot, and Scottish settlers

¹¹ Julia A. Tevis, *Sixty Years in a School-Room: An Autobiography of Mrs. Julia A. Tevis...* (Cincinnati: The Western Methodist Book Concern, 1878): 173.

arrived in waves, resulting in a polyglot landscape with high levels of cultural interplay. For over a century scholars have contemplated the geographic demarcations and regional delineation of this vast land of contrasts. Most recent studies stress the multiplicities of southern frontier experiences across time. Southwest Virginia was no exception to this rule.¹²

This chapter narrates early settlement of southwest Virginia, with particular attention to the migration of Germans into the region beginning in the 1780s. European settlements in southwest Virginia stymied early-on due to persistent conflicts with dispossessed Indian nations. The area's earliest settlers, primarily Ulster-Scots, Irish, German, English, and Scottish, made early commerce and development possible by providing the necessary goods, early industries,



Figure 6: "Virginia and the Great Wagon Road," Topographical map courtesy, Google Earth, alterations made by author (2015);

¹² For recent debates on Backcountry geography and delineation see Robert D. Mitchell, "The Southern Backcountry: A Geographical House Divided," in David Colin Crass et al, eds., *The Southern Backcountry: Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Frontier Communities* (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1998): 1-35.

and lodging to migrants. Near the end of the American Revolution primarily second-generation families, communities, and church congregations from southeast Pennsylvania, western

Maryland, northern Virginia, or piedmont North Carolina began concentrating in what was then the western half of Montgomery County, Virginia. The roles and resources artisans provided to their transplanted communities was numerous, and culturally influenced by their Old and New world heritages and experiences.

Geography and Early Europeans on the Western Waters

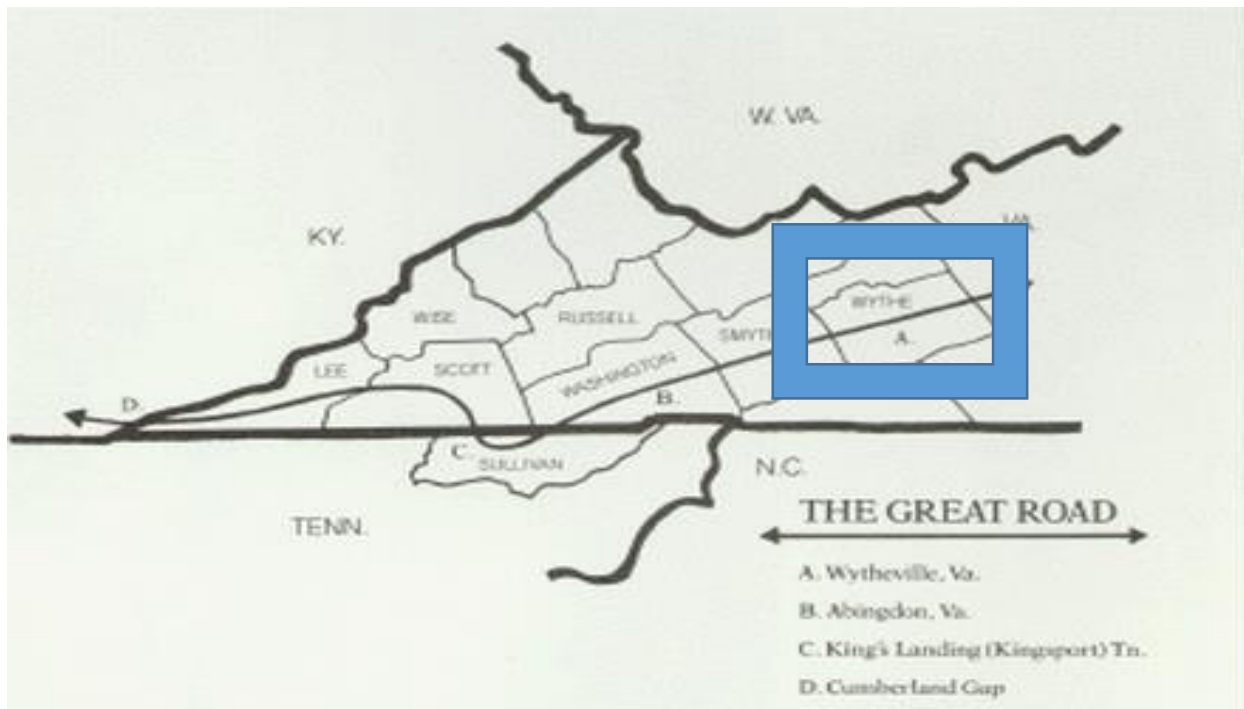


Figure 7: The Great Road of Southwest Virginia and East Tennessee, adapted from J. Roderick Moore's "Earthenware Potters along the Great Road in Virginia and Tennessee." *The Magazine Antiques*, (1983), box indicates study's geographic focus as the original county boundary of Wythe County, VA.

Southwest Virginia's physical landscape consists of alternating valleys and mountains. The area is a mountainous watershed littered with several branches and creeks that lie along "bottoms,"—well-watered, comparatively flat lands below a mountain ridge—which made ideal places of settlement for oncoming migrants. Deep within Virginia's southwest, the present-day

boundary of Wythe County incorporates three fertile valleys, traversing northeast to southwest lying at an average of 2,200 feet above sea level. Within Wythe's county boundaries lay lead and zinc ores of historically renowned purity. On the south side of the county lie vast deposits of iron, manganese, magnetic and brown ores in addition to several veins of semi-bituminous and semi-anthracite coal. Between these mineral belts are well-watered blue-grass and farming lands and mineral springs.¹³ Within Wythe's boundaries is the most western extent of the New River watershed. The beginnings of the Holston, Clinch, and Powell Rivers are also within the county. All together these waterways are colloquially called the 'Western Waters,' as each eventually flows into the Mississippi River. The New River's primary tributaries of Reed and Cripple Creeks would soon attract the earliest land claims made by European-Americans.¹⁴

All extant accounts point to 1671 as the date when the white man first arrived in the New River Valley. Financed by Abraham Woods, Thomas Batts and Robert Fallom travelled down former Indian trading trails from eastern into southwest Virginia. Their party approached the New with bewilderment at such a wide, north-flowing river that began in northwest North Carolina, into Virginia, and the Greenbrier Valley (present-day West Virginia). Northern and southern Indians for centuries used the region as a neutral hunting ground. It did not take long for Indian nations such as the Iroquois of the Five Nations to notice the encroachment.¹⁵ Into the early 1700s, pressures by colonial officials in Williamsburg and tobacco plantation owners in the Tidewater and Piedmont regions of the colony fueled a desire to stretch settlements toward the Valley of Virginia. In 1745 the Virginia Council authorized the first major English grant of 100,000 acres to Col. James Patton, an Ulster-Scot businessman and land speculator, who

¹³ C.R. Boyd, "Resources of South-west Virginia Showing the Mineral Deposits of Iron, Coal, Zinc, Copper and Lead," 47-90, reproduced in James S. Presgraves, ed., *Wythe County Chapters: A Gathering of Materials From Scarce, Rare, or Out-of-Print Sources About Wythe County, Virginia* (Pulaski, VA: B.D. Smith & Bros., Printers, Inc., 1972): 23-69.

¹⁴ Mary B. Kegley, "Migration Patterns in Southwest Virginia," *Wythe County Historical Review*, no.37 (January, 1990):1.

¹⁵ The Iroquois Five Nations became the Six Nations in 1722.

subsequently formed the Woods River Company. Patton proposed to assign each settled family 1,000 acres, and he knew most of these migrants would come from Pennsylvania. For the past twenty years an eclectic mix of Irish, Scottish, Ulster-Scot, German, Swiss, and French emigrant families and entire communities had taken up land in William Penn's religiously tolerant colony. As choice lands became scarce these peoples, especially their second-generation offspring, began to look elsewhere for settlement west and then south down the Wagon Road. When Maryland and Virginia's northern valley was no longer available, southwest Virginia became the next choice.¹⁶

Settlement, Warfare, and Frontier Entrepreneurs

By the time John Buchanan visited the region on behalf of Col. Patton in 1745, white settlement had already begun on the New River Valley. The German-born family of Adam Harmon took up land near present-day Radford, while a group of Ephrata Brethren—Dunkards or Sabbatarians—located at 'Dunkards Bottom' or what is today Claytor Lake State Park. In present-day Wythe County several families had also begun land development. William Mack, for whom Max Meadows, VA was named from, located near Reed Creek, along with several McFarlands, Calhouns, and Crocketts. By 1750, Dr. Thomas Walker joined forces with Col. Patton and formed the 800,000 acre Loyal Land Company. By the time of this merger, over ninety families had already staked claims across southwest Virginia. Yet, the timing for these early settlers of the 1740s and 1750s was not ideal as global, imperial conflicts would make the colonial frontier a battleground.

For several years the French and English had been competing for their colonial holdings in North America and India. In America both parties were primarily concerned with who would

¹⁶ Patricia Givens Johnson, *James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists* (Verona, VA: McClure Press, 1977).

control the vast territory between the Allegheny Mountains and the Mississippi River: the Ohio country. As France and its Indian allies began constructing a chain of forts from Quebec to New Orleans, war appeared inevitable. After the young Virginian, Col. George Washington surrendered at Fort Necessity in 1754, a well-organized French strategy to eliminate every settlement made on the Western Waters had officially commenced. By October, northern Indians killed three men settled on the branches of the Holston River. In June 1755, the Shawnee struck in the same area, completing eliminating the German family of Samuel Stalnaker [Stalniker]. Most infamous of all Indian strikes occurred in July 1755 when the Shawnee attacked Draper's Meadow—today Blacksburg—thereby completely eliminating white settlement in the New River Settlement. Some families fled to the Moravian settlement of Wachovia in northwest North Carolina, while others relocated near present-day Roanoke at Big Lick. Some would return to the New River after the warfare ceased, others relocated to colonies in the South.

As violence escalated into the 1750s and 1760s, investors in Williamsburg sought to make an early claim on an untapped natural resource. In 1759 John Chiswell, assigned by the legislature to deliver provisions to relieve the war-torn families of the New River, scouted deposits of lead ore near the river banks. By 1761, Col. William Byrd III and his troops began building roads and forts across southwest Virginia, and raised a blockhouse near the lead deposits and named it Fort Chiswell. Chiswell himself recruited several Welsh miners from Bristol, England to begin work.¹⁷ By 1763, the mine had produced wagon loads of lead as Moravian accounts reported in June of receiving “over 300 lbs. of lead for our store from the

¹⁷ Randal L. Hall, *Mountains on the Markets: Industry, the Environment, and the South* (Lexington, KY: The University Press of Kentucky, 2012): 15-17.

mine on New River.” Moravians later on learned the mines did not have enough silver to make a profit, but they continued to provide cornmeal to the Virginians in exchange for raw lead.¹⁸

As the French and Indian War ended and industrial and military development began at Ft. Chiswell, signs of security in the region emerged once more. Settlements began again near Drapers Meadow and Dunkard’s Bottom, while William Ingles established a ferry business for migrants to cross the New River. As early as 1760, a store in present-day Dublin, VA began bringing in fine commodities, including twelve different types of delftware and china. Such an inventory signals a connection to the Atlantic world of consumerism and commerce. In 1773, William Preston, nephew of Col. Patton, built his home plantation at Smithfield, definitively marking the beginnings of a backcountry society reminiscent of the Tidewater, English-speaking elite. Around the same time, Ulster-born James McGavock, Sr. and his family moved to Ft. Chiswell where he established the first major store, ordinary, and supply depot in the newly created county of Fincastle (1772-1776). In addition, McGavock established one of the first major blacksmith forges and carpentry shops in what would become Wythe County in 1790. Ft. Chiswell’s economic and militarily strategic importance multiplied quickly over time. These factors led to the Virginia Council’s decision to name the depot, located at present-day Austinville, as Fincastle County’s seat of government. In addition to being the county seat, small centers of commerce and protection such as McGavock’s at Ft. Chiswell spurred investment and settlement farther west into Virginia’s frontier.¹⁹

As the Loyal Land Company renewed surveying for settlers on the New, Holston, and Clinch rivers, the overwhelming majority of settlers continued to be English-speaking Irish,

¹⁸On interactions between lead mines and the Moravians’ Wachovia settlements from 1762-1765, see Adelaide L. Fries, ed. *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol.1, 1752-1771 (Raleigh, NC: Edwards and Broughton, 1922), 249, 276, 288, 302, 304, 307, 311-313.

¹⁹ Herschel Gower, “James McGavock Marks off his Empire,” *Wythe County Historical Review*, no.24 (July, 1983): 6-9.

Ulster-Scots and Englishmen. Names such as the McGavocks, Hoges, Kents, Buchanans, Crocketts, Montgomerys, Pierces, and others flooded public records of Fincastle County during this time. Naturally, these English-speakers set the tone for the region's early political culture and power hierarchy. In the midst of Revolutionary fervor of 1775, the most distinguished men of Virginia's frontier, those professional and businessmen of excellent education and background, wrote the Fincastle County Resolutions articulating their own grievances against the British crown to the Continental Congress. These same white men held military positions during the War for Independence. Southwest Virginians particularly assisted in engagements in North Carolina and also quelled a non-violent Tory uprising in the New River. It was these men who connected Virginia's frontier with the rest of the nascent American states. While their landholdings did not extend past Ft. Chiswell, their political and social positions facilitated future western land holders to make claims.²⁰

The German Migrants

Thousands of Americans traveled through the Great Road of southwest Virginia into and past the 1770s and 1780s (**Figure 7**). The great majority of these travelers had eyes set on the Cumberland Gap and Kentucky. Yet others looked upon the bottoms along the western end of Reed Creek and Black Lick and saw an opportunity for permanence and economic independence. This area of what would become Wythe County in 1790 attracted an enormous wave of migrants of German-Swiss decent. Many areas of western Virginia were available for settlement after the Revolution. None, however, attracted more attention than the upper valleys of Reed Creek and Cripple Creek (**Figure 8**). Providing settlers with good soil, plentiful fresh water, and a wide assortment of timber, these lands were natural magnets for oncoming Germans.

²⁰ "Fincastle, Jan. 20, 1775." Alex Purdie's *Virginia Gazette*, February 10, 1775.

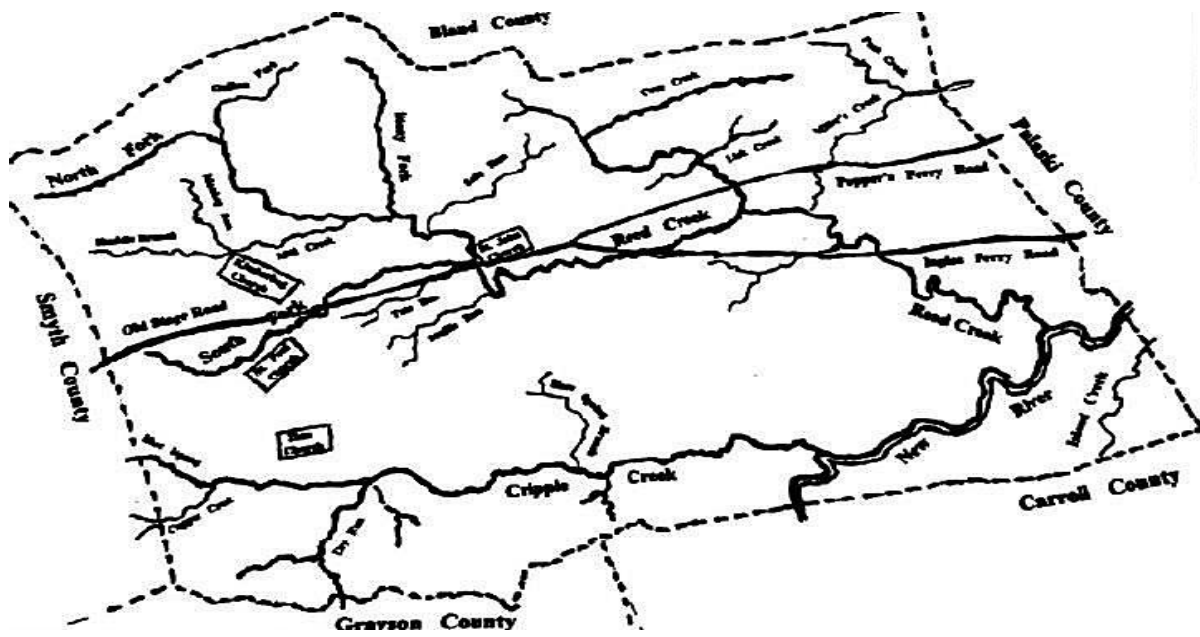


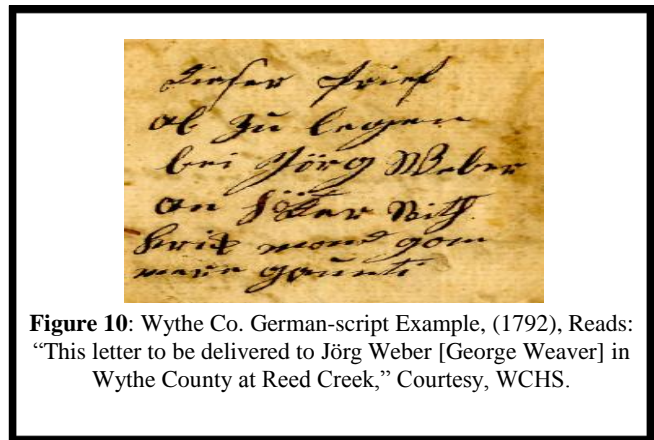
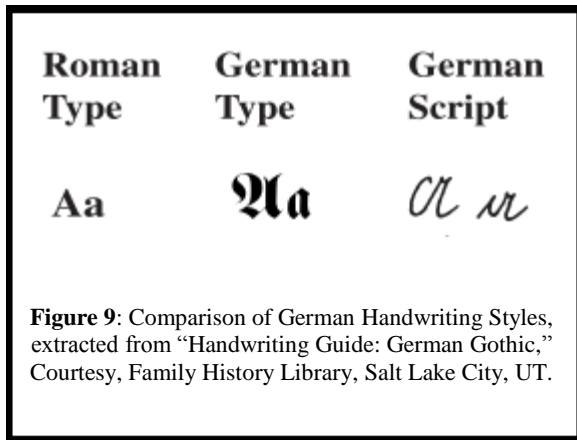
Figure 8: Map of Wythe County Virginia showing the creeks and tributaries of the early German Settlements,” from Roger Klutz, *Beside the Still Waters: The Story of the German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in Wythe County, Virginia*.

These Germans who called the Western Waters their home were people whose roots originated from diverse areas of Europe, specifically what used to comprise of the Holy Roman Empire (HRE) in the eighteenth-century. It consisted of little principalities, each governed independently. While most emigrant families originated from the Palatinate and northern Switzerland areas, others descended from principalities within present-day, southeast France. While the HRE was essentially a defunct body politic by 1700, its complex feudal history left an invariable mark on its people. Lacking means of economic independence or claims to personal property, most German emigrants hailed from the agrarian-peasant class. Once arrived to America, many of those families, however, grew out of their European underclass status.²¹

Aside from common geographic origin, these Europeans perpetuated distinct and recognizable ‘German’ cultural characteristics that they brought with them to America.

²¹ Many of these principalities included present-day Switzerland, Bavaria, former-Prussia, Alsace, Luxembourg, and the Low Countries.

Language proved to be the pervasive commonality. These people used *Deutsch* in everyday conversation, while a minority of first generation emigrants was literate enough to read and write *Kurrentschrift*— a handwriting practice colloquially referred as German-script. Descended from late-medieval cursive, German-script today is easily recognizable by its Gothic and Latin-inspired, enlarged—at times ornamented—capital letters, wording with sharp angles, straight lines, and abrupt changes in writing direction. This practice persisted in Europe as late as 1941 when Adolf Hitler’s chief of staff ordered a curious decree forbidding its use (**Figure 9 & 10**).²²



As a testament to continental Europe’s complex religious history, Germans brought with them to America a variety of religious beliefs. While most emigrants belonged to the Lutheran or German-Reformed church, many others belonged to the Catholic Church or identified as Amish, Moravian, Mennonite, Sabbatarian (Dunkard), Anabaptist, or Quaker.²³ Wherever German settlements occurred, the German church offered the spiritual, educational, cultural and social center for its congregants. In addition to schoolteachers, pastors acted as the model of Germanic culture. As German settlers engaged with and felt necessary to understand the English language,

²² National Socialist German Worker’s Party, *Circular of the Deputy of the Führer, Chief of Staff, January 3, 1941*, Martin Bormann (Munich).

²³ Elmer Lewis Smith, et al, *The Pennsylvania Germans of the Shenandoah Valley* (Allentown, PA: Schlechter’s, printed for The Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1964), 57-82.

schools and pastors vehemently opposed it as a medium of instruction. While settlers over time saw the necessity of bilingualism in British-America, schools nevertheless perpetuated the learning of *Deutsch* for many German-American communities. Spiritually, culturally, and pedagogically, German emigrants gravitated toward their church and its congregants.²⁴

Germans in Europe and America were renowned for their skilled farming and craftsmanship. These two traits proved to be both means of utilitarian and cultural expression. Historian Klaus Wust has argued that shortly after German emigrants settled in America, the landscape quickly “bore the stamp of their agricultural skill.”²⁵ German-American farms were renowned for their large barns that could provide housing not only for grain but also livestock. The barn, rather than the house, was central to the German’s plantation, and thus often built first before more permanent homes. In addition, as families began to permeate across the American landscape others began to identify Germans with superior craftsmanship. In Pennsylvania, the wagon and gun became synonymous with the touch of a German artisan. Their Old World condition instructed them be multi-tasked and take on another trade to provide for the family if farming or economic conditions turned for the worse. They also took seriously the apprenticeship training that emphasized distinct construction styles and decorative arts training.²⁶

Germans instilled in their crafts a distinct material culture lexicon that originated from their Old World traditions. Specialists have identified this material culture tradition as a folk form, composed of Rhenish and Swiss elements, endemic to south Germany’s peasantry (1400-1800 A.D). Upon their arrival in America, these German families began to create their own hybrid forms and continually reinterpreted traditional motifs, while continuing to be lively and creative. Chests, gravestones, Fraktur, ceramics, textiles, guns and other forms all exhibited a

²⁴ Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1969): 159-160.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Ibid, 68-70.

distinctive local vocabulary replete with geometric shapes, horses and riders, turkeys, tulips, urns, unicorns, birds, Gothic lettering and other flowers (**Figures 1-4**). All such designs were cultural and religious reminders of rites of passage, the finite quality of life, and the level of importance Germans placed on morality and piety. Vocal and written language was one form to indicate a German cultural element in colonial America. Exploration of the material culture traditions of these people's craftsmen, as they migrated to other parts of America, reveals a cultural lexicon that the written or spoken word could not articulate, particularly ways of remembering. While craftsmen provided a necessary skillset to conquer the southwest Virginia frontier, they also proved to be an important cultural resource for their communities.²⁷

As European overpopulation, poverty, droughts and land scarcity reached historic highs by 1700, over 80,000 members of entire German families and congregations made preparations for a new life abroad. The years 1717 to 1775 saw the majority of these Germans arrive to America, bringing with them cultural baggage originated from centuries of Old World spiritual, economic, and geographic conditions. During the first few years of emigration, New York seemed to be the most ideal location to relocate. Yet harsh laws that required Germans to forfeit their non-Anglican beliefs and swear an oath to the British Crown before stepping on land soon made these emigrants look elsewhere. Soon after, William Penn's already established colony of Pennsylvania provided the next haven for these people. Promising a government of universal male suffrage, religious toleration, and a land offering improved economic position, Germans and their emigrant counterparts, the Ulster-Scots, warmly accepted Penn's invitation.²⁸

²⁷ Curtis et al, 5-16; Henry Kauffman, *Pennsylvania Dutch American Folk Art* (New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1964, 2nd ed.): 12-15.

²⁸ Aaron Fogelman, *Hopeful Journeys: German Immigration, Settlement, and Political Culture in Colonial America, 1717-1775* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1996): 4-8; Conversations with Beverley Repass-Hoch, Genealogist and Fraktur specialist (2015); Roger S Klutz, *Beside the Still Waters: The Story of the German Settlements and the Lutheran Church in Wythe County, Virginia* (Blacksburg, VA: Privately Published for the Author, 1999): 10-13.

Settling and Building along the Creeks

Over time as choice lands in Pennsylvania became scarce, German families headed west and followed the mountains south into Maryland and the Valley of Virginia.²⁹ After the Revolution, however, most of these predominately second-generation Germans sought claims in southwest Virginia. As members of large extended families or congregations, German-American migrants had arrived in southwest Virginia before 1780, yet the great majority of them, like their surrounding neighbors, did not stay long due to Indian warfare. Violence consumed some families, while others relocated temporarily to Rowan County, NC, or to other colonies. Henry Grub [Heinrich Grubb], a Swiss-born millwright, arrived in 1752 after being hired to build a sawmill near Ft. Chiswell, but shortly after relocated to Rowan due to the warfare. Grub, however, returned in 1768 to the western end of Reed Creek after hostilities ceased to continue his trade with other Germans.³⁰ After the Revolution, however, Great Road migration into the region resumed once more and brought the largest wave of Germans into southwest Virginia and east Tennessee. While a few resided alongside the established Ulster-Scot, Welsh, and English communities surrounding Ft. Chiswell, most Germans began to reestablish communities and congregations in at least seven precise locations of what would become Wythe County in 1790 (**Figure 8**). These included: the South Fork of Reed Creek, North Fork of Reed Creek, middle branches of Reed Creek—Stony Fork and Cove Creek—, Cripple Creek, Elk Creek (present-day Grayson County), North Fork of the Holston River (present-day Bland County), and the Middle Fork of the Holston River.³¹

²⁹ James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1972): 61-64.

³⁰ Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, vol.5 (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 2004): 266-268; Paula Hathaway Anderson-Green, "The New River Frontier Settlement on the Virginia-North Carolina Border 1760-1820," *The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 86, no. 4 (1978): 418.

³¹ Klutz, 54-56 provides a more comprehensive list of family surnames that arrived first to each of these areas.

Arriving along the river bottoms, German craftsmen played a critical role in the development of farmsteads. This wave of Germans along the creeks necessitated the bringing along the ‘builders’: housewrights, wainwrights, millwrights, wheelwrights, and blacksmiths. These craftsmen could not only build barns, houses, wagons, farming tools, and structures but were also able to quickly repair them. Families and communities arrived in the middle-to-late period of winter to seed their farms by January or February. Doing so ensured that by June a self-sufficient amount of crops would be ready to harvest. Such timeliness necessitated these peoples to be accompanied by skilled persons who could to quickly raise structures and construct tools needed for survival. Local historian Mary Kegley has shown in her study of early New River pioneer probates that the items brought along with settlers were typically the barest of necessities: guns, horses, axes and food or livestock. For one to two months, families most likely lived in quickly raised log cabins or half-camps—open-faced log shelters lashed together with vine or rawhide.³²

Cultural traditions of these Germans dictated a specific blueprint to follow when building farm tools and structures. In even the most utilitarian tools, these Germans found ways to inscribe culture onto their agricultural world. A hackling, or flax comb, was a commonplace object on any farm. After a couple years of development farmers harvested matured flax stalks for the production of linen cloth. When stalks were harvested, farmers pulled, spread, and soaked with water, sun-dried, pounded, and pulled flax strands through the hackling comb, which would be placed onto a table and secured by bolts on each side. Extant pieces from Pennsylvania have family names and motifs inscribed onto them. One hackling comb from the Foglesong [Vogelsüng] family of Rural Retreat, VA demonstrates an intergenerational cultural extension

³² Kegley, “Pioneer Possessions: A Study of Wills and Appraisals of Southwest Virginia, 1745-1786,” (MA Thesis, Radford College [Radford University, Radford, VA], 1975).

from Pennsylvania to Virginia's backcountry, with punched-in, zig-zagged lines to signify vines, and geometric triangles encompassing its bolts holes on each side (**Figure 11**). Other domestic agricultural products like butter stamps and a wide variety of metal-work also demonstrate a similar cultural lexicon implanted onto them by these German communities of Wythe.³³



Figure 11: Hackling or Flax Comb, Rural Retreat, VA, ca. early 1800s. Notice the side zig-zag punched decoration onto the wrought iron cover, and triangular motifs encompassing the bolts holes on each side. Photo and item, Courtesy of the author.

When it came to farm structures, Germans, unlike their Ulster-Scot or English counterparts, felt compelled to build enormous, two-floor barn structures to provide storage and a wooden threshing floor for the processing of crops, and also stables for livestock. Early American onlookers and travelers marveled at the primacy and significance Germans placed on

³³ Curtis, et al, 356, see item #5B7: "Hatchel."

the construction of their barns. Samuel Kercheval noted in his 1833 retrospective on the Valley of Virginia's settlements:

The Dutchman's barn was usually the best building on his farm. He was sure to erect a fine large barn, before he built any other dwelling-houses than his rude log cabin. There were none of our primitive immigrants more uniform in the form of their buildings than the Germans.³⁴

Cultural geographer John Morgan's recent field work in Wythe, Smyth and Washington counties further confirms the material world of these early settlers. In Pennsylvania Germans were well known for building forebay, log, bank barns, also known as the "Pennsylvania Barn" or

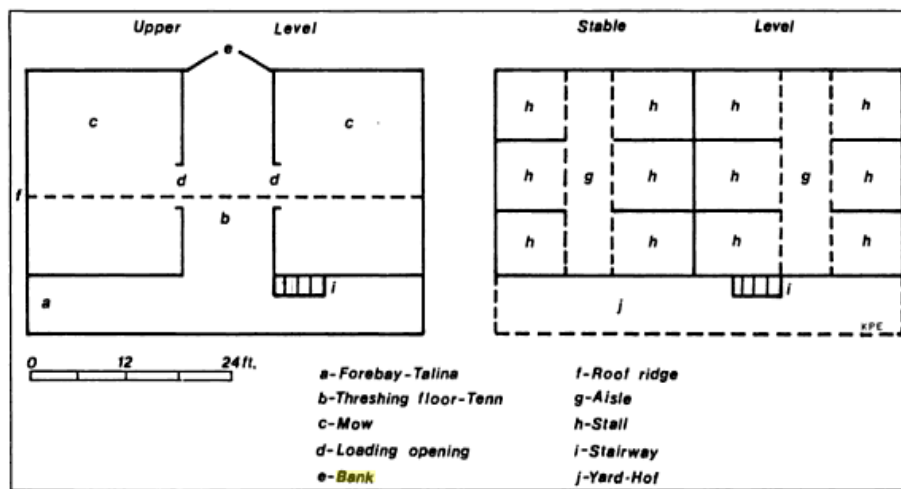


Figure 12: Typical floor plan of the Pennsylvania-German, Forebay Cantilever Log Barn, from Robert Entsminger's *The Pennsylvania Barn* (1992).

cantilever barn (Figure 12). Prior to Morgan's work, several folklorists and geographers' previous investigations concluded that these structures have direct European prototypes. Notably, Robert Entsminger's field work has shown that the Pennsylvania, forebay bank barn is a construct of Swiss origin from the fifteenth or sixteenth-centuries.³⁵

In his 1997 essay, "The Cantilever Barn in Southwest Virginia," Morgan noted that two barns in particular from Smyth and Wythe counties fit the Pennsylvania-German prototype

³⁴ Samuel Kercheval, *A History of the Valley of Virginia* (Winchester, VA: Published by Samuel H. Davis, 1833), 151.

³⁵ Robert F. Entsminger, *The Pennsylvania Barn: Its Origin, Evolution, and Distribution in North America* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1992), 15-16; also see Henry Glassie, "Old Barns of Appalachia," *Journal of the Roanoke Historical Society*, vol.9, no.1 (1973-1974): 1-13.



Figure 13: Cantilever Barns on the Western Waters, (Top) Kettering Barn in Rural Retreat ca.1815, (Bottom) Copenhagen Barn on the county border of present-day Wythe and Smyth Counties ca.1830, from John Morgan's "The Cantilever Barn in Southwest Virginia," in Puglisi et al, eds., *Diversity and Accommodation*, 286-287, with permission of the author.

model (**Figure 13**). What is curious, however, is that the Wythe barn, made by early settler Lawrence Kettering is a tri-level structure rather than the commonly documented two-level barns of Pennsylvania. Whether Kettering found the need to create an additional floor to accommodate more space for grain or possibly farming equipment is unknown. Nevertheless, such an accommodation does speak to the early settler's ingenuity.³⁶ Morgan found that these structures, once thought endemic to only Tennessee communities, along with twenty other documented barns show that the cultural diffusion maps of cantilever barns should be extended to include southwest Virginia, "especially Wythe County... because numerous German settlers migrated to the area from Pennsylvania and the Shenandoah Valley, where the barn is the most pervasive landscape feature."³⁷ Even in the most utilitarian of structures and objects, these artisans' cultural memory provided a blueprint for early settlers and the landscape they sought to develop.

The settlement of southwest Virginia proved to be a tumultuous development, as the majority of white Europeans did not arrive until after the American Revolution. This chapter has introduced and contextualized the world that German-speakers and their artisan population inherited once arrived within the 1780s-1790s. As German families migrated into Wythe, they attracted more specialized craftsmen who migrated soon thereafter. While honoring local preference and cultural tradition, these artisans formed hybrid structures, wares, and decorative arts reflective of a distinct material culture tradition transferred from their previous American settlements, and their parents' Old World condition. As the farms in the western end of the county developed, Germans allotted more time for luxury-item crafts and apprenticeships that ensured the transference of their craft traditions.

³⁶ Conversations with Roddy Moore (March, 2015).

³⁷ John Morgan, "The Cantilever Barn in Southwest Virginia," in Puglisi et al, eds., *Diversity and Accommodation*, 275-294.

Chapter 2

Rural Artisans and German Culture: Socioeconomics, Tradition, and Expression

In the course of the day, we crossed the head-waters of the Holstein [Holston], and towards evening entered a tract of Country almost entirely settled by Germans from Pennsylvania.

-Adam Hodgson, 1824³⁸

By 1800, the southwest Virginia frontier had grown into a bustling region of trade and manufacturing. The early American southern backcountry was far from backward or isolated. Instead, the region was an active participant in local, regional, and global trade. These engagements permitted early families' access to a variety of goods and services required to tame the frontier. The New River Valley was particularly defining itself socially and economically at this time as the area's most western settlements steadily grew and developed as entrepôts along the Great Road into Kentucky and Tennessee. The region proved to be a bustling producer of flax, hemp, corn, butter, and wheat as families focused on making their farms into permanent agricultural bases to gain commercial ties with regional and national markets. In studying the artisans of Rowan County, NC, historian Johanna Miller Lewis concluded that the influx of diversified craftsmen and itinerants into the county was directly correlated with its economic development and growth. Wythe County, VA was no exception to this rule. German

³⁸ Adam Hodgson, *Letters from North America, Written During a Tour in the United States and Canada*, vol. 1 (London: Hurst, Robinson, & Co., 1824): 293-294.

descendants coalesced along the county's western creeks established several congregations and created self-sustaining farms, largely due to the effort and skill of their artisans.³⁹

As Wythe County's artisans constructed mills, barns, granaries, and dwellings across the county, they simultaneously provided another resource as a means of remembrance and cultural association. While originally required to produce objects and structures needed to survive, these predominately German craftsmen were also tasked with maintaining a culturally-based applied aesthetic and construction techniques through their wares and structures. As German migrants arrived in Wythe County so did more artisans engaged in the production of luxury goods. These craftspeople worked across cultural lines, engaging with those Ulster-Scot, English, Welsh, and Irish families predominately at the eastern end of the county to expand their trade.

This chapter explores the socioeconomic lives of those craftsmen acquainted with the production of luxury items for both utilitarian and aesthetic, culturally-pronounced uses. It reveals how family-based apprenticeships ensured the transference of craft skills across generations and how those techniques made certain families or individuals renowned, regional experts of their trade. As their trade expanded across cultural lines, however, these artisans maintained a distinct material culture lexicon that could hybridize, or reshape cultural aesthetic

³⁹ Scott Crawford, "Ties to External Markets: Imports and Exports in the New River Valley, 1745-1789," *The Smithfield Review*, Blacksburg, VA, vol.2 (1998): 23-28.; Lewis, *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (1995), 4.

patterns, to fit the needs and demands of their consumers. Still, the structures and objects produced by these craftsmen demonstrate how they constructed on their own, cultural terms.

Artisans and Cultural Affiliation, 1780-1830

The craftsmen identified in the appendices of this study reveal a striking reality: German descendants overwhelmingly made up the majority of Wythe County’s artisan population (Figure 14).⁴⁰ Early account records from various individuals reveal a distinct cultural divide. Generally, Ulster-Scot, English, Welsh, Scottish, and Irish residents were store owners, plantation masters, merchants, regional and local politicians, and mine owners, while those of

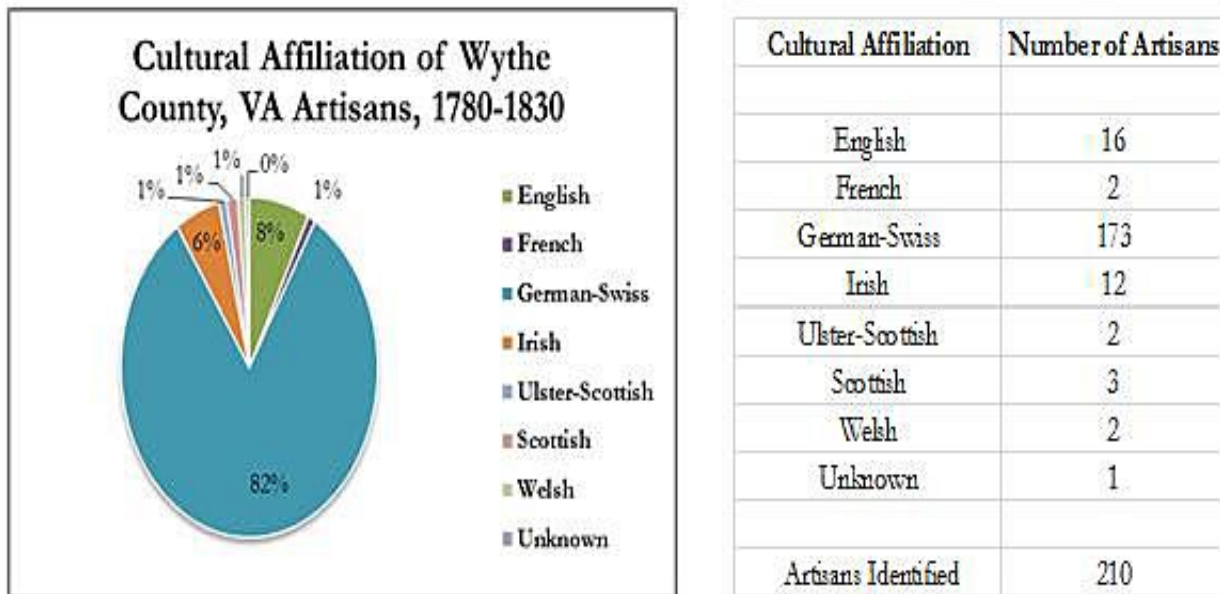


Figure 14: Cultural Affiliation of Wythe County, VA Artisans, 1780-1830, analysis and data based on author's craftsmen database which is located in the appendix, both charts Compiled by the Author.

⁴⁰ One of the objectives of this thesis is to identify who, when, where, and the trade of specific artisans working within Wythe County from the 1780s to 1830s. To date, I have identified over 200 artisans and their respective trade(s). These names are located in the appendices of this thesis, where I have also provided, when available, what part of the county they worked within, time range they worked and date of birth and death. In addition, I have provided a glossary in the appendix that lists and defines certain craftsmen trades and terms related to them to assist the reader. Cultural affiliation of an individual was determined from many widely available county genealogies, surnames, marriages, or extant private collections listed in the bibliography.

German-Swiss stock were predominately skilled artisans and stage line operators. Both groups, however, engaged in farming, innkeeping, tavern management, and local, county-wide politics.

Non-German descendants, however, also engaged in artisan work throughout the time this study covers. Englishman Andrew Crockett was a gunsmith, blacksmith, and cattle farmer. Crockett engaged in his trade as early as 1782 when he bought a tract on Pine Run and Newell's Run, on which he erected a blacksmith shop. Extant records that belonged to Crockett are numerous, including over seven ledger books and folders of loose receipts. He provided customers with the most essential of metal wares—i.e., keys, locks, handles—repaired guns and pistols, and even provided powder when requested. By 1800, however, Crockett, also a land speculator, left Virginia and relocated to Williamson County, Tennessee. His blacksmith and gunsmith businesses and farmlands in Wythe County were then left to his brother James Crockett to manage. James opted to purchase slaves to do most of the craft work, however, as indicated by his 1826 probated inventory.⁴¹ Like Andrew Crockett, his nearby Ulster-Scot neighbor, James McGavock, owned a carpenter and blacksmith shop, tannery, and mill at Ft. Chiswell. McGavock's slaves and some debtors staffed these establishments. Many others at the eastern end of the county followed a similar pattern of land and business development like merchant and McGavock's neighbor, Robert Kent. As the socioeconomic elite of the east end enhanced their land holdings and wealth over time, the more they were able to purchase slaves to provide manual labor.⁴² Other non-Germans, however, embraced their craft occupation for the entirety of their life. The Pierces were well-established tanners in the Poplar Camp area, Alexander

⁴¹ Receipts of Accounts with Andrew Crockett, 1786-1800, *Andrew Crockett Papers*, Box 1-1; Account Books of Andrew Crockett, 1782-1819, *Andrew Crockett Papers*, Box 1: 13-18, Tennessee State Library and Archives, Nashville, TN.

⁴² "Will of James McGavock, Sr.," *Wythe County, VA, Will Book, No.2, 1810-1822*, (Wytheville, VA: Wythe County Courthouse): 34-35.

McHood performed regional wheelwright work, and English-born John Maddox owned a renowned Hatter shop in Wytheville.

James Toncray, however, was perhaps the most renowned non-German craftsmen. A contractor and master builder, Toncray engaged in projects all throughout southwest Virginia. In 1812, Toncray agreed to build Wythe County's first jailhouse and in 1818 he and German joiner and carpenter, Jacob Fisher and John Swoope were contracted to build the first brick courthouse for the county. Montgomery County paid Toncray in 1834 for a new courthouse in Christiansburg. Soon after, Floyd County contracted Toncray for the construction of a new courthouse and Washington County for a jailhouse. Throughout his life, Toncray operated a grist

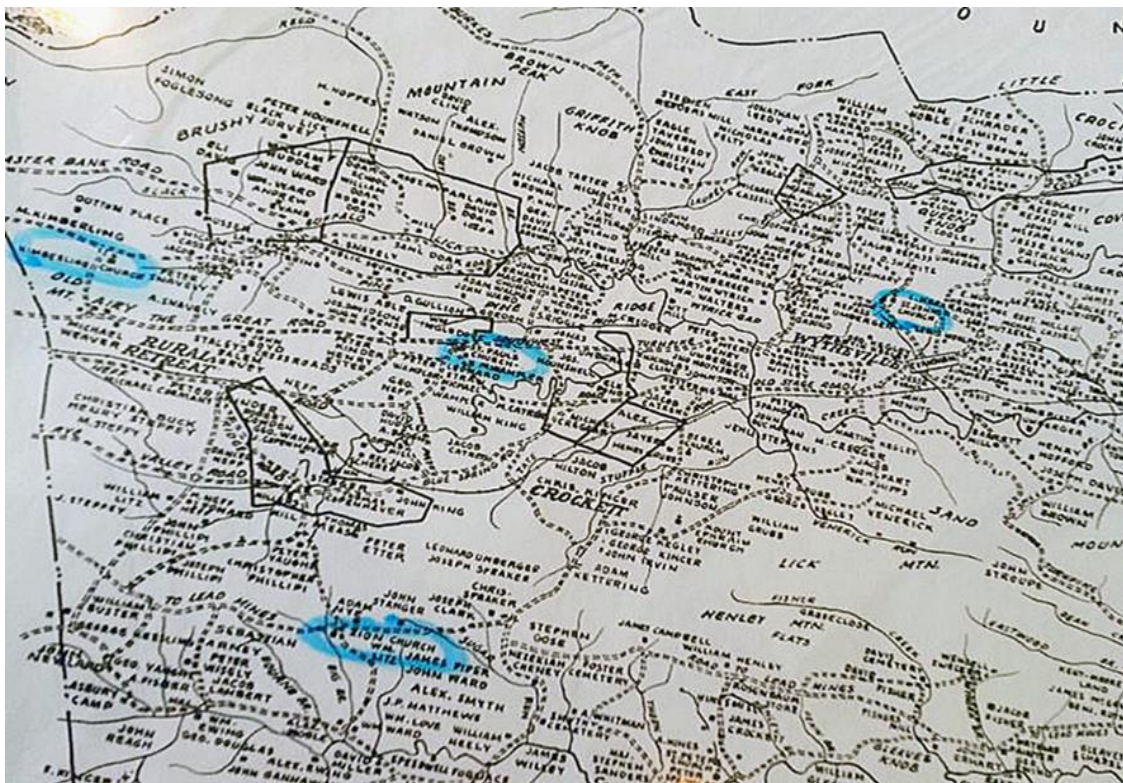


Figure 15: Western Wythe County and its Earliest European Settlers, including in circles the first four Lutheran-Reformed congregations in Wythe's history—St. Paul (1776), Zion (1791), Kimberling (1797), and St. John (1798), adapted from F.B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley's "A Settlement Map of Wythe County, Virginia, Giving the Names and Locations of Many of the Early Adventurers in the Territory from 1745 to 1858," (1974).

mill, sawmill, and blacksmith shop east of Evansham [Wytheville] along Reed Creek.⁴³ It is impossible to trace the past lives of over 200 artisans over a fifty year span of time. Instead, the subsequent sections of this and the last chapter present case studies that narrate particular peoples and families. These studies permit broader discussions and considerations of these people's socioeconomic and cultural significance to their county-wide communities.

Rural Congregations: Ministers, Scriveners, and Congregants

Before the turn of the nineteenth-century, German families of western Wythe County had established six union⁴⁴ congregations, and two others established within Wythe's original 1790 county boundaries (**Figure 15**). Known today as the 'German Churches,' the congregations also served as rural community centers. These included: St. Paul (1776), on the South Fork of Reed Creek, St. John Church (1790), on Elk Creek (1790)⁴⁵, Zion Church (1791), on Cripple Creek, St. Marks Church (1795) and Ebenezer Church (1799), both on the Middle Fork of the Holston River, Kimberling Church (1797), on the North Fork of Reed Creek, and St. John's Church (1798), a mile northwest of present-day Wytheville. The Sharon Church (1817) community, located at Ceres, VA (Bland County), later formed a congregation as more families arrived. Before such time, these families crossed Big Walker Mountain regularly to attend services at either St. Paul or Kimberling Church. Present-day Burkes Garden [Tazewell County] held the furthest west settlement of Germans who came to southwest Virginia in the late-eighteenth-century. This study is primarily concerned with those congregants at St. Paul, Kimberling, Zion, St. John, and Sharon. All of the communities mentioned above, however, were bound over time

⁴³ Kegley, ed., *Glimpses of Wythe County, Volume 2* (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Books, 1988): 68-70.

⁴⁴ Congregations with combined Lutheran & Reformed congregants and ministers.

⁴⁵ Due to annually low congregational attendance and migration out of the region at the pursuit of cheap lands in the West, this congregation disbanded in 1830.

by a common religion, culture, and migratory history. These connections solidified over time as many individuals married into each other's families and established first extended trade routes with each other across the ridges and valleys that demarcated each community.⁴⁶

Scholars have long observed that churches and their leaders provided the most direct cultural resource for German-American settlers.⁴⁷ Within a short amount of time after settlement, German churches regularly organized schools. In southwest Virginia, however, German families were long without trained schoolteachers.⁴⁸ Most county communities relied on their pastors for the burden of teaching their youth and young adults, in addition to religious tenants, basic writing skills, arithmetic, and possibly accounting, to acquaint them with early American commerce practices. St. John's Lutheran Church's ratified ordinances (1804) demonstrate that church leaders also expected to be the educational leaders of their congregation themselves. If and when schools were established, St. John's council ordered that "pastors of the congregation," shall give "special instruction to the children before and after the sermon...so that the youth may be instructed in the five articles of the Catechism and made acquainted with the order of salvation."⁴⁹

Wythe County's German congregations relied on irregular and itinerant preachers to preach, teach catechisms, administer baptisms and communions, and, if licensed, conduct wedding ceremonies. Swiss-born Rev. Bernard Willy, founder of a Latin academy in Woodstock, VA, offered secondary instruction during his short tenure in managing a Wythe Reformed pastorate from 1798 to 1799. Rev. Paul Henkel proved to be one of the more renowned religious leaders in southwest Virginia and east Tennessee. Henkel made at least twelve visits to Wythe's

⁴⁶ Klutz, 88-103.

⁴⁷ Fogelman, 12.

⁴⁸ Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 159-161.

⁴⁹ F.B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, *St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Wythe County, Virginia: Its Pastors and their Records, 1800-1924...* (Wytheville, VA: Printed privately by Gestetner Duplicator Process, 1961): 7.

congregants from 1785 to 1820 as documented by his diary accounts. In 1791, Henkel reported that congregants on “Reedy [Reed] Creek in Wythe County,” were urging him to return, as his “visits were of much benefit to the people of that vicinity.”⁵⁰ Over time, resident ministers migrated to Wythe and dedicated themselves to particular congregations. By 1811, Rev. George Daniel Flohr, the German-born, French Army veteran of the Revolutionary War, reported that his district’s congregations had established four schools.⁵¹

Within the schools of Wythe, a centuries-old folk art tradition perpetuated to recognize, celebrate, and remember life’s memorable moments. Wythe County’s German residents actively requested the production of *Fraktur*—colorful, hand-written manuscripts consisting of graphic alphabets, calligraphic text, abstract borders, and motifs painted with soft, watercolor tones. *Fraktur* was an Old World custom that originated in Alsace and the Palatine. The most popular

⁵⁰ Melvin L. Miller, ed., *The Autobiography and Chronological Life of Reverend Paul Henkel (1754-1825), from the Unpublished Manuscripts: “Autobiography of Paul Henkel” and “A Chronological Life of Paul Henkel”* (Harrisonburg, VA: Anthony Jacob Henckel Family National Association, Inc., 2002): 52-53.

⁵¹ Wust, *The Virginia Germans*, 161.

form of *Fraktur* produced by master calligraphers—*Scriveners*—was the *Taufschien*, or baptismal/ birth certificate. Today, over forty pieces have been identified as

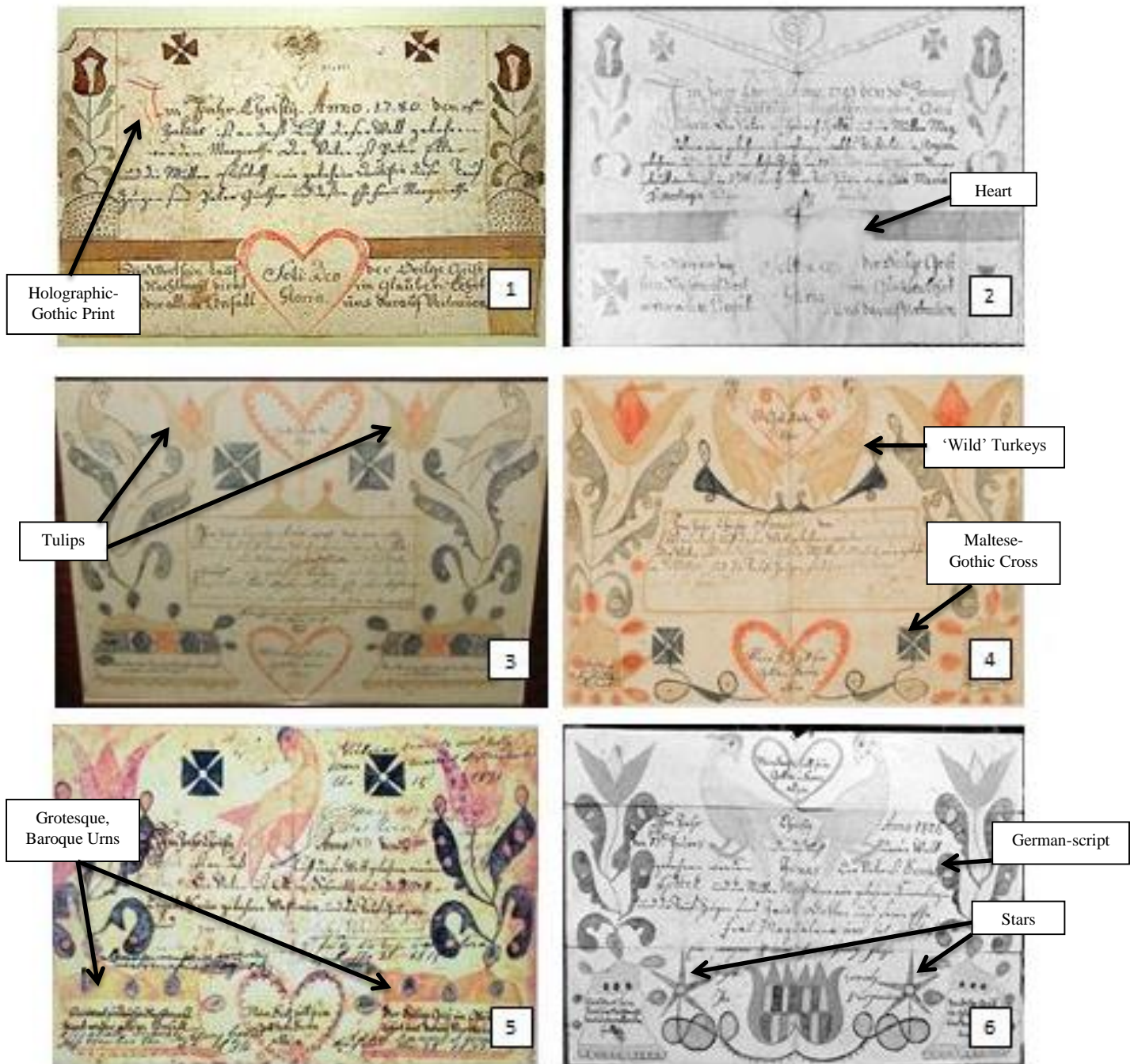


Figure 16: Fraktur made by the ‘Wild Turkey Artist,’ Wythe County, VA and German-Motifs & Features, earlier pieces (Top Left, Right) did not have turkeys, but did include German motifs present in every other piece like the Maltese Cross, enlarged tulips sprouting from Baroque-inspired, grotesque urns, stars, and the heart. The names of each person the taufschiens are celebrating their dates: 1) Margaretha Etter [b.1780], Courtesy Wythe Community College, Wytheville, VA, “Etter Family Fraktur,” Photo by Author, 2) Anna Sarah Huddle, [b.1793], Courtesy Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), Winston-Salem, NC, 3) Unknown, Private Collection of Roddy Moore, Photo by Author, 4) Anna Magdalena Sharitz [b.1819] Wythe Community College, “Fraktur Hanging File,,” 5) Nicolas Snaveley [b.1811], Wythe Community College (WCC), 6) Jonas Huddle [1806] Courtesy MESDA.

made in the area, dating from 1766 to 1850 (**Figure 16**). Once children matured and left home, often they received their taufschien as proof of their baptism and membership in the Lutheran church. Virginia counties did not begin to register or obtain certified proof of one's birth until 1853. As a means of cultural expression and association, the taufschien's purpose was twofold:

1) to keep the tenants of their faith before them and 2) documentation of one's date and location of birth, and baptism for their use into adulthood, for family members, and church records. Fraktur of Wythe County best suited the tastes, needs and character of its community members while also perpetuating a craft tradition rich in European overtones.⁵²

The most significant work from Wythe was that produced by the 'Wild Turkey Artist' (WTA); named so for much of his work included one to two facing birds, that look more like turkeys

due to their ubiquitous compass dial feature on the top the head. Evidently WTA drew these birds as a hybrid form of the more commonly used German peacock motif in Pennsylvania and Valley of Virginia Fraktur (**Figure 18**). WTA incorporated a wide variety of German motifs

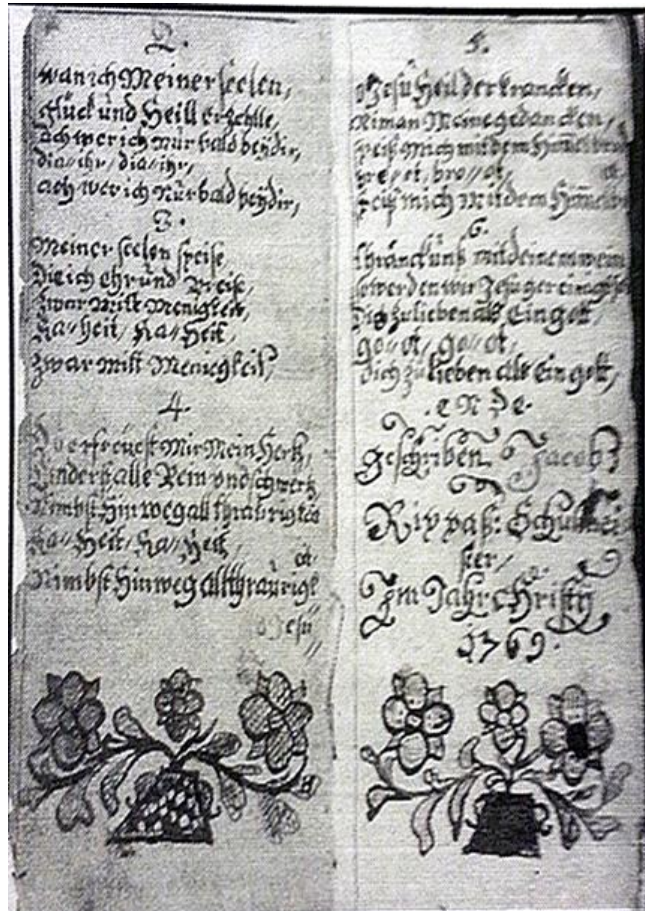


Figure 17: Rev. John Jacob Repass' 1769 Songbook, Courtesy Beverly Repass-Hoch.

⁵² Wust, *Virginia Fraktur: Penmanship as Folk Art* (Edinburg, VA: Shenandoah History): 13; Curtis, et al, 48-49; Donald A. Shelley, *The Fraktur-Writings or Illuminated Manuscripts of the Pennsylvania Germans* (Allentown, PA: Schlechter's for the Pennsylvania German Folklore Society, 1961): 21-37; John Bivins, Jr., "Fraktur in the South: An Itinerant Artist," *Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts*, I, no.2 (1975): 1-23.

including variations of the Maltese Cross, enlarged tulips sprouting from Baroque-grotesque urns, stars, and hearts, in addition to writing every piece's contents in German-script. Local Fraktur specialist Beverly Repass-Hoch has confirmed that each piece attributed to WTA share a connection to Wythe County families. At the center of these manuscripts was a boiler-plate text interspersed with blank spaces for the scrivener to fill in with: date of birth, the child's and

parents' names, mother's maiden name, and the sponsor name(s). This process permitted the scrivener to produce manuscripts en mass for the largely concentrated German communities. For over thirty years,

scholars and local specialists have debated on WTA's identify. The most likely candidates based on occupation and extant handwriting samples are Rev. John Jacob Repass, Rev. John Stanger or Rev. George Daniel Flohr. Repass especially is a

strong candidate based on the similarity of handwriting and folk art designs illustrated in his songbook with that on multiple Fraktur pieces (**Figure 17**).⁵³

As German church leaders into and past the 1830s were more amenable to bilingualism, a process of hybridized cultural accommodation occurred. This manifestation is seen in two



Figure 18: Evolution of German Peacock Motif in Fraktur, the peacock, dove, or parrot were popular bird motifs used by scribes in their Fraktur work, the peacock particularly has allegorical symbolism in the Bible's Job, 39:1 where Jehovah gives the wings to the peacock as a symbol of resurrection, in Wythe the artist hybridized the peacock to a turkey, possibly in response to a new landscape (Top Left) detail from the ca.1819 taufschieben of Anna Magdalena Sharitz [b.1819] (Figure 16, Image 4), (Top Right) taufschieben of David Herr [b.1800], (Bottom) unknown taufschieben ca.1810, Courtesy Philadelphia Museum of Art and Virginia Foundation for the Humanities.

⁵³ Russ and Corinne Earnest, "Fingerprints in Wythe County History," *Wythe County Historical Review*, no.35 (January, 1989): 12-16; Beverly Repass-Hoch, "Fraktur: Birth and Baptismal Records of the Early Germans," *Wythe County Historical Review*, no.56 (July 1999):11-20.

surviving Fraktur made in Wythe County, sometime between 1820 and 1840. Written in English by the “Wild Turkey Copy Artist,” the Cassel and Foglesong certificates contrast WTA’s work, by having similar, but morphed motifs, and include additional genealogical information (**Figure 19**). Huddle’s motifs included symmetrical, checkered urns, heavier outlined hearts, much smaller Maltese crosses, the bird of choice not always a turkey, and its contents are written in English. Understanding the material role and use of the Cassel/ Foglesong certificates’ is complicated by their inclusion of dates of marriage and dates of death. Jonas Huddle has long been credited as the copy-cat artist due to the almost identical penmanship and artistic capacity illustrated in his 1819 workbook (**Figure 30**). Huddle likely made these two manuscripts



Figure 19: Two Fraktur Made by the “Wild Turkey Copy Artist,” Wythe County, VA, (Left) “Jacob Foglesong,” [b.1790/ m.1817/ d.1864] and (Right) “Catherine Cassell,” [b.1798/ m.1817/ d.1847], Jonas Huddle’s work repeats many of the same German motifs used by WTA but certain hybridized elements: symmetrical, checkered urns, heavier outlined hearts, much smaller Maltese crosses, the bird of choice is not always a turkey, and its contents are written in English, Courtesy of WCHS.

sometime after Cassel/Foglesong’s wedding, filled with all information in one sitting, and filled in the date of each one’s death, *post-mortem* for family records. Swiss-descendant and western Wythe resident Jonas Huddle renegotiated and reassigned the use and meaning of the taufschiens into a hybrid medium of cultural heritage and association. A tradition long meant for the celebration of birth and baptism of a newborn German-American hybridized to fit the needs of a contemporary society. The use of the English language typifies the social assimilation post-1800

generations of Germans experienced, yet the need to document life events in an aesthetically memorable and culturally recognizable fashion signifies a continued local preference to tradition. Cassel and Foglesong demanded a hybrid form of cultural association: an indication that the spoken or written word in the early American backcountry was but only one facet of these people's complex cultural baggage. The performed trades and wares produced by artisans reflect an adherence to local, sociocultural traditions. Artisans' socioeconomic lives also demonstrate an ability to accommodate, like the Huddles, to the demands and needs of local consumers and the realities of early American society.

Craft Families and Economics

While church congregations formed the social, cultural, religious and educational centers of Wythe residents, their family networks facilitated the transference of cultural values and traditions across generations. In rural pockets of Wythe County German families transferred these values onto other generations through a variety of mediums: singing of church tunes, marriages, domestic instruction, social gatherings, foodways, Bible or catechism readings, among others. Few historians, however, have examined the importance of craft apprenticeships in transferring and perpetuating a distinct cultural lexicon to aspiring craftsmen. It is likely some of the early German families in Wythe brought with them design books and other printed materials as models for the construction of objects and buildings, as was the case in Pennsylvania. Others could have specially ordered these books from local merchants, or directly purchased in major urban centers like Baltimore, or even requested copies from Virginia presses. Wythe's own German-born Rev. George Daniel Flohr, long believed to be a cabinetmaker, for instance, wrote to Solomon Henkel of the Henkel Valley Press in New Market in 1823

requesting a copy of “*The Carpenter’s New Guide*, with 84 copper plates.”⁵⁴ Even so, rural craft persons required a great amount of startup capital to ensure their success. Rural millers, joiners, carpenters, blacksmiths, tanners, and weavers required established shops and storage facilities, in addition to their farm structures. Additionally, prospective craftsmen could not learn a trade without an established

and knowledgeable practitioner. Christine Daniels’ study of Kent County, Maryland craftsmen demonstrated that after the American Revolution “the likelihood that a boy whose father or uncle practiced a capital-

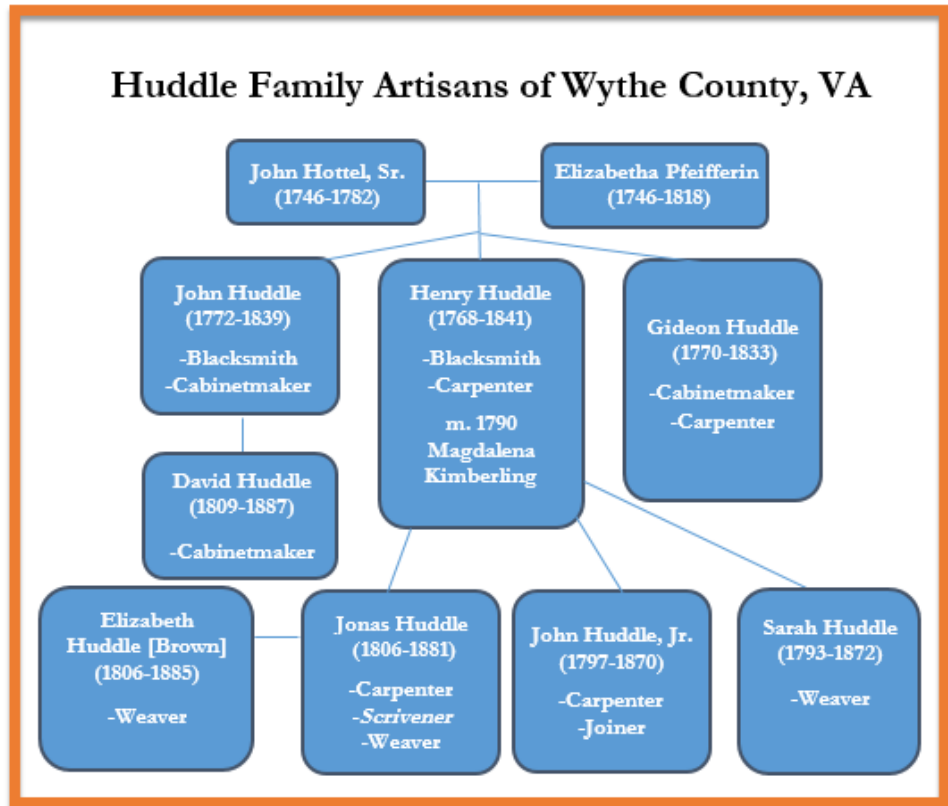


Figure 20: Huddle Family Tree of Well-Known Artisans, chart and information compiled by author.

intensive craft would be bound to that craft did *not* decrease,” but instead increased. As a result, family businesses were as lucrative as ever, thus increasing the frequency with which family members apprenticed into these trades.⁵⁵

Rural German artisans in Wythe similarly mirrored national trends in early America, as multiple families throughout the county established craft dynasties that persisted well into the

⁵⁴ “Letter George Daniel Flohr to Solomon Henkel, March 3, 1823,” *Henkel Family Papers* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia).

⁵⁵ Christine Daniels, “From Father to Son: Economic Roots of Craft Dynasties in Eighteenth-Century Maryland,” in *American Artisans: Crafting Social Identity, 1750-1850*, ed. Howard B. Rock et al. (Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1995): 4-5.

American Civil War. Today, the Huddle [Hottel] family is one of the most familiar names in the Wythe County community. A glance at some of its descendants reveals the multi-varied nature of craftsmanship and importance of familial tutelage in the southern backcountry (**Figure 20**). A look at several men and women descended or married into this line particularly reveals their individual success as artisans and also how family apprenticeships transferred design and construction skills. Through these exchanges, masters taught their apprentices old, culturally-based traditions or skills that defined the Continental, German craftsman. These skills included constructional idiosyncrasies that instructed the student about the right way to do things and decorative techniques aimed to beautify even the most utilitarian objects of everyday life. Lastly, such an examination permits a broader look into the world of other nearby artisans and their socioeconomic engagement over time. Particular attention is paid to how a distinct cultural memory's lexicon manifests across generations.

The Huddles, Craft Dynasties, and Rural Artisans

John, Henry, and Gideon Huddle migrated to Wythe County around 1781. The Huddle brothers and their mother, the remarried Elizabeth Piper [Elizabetha Pfeifferin], moved to the Black Lick area of the Kimberling community as former Shenandoah County [today Page], VA residents. The Huddles [Hoddell, Hottel] were of Swiss-stock whose American line began with George Hottel, son of John and Margaretha. The Huddles took up in Buck's County, Pennsylvania in 1732 before moving into the Valley of Virginia in 1750. John Huddle, Sr. [Johannes Hottel, Sr.], the eldest son of George, fathered his three sons Henry, Gideon, and John with his wife. He later on died in 1771. In 1774, Elizabeth married Peter Spangler, Jr. of Shenandoah County, and less than a decade later the family relocated to what is today western

Wythe County.⁵⁶ Just north of Black Lick across Big Walker Mountain sits the Sharon (org. 1817) community of Ceres (today Bland Co. VA). Here, Peter Spangler, Jr.'s brother, carpenter Jacob Spangler, owned a small farm. Jacob was already an established carpenter in Ceres, as indicated by his estate inventory's large number of woodworking tools.

According to family history, the three Huddle brothers spent their youth as Spangler's apprentices to learn the "art and mysteries" of carpentry,

cabinetmaking, and blacksmithing.⁵⁷ For probably three to five years, the brothers learned, watched, built and delivered furniture—new or repaired—,

metalware, sawed or plank wood, among other custom orders requested by local merchants, inns, and farmers. As their master, Jacob Spangler, agreed to lodge, provide for, take to church, and

rigorously teach the Huddle brothers likely the same construction techniques and designs his German-born father inculcated during his childhood. Spangler made them master the meticulous skill of cutting and joining wedge dovetails, consistent use of pegged and butt-joined drawer bottoms, and the diagonal pegging of mortise and tenon joints as the 'right' way (s) to construct

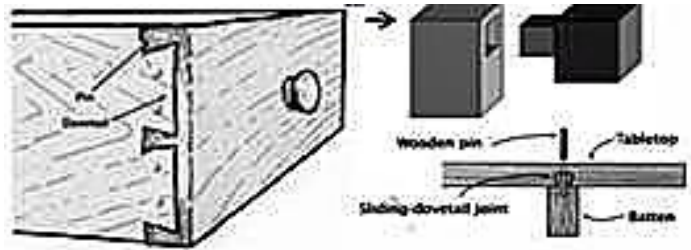


Figure 21: Diagram with Examples of Typical German Joining Techniques, includes: side cut view of drawer with wooden pins, butt-joining example, and cut view of mortise and tenon joints.



Figure 22: Western Wythe Co., VA Walnut, Side-Table, ca. 1815-30, Sheraton style finish and turnings, based on several noticed construction anomalies this was likely constructed or at least finished by a German apprentice, notably: (Top, Far Left) use of four augmented boards, instead of the typical two to three planks, to make the top, and (Bottom, Far Right) the over-sanded turned leg. Photo and table by Author.

⁵⁶ Kegley, *Early Adventurers, Vol.5*, 514-517; Joseph Rodney Cameron, *Early Settlers of Old Mount Airy, Wythe County, Virginia* (Baltimore: Gateway Press, Inc., 1990): 276-282.

⁵⁷ Moore, "Painted Chests from Wythe County, Virginia," *Magazine Antiques* (September 1982): 520.

and join wooded goods (**Figure 21 & 22**). The brothers would have learned the countless number of designs, motifs, and types of inlays for furniture and metal wares as decorative techniques. Lastly, the Huddles learned how to mix and create different colors of paints from local resources, and then apply onto the woodwork by hand, stencil, compass, and sponge. Most of the motifs were simple but symbolic: vines, leaves, flower petals, stars, and geometrical shape as a reflection of the pietistic, Lutheran’s embrace of the mundane, natural world. Other applied motifs ranged in complexity and biblical symbolism: the peacock, diverse selection of flowers—especially lilies, tulips, and roses,—the heart among many others.⁵⁸ Once applied to furniture and objects and then given to their clients, a process of cultural transference had come full circle.



Figure 23: Blanket Chest, Wythe County, VA and Interior Grab Lock, ca.1790-1800, attributed to carpenter, Jacob Spangler based on provenance and signature on lock , bottom grab lock image enhanced and sketched over by author to make signature more visible, (Top) Jonestown, PA Chest, notice commonalities with three front and two side panels, base moldings, and use of grain paintings, illustrate transference of Pennsylvania-German models and techniques into VA, Courtesy of MESDA.

Culturally linked to ways remembering Old World heritage, artisans’ application of these design

⁵⁸ John Joseph Stoudt, *Pennsylvania-German Folk Art: An Interpretation* (Allentown, PA: Schlechter's, 1966):103-111.

features provided a resource to German communities in Wythe through objects that instilled in their owners emblems of cultural association.⁵⁹

By 1799, all three of the brothers had married and established farms and shops of their own: John and Henry in Black Lick and Gideon in Cripple Creek, within the Zion community. John Huddle, Jr. — the youngest brother—became one of the two most well-known cabinetmakers from early Wythe County.⁶⁰ His fame today is due to the number of painted blanket chests that have been attributed to him, his brothers, or others (**Figure 24**). These



Figure 24: Blanket Chests, Wythe County, VA, ca.1800-1810, detail example of bracket feet and side with the ubiquitous dovetailing seen on German furniture, all three chests are earlier examples of the Wythe Blanket Chest Group based on the astragal panels and lid circles that are grain painted, Courtesy of MESDA.

⁵⁹ Ibid, While many symbolic interpretations exist, the Pennsylvania-German Folklore Society correlates these motifs to the following interpretations: 1) Peacock: allegorically linked to Job 39:1 as a symbol of resurrection, 2) Diverse Flowers (esp. lilies, tulips and roses): reverence towards early Hebrew literature's use as a decorative embellishment, and over time symbolize the eternity of the soul and/or the body of Christ; metaphorically linked to Isaiah 35:1, 3) The Heart: analogous to God's, Jesus' (i.e., "the noble guest of the heart"), or the shelter of the soul.

⁶⁰ Fleming K. Rich and Huddle are historically considered the two most renowned cabinetmakers from early Wythe.

wooden dower or blanket chests—contemporarily referred as *aus schteier kischt*—were made for either young German girls or given to couples as a wedding gift.⁶¹ Since J. Roderick ‘Roddy’

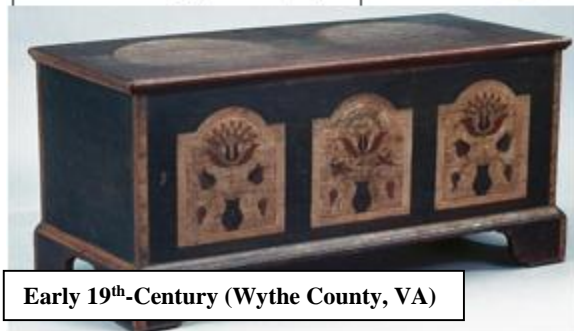


Figure 25: Late 18th-century Examples of German, Lebanon County, PA, and Wythe County, VA Blanket Chests, Courtesy of Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum and Library, (Bottom) Wythe County Chest, ca. 1800-1820, Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation.

Moore’s 1982 publication, over thirty painted chests have been documented and attributed to a distinct ‘Wythe County Chests Group.’ These chests’ applied decorative aesthetic mirrored the Germanic use of polychrome paint seen previously in Pennsylvania. All of these chests consist of either two or three astragal—tombstone shaped—or rectangular panels. Each has some combination of the Germanic urn and tulip, surmounted by an arc or halo, small petals and/or geometric diamonds as motifs. The craftsman’s wood of choice for every chest was poplar; a common feature among other identified Valley of Virginia pieces due to its affordability and ease to apply supplemental decoration.⁶² In

construction, each chest is built in the typical German manner: the case and feet are joined

⁶¹ Monroe Fabian, *The Pennsylvania-German Decorated Chest* (State College, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 1978, 1st ed.): 1-15; Moore, “Painted Chests from Wythe County, Virginia,” *Magazine Antiques* (September 1982): 516-521; Moore, “Wythe County Chests,” *Journal of the Historical Society of Early American Decoration, Inc.* (Fall 1984): 12-19.

⁶² For a synthetic overview and discussion of Valley of Virginia furniture see Louise G. Locke, “Antique Furniture of the Shenandoah Valley,” *Virginia Cavalcade* (Winter 1975): 109-115.

with wedged dovetails, while the feet and base moldings are attached by wooden pins, as is the lid molding.

The choice of panels and motifs painted onto these chests was not a Virginia innovation, rather a result of direct cultural communication with Pennsylvania-German hybrids. One chest likely made by Jacob Spangler indicates that the dispersal of ideas and techniques into the backcountry was swift. (**Figure 23**). The chest is replete with recognizable German patterns and motifs—i.e., urn, tulip, mermaid, parrot, dahlias. Spangler's chest is a puzzling artifact when examining its two side astragal panels with dot hex stars painted inside each. Today, it is the only chest attributed to the Wythe County Chest Group with side panels, paint-applied parrots and mermaids, and an interior grab lock with the initials: ‘**J ♥ S**’. Compared to several other chests from Jonestown, PA (Lebanon County), Wythe County chests can be read as an extension of an Old and New World tradition into the southern backcountry (**Figure 23 & 25**).⁶³ Monroe Fabian’s study of Pennsylvania-German chests traced their origin to Europe’s late Middle Ages to the Renaissance. Upon arrival to America these chests greatly hybridized. They deformed into a cheapened mass aesthetic that lacked more elaborate, deep cut carpentry in favor of cost-effective applied decoration which permitted more individualistic expression, or folk forms. Over time, the many counties of southeast Pennsylvania became renowned for each localities’ decorative preference. The Lebanon County/ Jonestown Group is the likely progenitor of the Wythe group based on identical motifs and paint techniques—urns, tulips, dahlias, two to three astragal panels—and typical German construction features—joined with wedged dovetails, feet and base moldings attached by wooden pins. In the backcountry of Wythe County, the

⁶³ Wendy A. Cooper and Lisa Minardi, *Paint, Pattern, and People: Furniture of Southeastern Pennsylvania, 1725-1850* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press).

perpetuation of this Old-New World tradition acted as a cultural resource for a people who demanded a cultural aesthetic that was familiar and reflective of their heritage.⁶⁴

An examination of the inventories, wills, property assessments, and ledger books can provide a clearer historical understanding of precisely who did the construction and painting of Wythe's chests (**Figure 26**). The inventories of Jacob Spangler and all of the Huddle brother's full and half-brothers show a greater number of woodworking tools—i.e, 'turning lathes,' 'hammers,' 'anvil,' 'chisels,' 'screw/ nail augers,' 'compasses and scales,' 'blacksmith tools' etc.— and supplies than a non-craftsman would have owned for basic farming purposes. These higher appraisals are indicative of a more skilled craftsman within a given locality.⁶⁵ While some chests

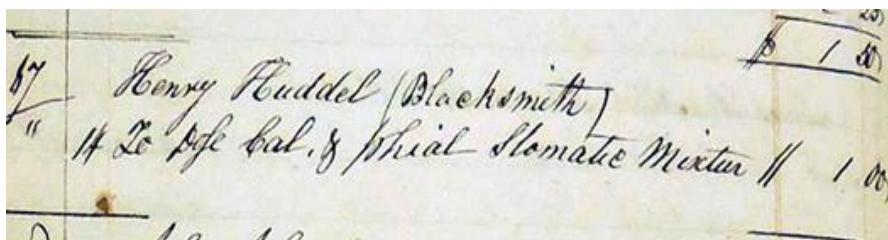


Figure 26: Henry Huddel [Huddle]'s 1817 Account in Dr. John Haller's 1815-1830 Daybook, perusing multiple different ledger and daybooks of Wythe County oftentimes results in definitive evidence to attribute a trade to a specific person, Photo by Author, Courtesy of WCHS.

include John's full German name [Johannes Hottel], he could have, like other craftsmen of the day, purchased chests and then painted them afterward. A ledger from the Rich & Moyers cabinetmaking shop in

Wytheville (1834-1840) shows John purchasing multiple chests on several occasions. John (d.1839) likely undertook chest painting, as he could not execute the labor demanded from cabinetmaking at his age (**Figure 27**).⁶⁶ What further complicates the identification of these chests' painter and/or builder is the fact that John Huddle owned eight slaves. Two of his eight slaves were males, with "boy Washington" valued the highest at \$475. It is not farfetched to suggest Washington participated in the craft business, as other early American southern communities

⁶⁴ Fabian, 36.

⁶⁵ *Wythe County, VA, Will Book, No. 1-2, [1790-1810], [1810-1822]*, (Wytheville, VA: Wythe County Courthouse); Daniels, "From Father to Son," 10.

⁶⁶ "John Huddle Account, 1834," *Moyers & Rich Account Book, 1834-1840* (Winterthur, DE: Henry Francis DuPont Winterthur Museum & Library).

tasked their slaves with artisan work. Dr. Johan D. Schoepf noted on his 1783 visit to South Carolina that “there is hardly any trade or craft which has not been learned and is not carried on by Negroes.”⁶⁷ Thus, it appears John and all his brothers, possibly John’s slaves, participated in some aspect of the building, joining, and painting of these chests, as expected in a familial, rural craft dynasty.

As trades and family craft dynasties flourished in Wythe’s west end, German artisans increasingly engaged with the county’s merchants and store owners in the east. Eastern Wythe’s

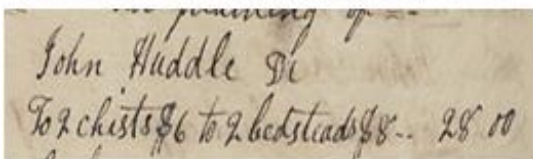


Figure 27: (Top) Detail of urn from a chest: 1812/10/March/Johannes Huddle, written in German-script (Bottom) 1834 entry from Rich & Moyers Account Book, Courtesy, Roddy Moore and Henry Francis du Pont Winterthur Museum & Library.

residents were descendants of the county’s first families. By 1800, eastern families had accumulated considerable wealth, social respect, and political power. These residents achieved such advancements over time through their investments into farming, inn-keeping, store businesses, and extraction of natural resources. Surviving ledgers and account records kept by James McGavock, Sr. and his sons provide many insights into backcountry commerce and the extent of cross-cultural interaction within the county. A soldier of the Revolution, McGavock was a renowned defender of the Patriot cause and sought out any and all residents

hesitant to endorse the Revolutionary cause, notably some German and Welsh residents. Nevertheless, his accounts from 1790 to 1820 demonstrate an extensive level of economic engagement with the county’s German populace. McGavock patronized German carpenters like

⁶⁷ Johann D. Schoepf, *Travels in the Confederation, 1783-1784* (Philadelphia, 1911), edited by Alfred J. Morrison, vol. II, p.221.

John Crigger [Creager], who regularly provided his family with cradles, chairs, and farming tools like a “flax break.” Additionally, McGavock entrusted Crigger with house carpentry projects such as: “steps to the back door...making outside cellar door...by making garners [storehouse or counting room] in old Gaol [jail] House...by putting a lock on big room door.”⁶⁸ While McGavock owned a carpenter and blacksmith shop staffed by his slaves, he sought after German craftsmen to instead supply him with cut wood planks. A large receipt from May 18, 1797 illustrates a great supply of 854 ft. of plank wood purchased from and cut by William Harrel [Harril], whose son Jacob also provided McGavock with joinery and stonemason work.⁶⁹ As late as 1815, the McGavock family had established decade-long partnerships with Germans in the west end and with those few families near his home farm in Ft. Chiswell. In 1815 George Oury, a Swiss-descendant, stage line owner, deputy sheriff, local tailor, and frequently employed artisan by James McGavock, Jr. wrote to his neighbor:

Dear Sir,

Wythe C.H. 29th Nov. 1815

I stand in great need of a smith anvil and have understood you have one at Mr. Toncray’s besides a set of tools you got from Amos Howell if you can let me have one on any terms to oblige me very much. I will pay you any thing you may think right for the use of one two or three months, or would purchase if you can accommodate me I will send for it tomorrow.

Yours Respectfully,
George Oury ⁷⁰

⁶⁸ “Account with John Crigger, 1796-1799” James McGavock Account Book, 1796-1803, *McGavock Family Collection* (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wythe Community College): p.16

⁶⁹ “William Harrell bill for plank, 18th May 1797.” James McGavock Account Book, 1794-1797, *McGavock Family Collection* (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wythe Community College): p.38a.

⁷⁰ “Letter: George Oury to James McGavock, Sr., Nov. 29, 1815, *McGavock Family Papers* (Williamsburg, VA: Earl Gregg Swem Library Dept. of Special Collections at the College of William & Mary).

In all likelihood, it appears McGavock obliged in offering up his tools to Oury, as indicated by a loose receipt of payment received by Oury to McGavock three days later for \$5.50, \$4.00 of which he paid for an “anvil, in good order for Mr. G. Oury.”⁷¹

Eastern Wythe residents additionally invested in Wythe’s natural mineral resources, which greatly contributed to the financial success of western Wythe’s craftsmen. The Lead Mines in Austinville attracted the English-born, Thomas Jackson to pay for the construction of a shot tower overlooking the New River sometime between 1815 and 1820. Soon after, Jackson also established his own ferry business. Other entrepreneurs invested in dozens of iron mines present along Cripple Creek. Speedwell, the county’s first cold blast, iron furnace was established by 1790 in the southwest edge of the county. It supplied the area with wagon loads of pig iron for axes, hammers, and barrel and wagon wheel rims.

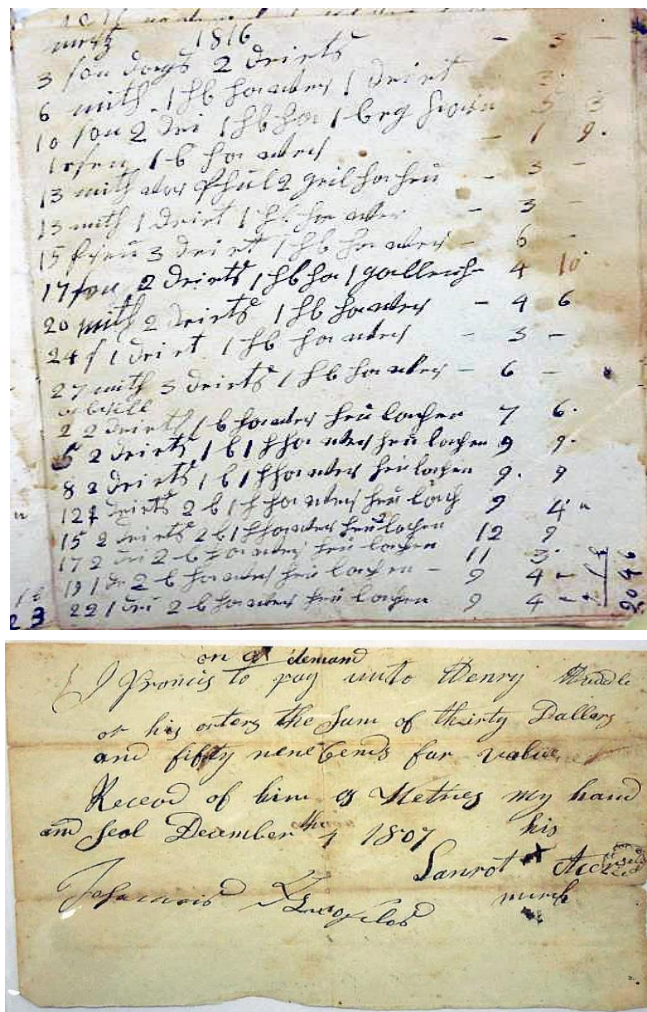


Figure 28: 1816, Page from Henry Huddle's 1814-1817 Blacksmith Shop Ledger (Written in German-Script) and Promissory Note from Customer, several ledger entries refer to bars of iron sold by pound, hinges and trivets, etc., promissory note illustrates the customer’s difficulty in using bilingualism as he incorporates both German-script and English alphabet, Photo by Author, Huddle Family Papers, Courtesy of WCC.

By 1810, three more furnaces at Poplar Camp, Raven Cliff, and Cedar Run emerged, in addition

⁷¹ “Receipt of Payment Receipt Received from G. Oury, 1815,” *McGavock Family Papers* (Williamsburg, VA: Earl Gregg Swem Library Dept. of Special Collections at the College of William & Mary).

to ‘Little Wythe’ furnace in 1818 near Austinville.⁷² Due to these early business efforts, western Wythe’s blacksmiths, wheelwrights, coopers, and waggonmakers received steady amounts of raw iron to manufacture. As early-nineteenth-century Americans headed west to Kentucky, Tennessee and soon after that the Midwest, the sight of wagons rolling through Ft. Chiswell to Evansham and Old Mount Airy ensured a steady stream of customers in the area. By 1821, as illustrated on John Wood’s map, the county’s western end had readily available blacksmith and wagon shops, a



Figure 29: (Top) Trammel, attributed to Henry Huddle, ca.1815, note faint ‘HH’ in close-up, close up on body with zig-zag decoration added by Huddle and bottom of trammel with faint ‘HH’ Photo by Author at Haller-Gibboney Rock House (Wytheville, VA), Courtesy of WCHS.

tannery, and numerous taverns for incomers.⁷³

Blacksmith families like the Huddles, Umbergers, and Davis, however, attributed their success to not depending upon just one furnace or iron supplier. Wythe’s early furnaces changed ownership regularly, which halted production at certain places and times. To obtain consistent amounts of raw pig iron, smiths needed to engage with various locations throughout Wythe. In 1808, Henry Huddle purchased excess pig iron owned by Dr. John Haller in Evansham. As far east as Austinville, Huddle engaged with wealthy Ulster-Scot merchant, Andrew Kincannon in 1821 for over “14.00 Bars Iron in good

⁷² J.A. Whitman, *The Iron Industry of Wythe County from 1792* (Wytheville, VA: Southwest Virginia Enterprise, revised ed. 1942, orig. 1935).

⁷³ John Wood, “Wythe County: Surveyed and Drawn under the Direction of John Wood, 1821,” published in 1827, *Library of Virginia* (Richmond, VA): 755.87/1821.

order...”, and Huddle gave Kincannon several boxes of nails, pots, and trivets as credit to his account.⁷⁴ Other west end German families utilized depots near the salt mines in present-day Smyth County.

As a result of early investments in the county’s natural resources and subsequent industries, Henry Huddle established within a decade after his apprenticeship a prosperous blacksmith, carpentry, and farming establishment in Black Lick (**Figure 28**). Extant pieces attributed to Huddle

demonstrate a continued application of basic, culturally inspired motifs onto the most utilitarian devices for German families. One hearth trammel—used over fireplaces to raise/lower pots—carved with zig-zagged lines is particularly revealing. (**Figure 29**). Along with his initials “HH,” Huddle applied a commonplace German motif onto one of the -most commonplace of domestic items. Representative of natural vines, this motif symbolized the ephemeral,



Figure 30: Pages and Loose Items from the 1819 Workbook of Jonas Huddle, (Bottom) remaining slip from the workbook indicating a lesson plan in Gothic calligraphy, while his cover scanned by the author, Private Collection and Courtesy of Beverly Repass-Hoch.

⁷⁴ “Receipt of Pig Iron to Henry Huddle, 1819,” *Andrew Kincannon Ledger, 1808-1837* (Williamsburg, VA: Earl Gregg Swem Library Dept. of Special Collections at the College of William & Mary): 58.

mundane world—allegorical to the Bible’s Garden of Eden. This German motif is seen on a variety of metal wares produced within early American German communities (**Figure 11**).

Jonas Huddle (1806-1881) did not take up the blacksmith trade like his father. The level of craftsmanship Jonas showed in carpentry, weaving and Fraktur, however, ensured an intergenerational exchange in craftsmanship and how folk art could be used to instill cultural association and remembrance. Jonas’ 1819 workbook compiled while superintendent of Kimberling Church’s Sunday school is vast and eclectic in contents (**Figure 30**). As seen in his hybrid Fraktur work (**Figure 17**), the most striking workbook entries are the pages that include drawings of various folk images—birds, unicorns, flowers, etc. —in addition to both English and German Bible lessons. Jonas’ lessons in penmanship also perpetuated the learning of Gothic calligraphy; a medieval, continental Europe tradition. The most significant piece from this book is Jonas’ cover page, which includes six varieties of Germanic bird motifs. The most illustrative features of this page are its hand-drawn, enlarged dove and Huddle’s signature. A common feature on Fraktur produced within Pennsylvania, the dove sits at the forefront of the cover page as reverence to the Bible’s *Song of Songs*, which explicitly mentions the “dove of paradise who feeds among the lilies.” Jonas’ signature is a greatly hybridized cultural emblem as his first name is written with a combination of German-script—normally written as *Johann*—and English cursive. Into 1820 and 1830, western Wythe German families and their children had participated greatly in the county and regional economies. The resulting social assimilation with other Wythe families and incoming migrants facilitated the gradual acceptance of bilingualism in schools, as evidenced by Huddle’s workbook. Nevertheless, as with Jonas’ case, such an accommodation to the realities of their social world did not result in an elimination of their cultural heritage and traditions. Rather, culture hybridized to fulfill modern needs and demands, but on the people’s terms.

Within a recently found collection at the Winterthur Museum are thirty-three individual weaving guides—or drafts—for table cloths and coverlets, all sketched by Wythe County’s earliest German settlers (1810-1847). Jonas Huddle, his future wife, Elizabeth Brown, and older sister Sara Anne Huddle, who lived with Jonas and his wife, are frequently listed as authors of these drafts. These drafts provide clues into the typical types of coverlets—covers used on the top and sides of beds for utilitarian and decorative purposes,—woven within a given time and what cultural features weavers incorporated into their creation.⁷⁵ The majority of these drafts are guides for coverlets consisting of *Theilig Zugs*—or block-pattern design. Between the last quarter of the seventeenth-century and first decade of the eighteenth-century the concept of a block pattern crystallized as a German-construct, evidenced by widely published and circulated weaving books in Germany. Block-pattern weaving required the weaver to operate under the idea of a unit of fabric structure consisting of a self-contained square of interlaced threads. Doing so permitted the weaver to choose among a variety of different structures and German motifs.⁷⁶

As German emigrants arrived in waves to Pennsylvania, they brought with them the recently obtained knowledge and techniques to create block pattern textiles, which eventually made its way into the southern backcountry after the Revolution. In Pennsylvania, women and men took the German block-design and transformed it into an enlarged pattern technique to be used for bed covers and coverlets. In Wythe, this tradition continued and expanded. The most popular block-design used by Jonas, Sarah, and Elizabeth was the ‘Morning Star’ and ‘Snowball’—or *Schneeball* (**Figure 31**). In Germanic origins, Morning Star designs produced quilts with typical *leichttheilig*—or lighter block—motifs while the Snowball showed typical

⁷⁵ Kathleen Curtis Wilson, *Textile Art from Southern Appalachia: The Quiet Work of Women* (Johnson City, TN: The Overmountain Press, 2001): 1.

⁷⁶ Patricia Hilts, “Roses and Snowballs: The Development of Block Patterns in the German Linen-Weaving Tradition,” *Ars Textrina*, 5 (1986): 169-171.; also see Hilts, *Seventeenth and Eighteenth Century Twills: The German Linen Tradition* (Winnipeg: Ars Textrina, 1985).

schwertheilig—dark, heavier block—motifs. Seen in several Wythe drafts are whimsical and poetic lines expressing love and remembrance. Weavers produced within the household, as further testament to the significance of the role of the family in facilitating and transferring means of cultural expression and tradition onto future generations. Coverlets would typically follow the German color schemes of blue/white, red/blue/green or light/ dark red. These mentioned patterns and colors would likely have contrasted those English-speaking communities’ textiles. One bed rug owned by MESDA and attributed to Wythe is illustrative of the latter’s preferences in textiles, that followed a Turkish-knotted, woven scheme in green/white arrangements (**Figure 32**).⁷⁷

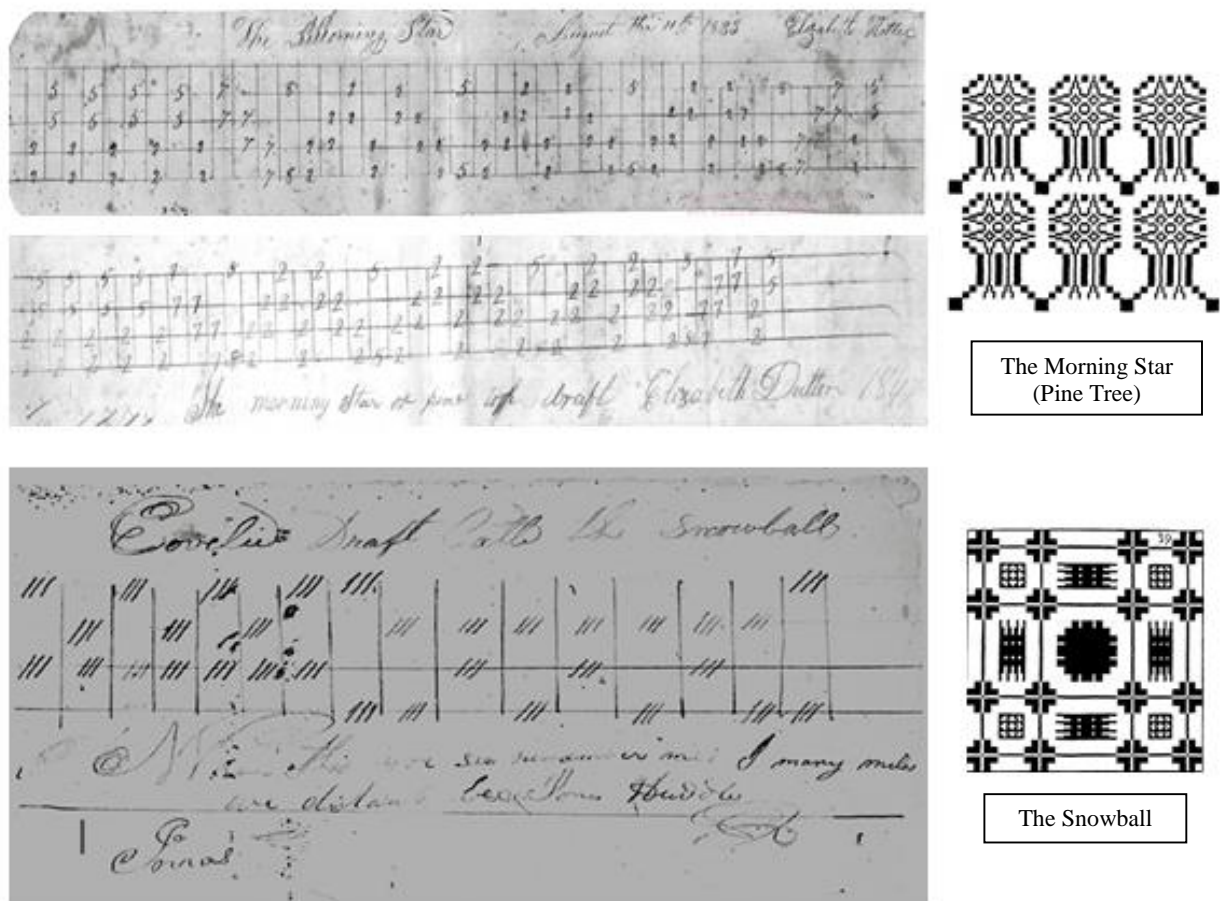


Figure 31: Coverlet Drafts, Wythe County, VA, (Top to Bottom) “The Morning Star, August 11, 1833, Elizabeth Hottel,” “The Morning Star, Or Pine Tree Draft, Elizabeth Dutton, 1847,” “Coverlet Draft Called the Snowball; When you see this remember me, I many miles distant be, Jonas Huddle,” Scanned Drafts Courtesy of the Winterthur Museum.

⁷⁷ Hilts, “Roses and Snowballs...” 170-171; Gloria Seaman Allen, “The Colonial Chesapeake Consumer’s Bed Covering of Choice,” *The Journal of Early Southern Decorative Arts* 30, no.1 (2004): 10.

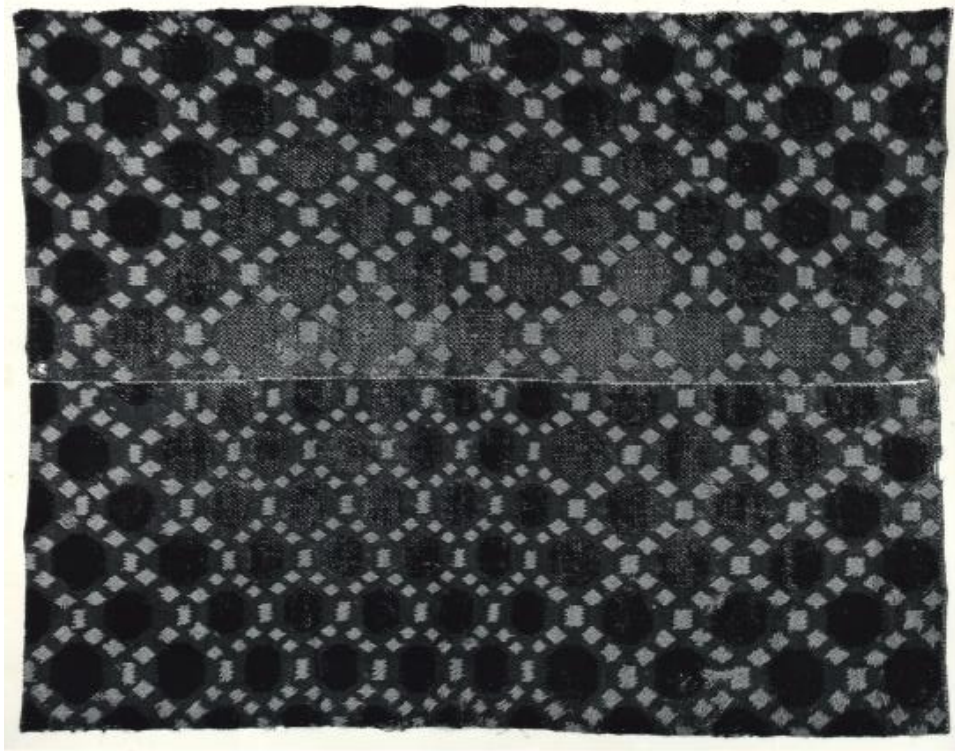


Figure 32: Turkish-knotted Woven Bed Rug, Wytheville, VA ca.1825, this style of bed rug's antecedents can be traced back to ports of England, Courtesy of MESDA

Far from solely relegated to the tasks of *Kinder, Küche, Kirche*,⁷⁸ women of Wythe acted as visible actors in public businesses and crafts within the county. Women of Wythe County participated in a variety of business contexts, rather solely attached to homespun, textile trades. Evidence suggests that Wythe *hausfrauen* were as industrious and engaged in the public sphere as they were in the domestic. Rev. Paul Henkel recalled in his autobiography a visit to Wythe in 1792 where a husband accused his “wife of being lazy.” He confessed:

It was hard for me to know however to act in the case, but I called them both before me in the presence of the elders of the church and asked them to extend their hands and I placed them side by side and asked the elders to judge for themselves who was the lazy one of the two. The elders were unanimous that in judging by the roughness of the hands the woman was the industrious one. The declaration of others who knew the circumstances agreed with this conclusion. The man left and went his way justly defeated.⁷⁹

Surviving accounts also highlight the industry of Wythe women. From 1834 to 1836, the widow Elizabeth Catron [Kettering] purchased a multitude of sundry goods from eastern Wythe merchant,

⁷⁸ (English Translation)Children, Kitchen, Church.

⁷⁹ Miller, ed., *The Autobiography and Chronological Life of Reverend Paul Henkel*, 56.

John Bralley, Jr. Catron performed labor-intensive work as credit toward her debts for seventeen days in August 1836. The ledger indicates Catron on each day completed 3 to 6 “days work at a house at carpentry.” Her account closed by August 30th after making over 150 wood plank boards for Bralley. Seen through a variety of ledger and day books from 1810 to 1830, Wythe’s women provided manual labor whenever necessary to fulfill financial obligations that provided for their families.⁸⁰

‘Glory to the Memory:’ Stonemasons, Funerary Art, and Itinerants

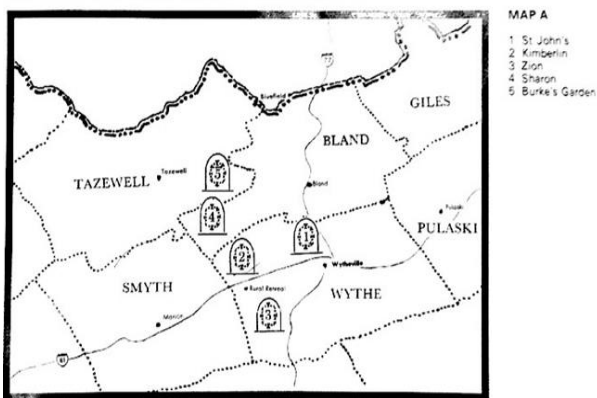


Figure 33: Map of Southwest Virginia Counties with Germanic Folk Gravestones, from Klaus Wust’s *Folk Art in Stone* (1970)

Along the hills of southwest Virginia are many creations of folk art that remain in the graveyards and cemeteries of five Lutheran-Reformed churches and family plots. **(Figure 33 & 35).** Dating from 1770 to 1850, over 160 gravestones have been documented by scholars.

These stones must be examined within the context of the stonemasons who created them to accurately understand their meaning and creation. Multiple German stonemasons worked within Wythe County. Yet, as late as 1991, scholars have identified only one mason who without a doubt engaged in stone funerary art. This thesis, however, presents newly discovered information that concretely identifies an additional mason at work within the many cemeteries and graveyards of Wythe and surrounding communities. An examination into the lives of these two masons permits broader, historical conversations of these tradesmen and meaning(s) behind their many examples of German-American folk art. Thus far, this work has

⁸⁰ “Account of Elizabeth Catron, 1834-1836,” John Bralley Copy and Account Book, *Southwest Virginia Counties Collection, 1783-1878* (Blacksburg, VA: Newman Library Dept. of Special Collections at Virginia Tech): Box 1.

shown how familial dynasties and apprenticeships ensured the transference of cultural ideals and memory. Journeyman and itinerant artisans also played a significant role in providing their communities a cultural resource. As objects fixed on a landscape, gravestones offer a great deal of insights into the sociocultural world of past people.⁸¹

For many years, historians and folklorists had identified Laurence Krone [Krohn, Cron] as the only stonemason from the area who made gravestones. Krone arrived at Wythe and present-day Pulaski sometime between 1800 and 1810. His life best epitomizes that of the early American itinerant in the southern backcountry: nebulous to historians and frustratingly hard to pinpoint for genealogists. Krone likely arrived from the Alsace Township in Berks County, Pennsylvania. As a journeyman—recent graduate of an apprenticeship—Krone’s work typified much of what is considered an itinerant lifestyle. Itinerants typically worked within a given region, rather than a locality.⁸²

Other Wythe journeyman, however, arrived around the same time as other German families and ended up creating familial dynasties like those already mentioned. Joseph Sexton, a tanner, currier, and harness maker, left Prince William County, Virginia in

Date	Description	Amount	Balance
1818	by mason work at a spring house	\$ 16	50
1819	by Stone work at a Chimney	\$ 66	25
			82
1819	By 35 Days Stone work	\$ 35	00
1819	By Trenching	8	00
			\$ 125

Figure 34: Account of Laurence Krone, 1818-19, credit side, from John Repass’ Account Book (1818-1836), Photo by Author, Courtesy of WCC.

the late eighteenth-century as a recent apprentice under the tutelage of Thomas Jacob. Upon his

⁸¹ Moore, “Decorated Gravestones of Wythe County, VA,” *The Magazine Antiques* (October 1991): 620.
⁸² Wust, *Folk Art in Stone: Southwest Virginia* (Edinburg, VA: Shenandoah History Publishers, 1970): 23.

departure, Sexton carried with him a note that documented his training and trustworthiness. Jacob affirmed that he “think [Joseph] a good workman,” and that he “lived with [him] upwards of one year at the tanning & currining business.”⁸³ Sexton expanded his economic opportunities quickly, owning several lots at Old Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat) in the west end of the county by 1800. As progenitor, Sexton give birth to one of the largest family tanning businesses in southwest Virginia.

Krone’s earliest documented contracts demonstrate that early American stonemasons rarely gathered enough business to make a means of living by only carving gravestones. Masonry required an understanding and knowledge of how to extract natural stone in the most efficient manner, identify and determine what kind of rock to use and its quality when quarried, and how to think like an architect. Two different ledgers from John Repass and Col. Robert Sayers provide a more realistic view of the labors of the stonemason in the early nineteenth-century. One witnesses within a system of accounting based on debits and credits the different tasks a laborer can perform to receive credits to their account. Doing so provides invaluable information into the trades of particular individuals and, if they owned slaves, demonstrates how often slave labor is used to pay off a master’s debt.

In 1811, Col. Robert Sayers paid Krone for making a “stone peazor [piazza],” and then in 1812 for “laying four stone walks.”⁸⁴ On April 28, 1818, Krone engaged at Mr. John Repass’ farm near St. John’s Church. Repass was one of the wealthiest farmers of German descent in the county, owning dozens of slaves and large farmland for wheat exportation to Lynchburg. Based on Repass’ ledger, Krone was a regular consumer of his whiskey. Repass credited Krone “by mason work at

⁸³ “Joseph Sexton Certification of Prior Residency and Apprenticeship, by Thomas Jacob, 1796,” *Sexton Family Papers* (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia), Box 1, Accounts & Receipts Folder 2.

⁸⁴ “Laurence Krone Account, 1808-1812,” *Robert Sayers Daybook, 1795-1827* (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wytheville Community College): 50.

a spring house,” and “by stonework at chimney,” valued at \$84.25 (**Figure 34**). Later on in 1830 Krone received \$125 “for building a graveyard and tombstone” for the Cloyd family on Back Creek, today-Pulaski County.⁸⁵ These few different contracts performed over time imply that the stonemason most often made gravestones “on-the-side.” Nevertheless, when given a gravestone contract masons were offered an almost unlimited scope for personal creativity and demonstration of their artistic knowledge.

In 1815, Krone purchased 171 acres on Sally Run, just about five miles northwest of then-Evansham. Shortly after, Krone commenced with the construction of his well-known extant pieces located in the St. John’s Church cemetery (**Figure 35**). Krone’s work in St. John’s is made up entirely of traditional German motifs. Centered and formalized rosettes most often appear on the headstones, symbolizing the eternity of the soul of the deceased. Krone’s roses seem to recall flowers of



ZION

SHARON

KIMBERLING

⁸⁵Wust, *Folk Art in Stone*, 23.



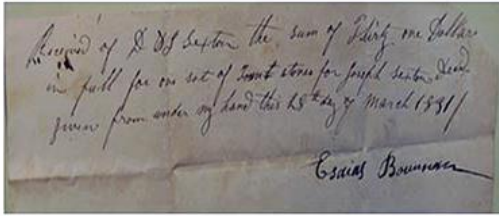
ST. JOHN'S

Figure 35: Gravestones of Southwest Virginia, ca. 1781-1840, Photos Taken by Author

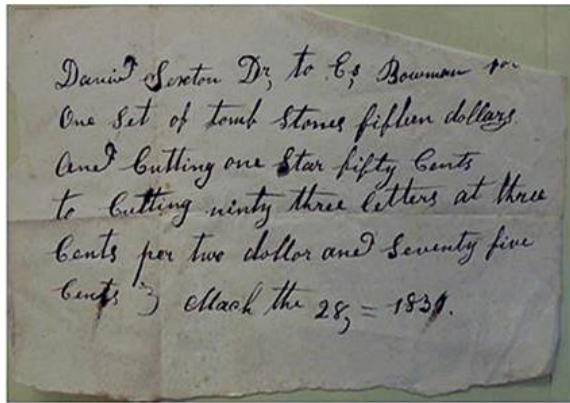
Rosicrucian or Tudor allegories, reminiscent of medieval to fifteenth-century Europe. Each burial included a headstone and footstone (a common feature of any German cemetery). Krone's headstones typically have high, rounded shoulders and a central three-quarter round element. The front and edges of Krone's stones typically include serrated "pie-crust" decoration, while the reverse side of the headstone feature the German heart or tree of life motif. Other stones in St. John's include an even wider variety of German motifs, ranging from a sunburst star to a moon surrounded by stars. Furthermore, Krone's work is the only set of stones that have epitaphs written in either English or German. Other stones at Zion, Kimberling, and Sharon in Bland County are more perplexing as they have over time received the most damage due to acid rain, vandalism and no known cutters signed their names.⁸⁶

⁸⁶ Association for Gravestone Studies (AGS), *Symbolism in the Carvings on Old Gravestones* (Greenfield, MA: Published by AGS, 2012): 1-8.

Roddy Moore has concluded that at least three other stonemasons were carving stones



Received of D. Sexton the sum of Fifteen Dollars
in full for one set of Tomb stones for Joseph Sexton Dead
given from order of head this 28th day of March 1831
Esaias Bowman



David Sexton Dr. to Esaias Bowman Jr.
One set of Tomb stones fifteen dollars
and cutting one star fifty cents
to cutting ninety three letters at three
cents per two dollar and seventy five
cents } March the 28th = 1831.

Figure 36: Receipts of Payment Received by David Sexton to Esaias Bowman, March 28, 1831, Sexton Family Papers, Photo by Author, Courtesy of Library of Virginia

around the area of today’s Wythe County. This contention is based upon commonalities in shape, design, stone choice and motifs chosen between all grave sites’ stones. Two receipts issued to one Esaias Bowman [Baumann], for the cutting of “one set of tombstones” which would require “...cutting one star...and ninety-three letters,” for the late Joseph Sexton; the aforementioned, leather currier, tanner, harness maker, and lawyer.

(Figure 36). Joseph’s son, David, also leather tradesmen with his brother John, paid Bowman a

total of \$52. Bowman lived directly northwest of the present-day boundary of Wythe, along the North Fork of the Holston. Like Krone, Bowman was likely an on-the-go itinerant, as he appears in the census records of Washington, Wythe, and Smyth counties from 1810 to 1830.⁸⁷

The McGavock family cemetery in Fort Chiswell demonstrates how respect for one’s trade transcended cultural boundaries and the versatility of German craftsmen in Wythe. After McGavock’s death, his two sons sought the services of Krone to commemorate their father. Rather than order and import gravestone slabs from Philadelphia—like James’ acquaintance, Col. William Preston at Smithfield Plantation (Blacksburg, VA)—James’ sons engaged Krone, seeing him as best suited to commemorate the McGavock family’s socioeconomic prominence. Krone’s products, symbolizing a reciprocal level of socioeconomic respect, stand as a turning

⁸⁷ “Receipts of Payment from David Sexton to Esaias Bowman, March 28, 1831,” *Sexton Family Papers* (Richmond, VA: Library of Virginia), Box 1, Accounts & Receipts Folder 2.

point in Wythe cross-cultural engagement. The stones Krone produced for the McGavocks fully articulated his typical repertoire of Germanic-inspired motif features, yet it is within this cemetery these designs also hybridized (**Figure 37**). Like most Germanic stones, they are all double-sided, with a design on the reverse, and a different design framing an English written inscription on the obverse. On the reverse, all stones receive pinwheels that are then connected by a central, iconic motif such as a tulip, fern, or sunflower. They also display more refined, architectural elements of the day: notably flanking columns, arches, and keystones. Such architectural features spoke of the day and age of ordered, classical revivalism rather than the folk elements that German craftsmen like Krone used within German communities. Lastly, the addition of wheat strands on several stones is unique. The McGavock Cemetery includes the only set of Krone-made stones that includes the wheat motif, these unique historical documents



Figure 37: McGavock Family Cemetery, Ft. Chiswell, VA, (Right) Including detail of unique, wheat motif, Courtesy of VDHR symbolized Krone’s negotiation skills: he could maintain his known way of construction and application of emblems of German cultural association, but accommodate and hybridize enough to satisfy his clients’ more refined tastes in decorative and architectural trends of the day. The

use of a wheat motif was a clever way for Krone to remind passerbys that the McGavock's owed their prominence largely due to their agricultural successes throughout time.⁸⁸

As farms, schools, and church congregations established over time, more artisan efforts could be devoted toward luxury items that required more persons with specialized skillsets. The rise in demand of finer things, however, was directly correlated to the demand for emblems of cultural association. Fraktur, furniture, cookware, blanket chests, textiles, and decorative gravestones all spoke of a distinct cultural lexicon early Germans wished to publically display and speak. Artisans supplied Wythe's German families with these items as a cultural resource. Simultaneously, they ensured the transference of their cultural memory to future generations through rigorous, family apprenticeships. Family tutelages gave rise to prominent craft dynasties that entrepreneurs in the east quickly took notice, as indicated through numerous accounts over time. The industry and success of these German craftsmen, then, was directly attributed to their engagement with, and the early investments made with other established county families.

In narrating the socioeconomic lives of these early German artisans, this chapter has established the historical context of the county's early development. Within that historical frame, culturally-based ideas, traditions, and beliefs continually flowed into and perpetuated within Wythe's German communities. The embrace of bilingualism did not diminish the latency of German families' Germanic identity and culture, rather enhanced it as cross-cultural exchange permitted the expansion of craft businesses and their renowned decorative and construction techniques. In understanding the local dynamics of county-wide trade, business, and culture, it is

⁸⁸ Moore, "Decorated Gravestones..." 622; Conversations with Roddy Moore (March 2015).

possible, then, to place Wythe County's early development within the context of regional, national and international forces.

Chapter 3

Hybridization in a Post-Backcountry Society: Neoclassicism, Regional Industry, and Culture in Wythe

Strange to tell, however, there was much refinement among [Wytheville's] better class...Politeness, kindness, and true Virginia hospitality reigned pre-eminently.

-Julie A. Tevis, 1865⁸⁹

Extant records and materials indicate that the southwest Virginia frontier did not remain primitive for long. After the Revolution Virginia's southwest backcountry counties proved to be bustling producers of grains and livestock for the rest of the nation. In addition, investments into the area's natural resources and the expansion of family-based craft dynasties further extended commercial ties with their surrounding communities. From Lynchburg, to Evansham (Wytheville), to Abingdon, and into Kingsport, Tennessee and southeast along the Smokey Mountains, trades flourished across the Great Road and even extended into other areas of the nation. The most northern stage road stops of Baltimore and Philadelphia greatly contributed to these developments as the early American grain trade brought vast wealth, ideas, and goods into the valleys and ridges of Virginia. As migration west continued into the antebellum period, consumer capital continued to steadily flow within the region, permitting residents to order from merchants and/ or contract local artisans to receive or make luxury commodities. By 1820, travelers heading west through the New River Valley would have found in local stores almost anything available on the coast of Virginia, Richmond, or in nearby Lynchburg. Many store

⁸⁹ Tevis, 161.

inventories included: delftware, queen's ware, bolts of cloth, looking glasses, toothbrushes, washing machines and a wide variety of locally produced textiles.⁹⁰

In Wythe County wealth and taste for Enlightenment goals linked with an international quest for a better way of life. Into and past the 1830s Wythe's residents' transformation of natural wealth into profitable exports made the finer things in life possible. Modern classical houses, fine furnishings, and imported commodities, as well as the knowledge to use them properly during polite conversation, were all highly sought after emblems of refinement. Such consumer trends and rituals attached to those sets of beliefs illustrated a society that was no less hierarchal than that of the coast. Richard Bushman has argued that within the first quarter of the nineteenth-century a "vernacular gentility" had emerged within a new, American middle class that selectively incorporated elements of upper class culture. Even while refinement and emulation of genteel ideals proliferated within Wythe's residents an adherence to locality and cultural tradition remained.⁹¹

This chapter looks at the establishment and development of Wythe's county seat of Evansham (today Wytheville) within the context of early American trade and internationally promoted neoclassical trends . It examines how craftsmen contributed to the town's development, and how neoclassical inspired consumer trends and beliefs simultaneously flowed into the area, and what effect they had on the German cultural lexicon and identity. The development of Evansham resulted in many western Wythe County German artisans to expand their trade across the Great Road. As business connections expanded across state and regional lines, an exchange of locally popular design features onto emblematic objects resulted in an unconscious way of remembering cultural identity and tradition. Wythe's artisans demonstrated

⁹⁰ Moore, "Earthenware Potters along the Great Road in Virginia Tennessee," 528.

⁹¹ Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1992).

through their many wares that even in the midst of pre-industrial development, cultural identity did not dissolve within the wave of nationalist republicanism, rather hybridized to fit the demands of a changing populace. To modern observers, backcountry furniture and decorative arts often looks out of proportion, irregular, or odd when compared to that of the coast. Hidden beneath these objects are stories of the people who made them based upon their cultural association and the polyglot landscape they inhabited with others.⁹²

Neoclassicism, Republicanism, and Refinement in Early America

Neoclassicism, also called classical revival, was a mid-eighteenth-century movement that heralded a reawakened interest in the ancient Greco-Roman world. Much of Europe's renewed interest into the classical world was spurred in the 1740s after the accidental discovery of Herculaneum (1738) and Pompeii (1748)—the two Roman cities buried in 79 AD after the eruption of Mount Vesuvius. From Italy to England, printing presses from 1760 onward produced a variety of architectural and art treatises, prints, drawing books, and plays influenced by neoclassicism.

Neoclassicism and neoclassical style dispersed rapidly around the globe and took many different shapes and forms throughout the late-eighteenth to early-nineteenth-centuries. Key features unified neoclassical style such as symmetry and classical ornamentation. Houses typically had symmetrical, rectangular plans. The most common plan was the double pile with a center hall passage, which included two parallel chimneys on the sides, a passage that bisected the length of the house. On each side of the center passage was a square room, both of an equal size (**Figure 38**). This double pile, center hall floor plan replaced the medieval hall and parlor

⁹² Much of this chapter is modeled and inspired by Jennifer Diane Elliot, "The Neoclassical Backcountry: Architecture, Material Culture, and Hybridity in the American South, 1780-1830" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 2013).

plan, comprised typically of two rooms and a third given to the parlor and two-thirds to the hall. The floorplan of the neoclassical period's Greek Revival-influenced house is today referred as "I-Form", or specifically the Virginia I-House. In the spirit of vernacular genteelism Virginia I Form houses were, in essence devolved versions of the Georgian—two-story, four-room plan with a central hall—plan that used only two, rather than four room per floors.⁹³

Moldings framed the exterior features of and accentuated panels and friezes. By the end of the eighteenth-century most housework had fine, delicate plasterwork in the spaces between carved moldings with deep curves. The

exterior of houses and cabinets also had pilasters. Neoclassical homes typically included one or more of the following varieties of features: entry portico with pediment and columns, lunette window in portico pediment, elliptical fanlight over paneled front door, symmetrically aligned windows and doors, side gabled or low pitched roof, and large windows and doors (Figure 39). Similar to housework, neoclassical furniture also took on several

distinct construction methods and decorative motifs. Most included classical molding profiles, pediments, and volutes pilasters, among others.⁹⁴

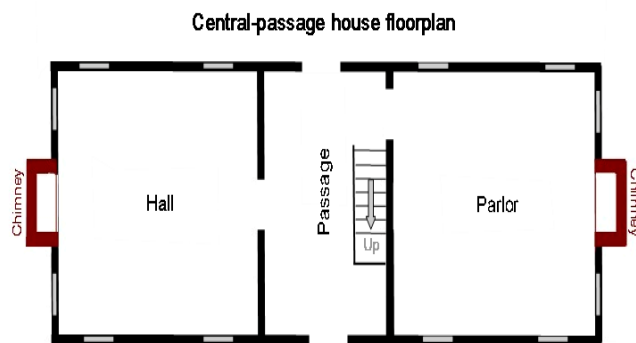


Figure 38: Double Pile, Central-Passage House Floor Plan, typical rectangular floor plan style of neoclassical influence.

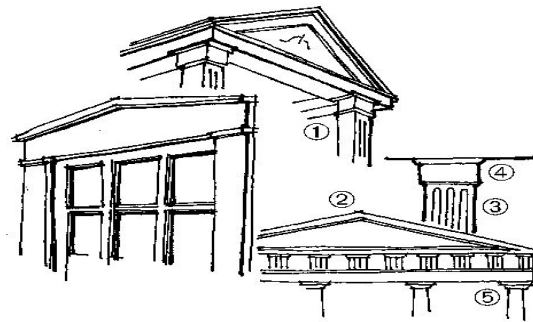


Figure 39: Neoclassical Architectural Features, 1: Portico (porch), 2: Pediment, 3: Pilasters (columns), 4: Capitals, 5: Tall, Light Colored Columns.

⁹³ W.L. Whitwell and Lee W. Winborne, eds., *The Architectural Heritage of the Roanoke Valley* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1982): 75-76.

⁹⁴ Helen Sheumaker and Shirley Teresa Wajda, *Material Culture in America: Understanding Everyday Life* (Santa Barbara, CA: ABC-CLIO, 2008): 101-102; Helen Comstock, *American Furniture: Seventeenth, Eighteenth, and Nineteenth Century Styles* (Exton, PA: Schiffer Publishing Limited, 1962): 191-274; Donald L. Fennimore, "American Neoclassical Furniture and Its European Antecedents," *American Art Journal*, 13 (1981): 49-65.

European-taste for Greco-Roman ornamentation quickly crossed the Atlantic into the 1790s. Over time, Americans found in this architecture style the fullest expression of democratic and republican values. Americans, thus, adopted the Neoclassical style in their first major government buildings in the new federal capital of Washington, D.C. American structures often imitated marble in wood painted white to follow the orders of Greek architecture (Doric, Ionic, and Corinthian). The Neoclassical style was promoted and popularized by Thomas Jefferson, who found the impressively monumental architecture of ancient Rome a suitable model for the newly formed nation. His home at Monticello, the campus of the University of Virginia, and the Virginia state Capitol were some of Jefferson's most notably Neoclassical structures. These buildings were in direct contrast to Rococo style, which had developed out of the French monarchy, and which Americans considered frivolous—a reminder to Americans that monarchies were antithetical to the new republic. In decorative arts, American craftsmen similarly ornamented their furnishings with classically-inspired motifs: swags, garlands, medallions, and silhouettes.

Americans also instilled within neoclassical style new ways to distinguish economic, political, and social status. Gentility, the assemblage of rituals with civil and polite behavior, driven by nuanced social interactions, became the method by which individuals communicated their status. Vernacular gentility after the Revolution, however, became the norm for American citizenry that selectively incorporated elements of upper class culture.⁹⁵ The prospect of entering into a new middle class then meant that one needed to engage in refinement—financially independent enough to acquire emblems of status. Both refinement and Neoclassicism were endorsed by Americans as a means to obtain gentility. When introduced to communities over

⁹⁵ See Clifford Geertz, *The Interpretation of Cultures: Selected Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1973).

time, Neoclassicism, according to Historic Deerfield director, Philip Zea, acted as a major catalyst of change, especially within the southern backcountry.⁹⁶

Great Road Connections: Cultural Exchanges along Wythe's Eastern Border

Near the end of the eighteenth and into the early nineteenth-century wagons travelling south along the Great Road reached historic numbers. Better road conditions, internal improvements, surplus production and export of grains, and stabilized populations all facilitated the cementing of southwest Virginians' relationships with America's major commerce centers: Philadelphia, Baltimore, and New York in the North, and Lynchburg, Richmond, and Norfolk within Virginia. Backcountry merchants led the way in strengthening these trade lines for themselves and store owners, clients, and soon after artisans within their own backcountry communities. Along these routes modern consumer trends and tastes in neoclassical features and refinement flowed into southwest Virginia. Over time, backcountry entrepreneurs similarly extended their businesses, goods, and ideas into Virginia's most westward communities and northeast Tennessee along the Great Road (**Figure 40**). Just west of Ingles Ferry and adjacent Ferry Hill Tavern sat a mixed community of German and English artisans and tavern keepers along Back Creek in Pulaski County (1839) (**Figure 41**). The nearby road, parallel to Back Creek served as the local extension of the Philadelphia Wagon Road through the Valley of Virginia, and Great Road into

⁹⁶ Philip Zea, Lecture: "Building Traditions: Craftsmanship & Culture in the Southern Backcountry," Winston-Salem: Old Salem & Gardens, 2011.

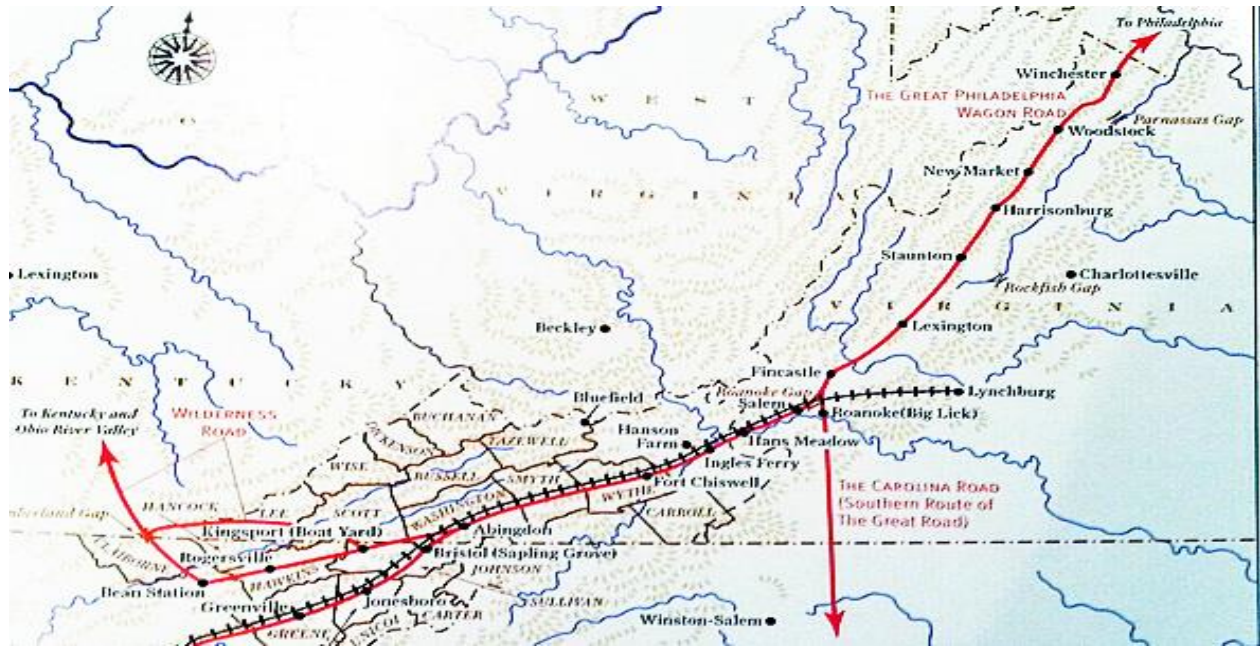


Figure 40: The Great Wagon Road from Philadelphia to Tennessee, from Betsy White's *Great Road Style* (2009)⁹⁷

Tennessee. Since the 1760s, this road stop held a station that sold horses, cattle, sheep, and turkeys from Virginia's southwestern counties and—by 1790s—Tennessee and Kentucky that were then driven to eastern and northern markets. When Wythe County was drawn as an independent county in 1790 present-day Newbern, along with Ft. Chiswell, served as the most profitable and active trading posts west of the New River Valley.⁹⁸ Within this community lived Peter Rife [Riffe, Pfaff], a Swiss descendant, farmer and knowledgeable and skilled craftsmen.



Figure 41: Detail from 1827 Map by Claudius Crozet, boxed area indicates Back Creek community

⁹⁷ Betsy K. White, *Great Road Style: Decorative Arts Legacy of Southwest Virginia and Northeast* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 2009).

⁹⁸ H. Jackson Darst, "Sebastian Wygal and His Clock," *Western Virginia Historical Review*, 29 (1976):4.

Rife was born in Rockland Township, within Berks County, Pennsylvania in 1762 and resided in then-Montgomery County by 1777.⁹⁹ Earliest financial accounts from Ferry Hill Tavern illustrate Rife's life as a professional wheelwright.¹⁰⁰ There is reason to believe Rife engaged with customers as far away as Tennessee. This is indicated by a 1796 letter sent by David McGavock to his father James McGavock, Sr. from his Tennessee home indicating that he last heard of father from a letter "delivered by Mr. Ryfe."¹⁰¹

Extant tall case clocks attributed to Rife demonstrate the man's mastery of cabinetmaking and complexity of backcountry decorative arts (**Figure 42**). In 1996 the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation purchased a remarkable tall case clock for nearly three-quarters of one million dollars. This mahogany and mahogany veneer on cherry case clock has long been thought to have been built by Rife for affluent Swiss, tavern keeper and nearby neighbor, Sebastian Wygal [Weygel] based on family history. However, estate inventories and sales from Montgomery County, VA's will books suggests a different original owner. James Hoge, Jr. (1732-1812), a Revolutionary War veteran and progenitor of the renowned southwest Virginia Hoge family, lived less than five miles away from Peter Rife. Hoge descended from a long line of Scottish family members originally based in Frederick County, VA. His estate inventory and sale after his death in May 1812 lists one "clock and case" bought by "Sebastiaen Wygllle" for \$66.25; a much higher appraisal price than tall case clocks seen in other contemporary inventories (Wygals home place is shown in **Figure 41**, listed as "Wigal's"). Wygal's own September 1835

⁹⁹ Ronald L. Hurst and Jonathan Prown, *Southern Furniture: 1680-1830* (Williamsburg, VA: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1997): 586-591.

¹⁰⁰ *Ferry Hill Tavern Ledger, 1798-1804*, Newman Library, Special Collections (Blacksburg, VA).

¹⁰¹ "Letter by David to James McGavock, Dec.4, 1796," *McGavock Family Papers*, Box 1:1, Kegley Library (Wytheville, VA: Community College).

inventory lists only one clock appraised for \$100, and later purchased for \$105 by nephew



Figure 42: Tall Case Clocks Made by Peter Rife, 1): ca.1809/1810 with clockwork by Swiss-man Peter Whipple, long believed to have been made for tavern keeper and entrepreneur, Sebastian Wygal, recent research indicates otherwise 2) ca. 1815-1820, Courtesy of Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, MESDA, and Ken Famer Antiques.

Sebastian “Boston” Wygal Miller, which is further confirmed by family accounts.¹⁰² Regardless who was the original owner, the clock stands as an affluent man’s piece of decorative art as exhibited by its intrinsic and rare additions of both Arabic and Roman numerals on the clock face, over 365 individual cuts of wood, and over 22,000 individual inlays composed from mahogany, cherry, tulip poplar, oak, black walnut, holly, maple, bone, horn, silver, glass, iron, brass, and steel pieces.¹⁰³

¹⁰² *Montgomery County, VA Will Books 2 (1809-1817) & 5 (1830-1837)*, Montgomery County Courthouse (Christiansburg, VA).

¹⁰³ Agnes Rothery, *Houses Virginians Have Loved* (Whitefish, MT: Literary Licensing, LLC): 111-112.

This one tall-case clock provides an insightful look into the world of an early-nineteenth-century, backcountry clock case builder and his/her regional adaptation to national tastes and designs. Above all, Rife's *magnus opus* is representative of how early southwest Virginia German artisans hybridized urban neoclassical designs with local traditions before 1810. Many western Virginia clocks share the same monumental stance and exaggerated architectonic proportioning, such as those painted by Johannes Spitler from the Valley of Virginia. Close examination of the Hoge/Wygal clock reveals two distinct aesthetic interests of Rife: one rooted in a sophisticated concern for visual order, classical allusions, and meticulous workmanship, and the other revealing a more playful, less disciplined, German-influenced spirit.



Figure 43: Detail of Peter Rife's Wygal/ Hoge Clock, facade of clock face and left siding, Courtesy of MESDA

(Figure 43). Representative of the former, Rife included multiple curvature strung bands and the American eagle motif in the tympanum. Additionally, the clock includes classical urns on the base and trunk and the urn-shaped finial on the hood distinct from those of Germanic-influence. These classical urns sought to mimic those non-funerary textiles of Greco-Romanic traditions that are narrower and usually have two handles. As a hybrid form, the clock also features merged German-American motifs: meandering vines on the trunk and base, the flowering witch's hearts at the bottom of the trunk door, and the whimsical inlays above the hood door in which bellflowers emanate from striped shields. Also departing from neoclassical standards are the clock's scrolled feet, the projecting hood scrolls with their pendant spheres, and the F-holes in the tympanum, which are clearly derived from those on the German-originated Dulcimer. Historian Anne Smart Martin and other antique experts have said that Rife's clock is an ideal model of cultural hybridity within the southern backcountry: fully connected and receptive to trends and markets of the present day, yet refusing to fully adopt Anglo-American cultural patterns of goods and behaviors. Rife's ca.1809/10 clock, then, can be seen as the eastern harbinger of cultural manifestation in Wythe County. There, artisans over time similarly managed to learn and implement new techniques and designs demanded by their clients, while also reshape those established aesthetic patterns that still honored their local, cultural traditions.¹⁰⁴

Master gunsmith Jacob Shaffer [Schafer] (1783-1874) of Ft. Chiswell, around the same time Peter Rife completed his *magnus opus*, began the production of the region's most sought after rifles. German gunsmiths had long been renowned craft experts in the construction and ornamentation of early American guns and rifles. The heavy influx of German-Swiss into the

¹⁰⁴ Martin, *Buying into a World of Goods*, 108-110.

American colonies beginning in the 1710s-1720s corresponded to the development and standardization of the Euro-Germanic *Jäger* (hunter) rifle. These rifles were flint-locked, fired a patch-ball, and accurate at longer ranges, but required longer loading times. Over time Pennsylvania-German craftsmen melded their European craft traditions with American frontier experiences.¹⁰⁵ As a result, *Jäger* rifles evolved into the American—or Pennsylvania or Kentucky—Long-rifle. These rifles had slender, full stocks and flintlocks with a much longer barrel with a brass patch box. Like the *Jäger*, the American long rifle was often decorated with silver and brass inlays, carvings, and engravings of traditional German motifs.



Figure 44: Home, Workshop, and (possible) Picture of Jacob Shaffer and his Rifles, Courtesy Michael Gillman and James Spraker.

The Shaffer family of Shenandoah County, VA, headed by Daniel and Anne [Hudlow] Shaffer, arrived to Wythe's Ft. Chiswell area sometime before 1802. Daniel and Anne took up land

¹⁰⁵ Fred Stutzenberger, "The Jager Rifle: Forerunner of the American Longrifle," *Muzzle Blasts* (August 2014): 4.

adjoining that of fellow Germans David Simmerman, Daniel Sponsler, and Peter Bishop [Bischof]. By 1817/1818, however, the Shaffers moved to Wayne County, Indiana, leaving behind their 140 acre tract to the benefit of their son, Jacob who lived with neighbors and in-laws Peter and Margaret Bishop. In 1818, Peter and Margaret ceded their 440 acres of farmland to Shaffer on the condition that he and their daughter and Jacob's wife, Catherine care for them for the remainder of their lives.¹⁰⁶

Up to the 1830s, at least a dozen other gunsmiths worked within Wythe County's borders, all of whom were of German ancestry. All extant pieces made by Shaffer suggest that he was a master craftsmen. As early American migrants arrived into the southern backcountry and continued their individual trades, many chose the most feasible means to decorate their products. An overwhelming majority of Shaffer's rifles, however, include or included at one point *either* silver or gold and brass inlays, rather than the common choice of just the latter. This suggests that Shaffer was very aware of national demand and willingness of Americans to pay for refined, luxury items to use and display in public forums. One ca.1825 gun made by Shaffer held in a Virginia Beach, VA private collection is colloquially known by collectors as the "Super Shaffer Rifle," as its inlays are almost entirely made of silver and gold carvings (**Figure 44**). Shaffer's selection of carved motifs on his rifles also speak to the man's ability to appeal to the refined consumer without eliminating cultural identity and association. The most common neoclassical motif incorporated onto Shaffer's rifles is the erect American eagle, similar to the clocks of Peter Rife (**Figure 43**). In selection of Germanic motifs, Shaffer incorporated a variety of the following: geometric diamonds, hearts, diamonds, and floral patterns. Even the earliest dated rifle attributed to Shaffer (1810) that lacks these motifs is refined in appearance and holds

¹⁰⁶ James C. Spraker, "The Shaffer Family," *Wythe County Historical Review*, 59 (January 2001): 6-12.

cultural association with the brass plating covering the patch box. The plate is an assemblage of several different florals, a common feature on any German influenced material, that culminate into a pointed metal inlaid aesthetic (**Figure 45**).



Figure 45: Buttstock of 1810 Jacob Shaffer Rifle and Detail of Signature on Rifle, Courtesy of Roddy Moore, Photo by Author.

The identifiable features of Jacob Shaffer’s work substantiates the importance of the local as well as the regional in the perpetuation of emblems and idiosyncrasies of cultural association.



Figure 46: Detail of Jacob Shaffer's Typical Trigger Guard Pattern, Courtesy Michael Gillman and WCHS.

A good number of extant rifles have carved onto their barrels either “J. Shaffer” or “J.S.” (**Figure 45**). Most important is the intricately cast trigger guard seen on almost every rifle made by Shaffer. Twirled and curled backward toward the buttstock, the trigger guard in most cases includes an additional bifurcated twirl much smaller and less ornate

(Figure 46). A cross comparison between Shaffer's and other rifles produced within the regional vicinity of Ft. Chiswell suggest that early German artisans relied on or at least practiced both individual imagination and alteration of ornamental techniques used by other craftsmen. Within the last few years, material experts have suggested that Shaffer interacted, engaged, and possibly learned his trade from the Honaker family. The Honakers located primarily within the vicinity of Peter Rife and other then-Montgomery residents west of the New River. Some striking similarities are visible between a ca.1820/30 Jacob Shaffer rifle and a ca.1825 John Honaker rifle **(Figure 47).**



Figure 47: Comparison of Honaker, ca.1825 (Top) and Shaffer, 1825/30 (Bottom) Rifles with Detail of each Rifle's Trigger Guard, Courtesy of Michael Gillman, WCHS, and Aspen-Shade Ltd.

Another German-speaking family, the Honaker family provided skilled gunsmiths to the New River Valley as early as the 1780s. The 1825 Honaker rifle example includes a scrolled trigger guard and German motif of a predator bird finial upon the top of the patch-box plate. Examining the 1825/ 30 Shaffer rifle, an almost identical scrolled trigger guard is present, among the German motifs of star and geometric diamonds. Other evidence that suggests the two families had a measurable amount of familiarity or engagement with the other is seen in family lines. For

instance Edith Honaker, sister of Henry Honaker, married Joseph Shaffer, the tenth of eleven children raised by Jacob and Catherine Shaffer.

Regional, cultural exchanges in southwest Virginia could also penetrate other mediums of material expression. Both Roddy Moore and Anne Smart Martin have suggested that Rife's clocks' hood scroll designs are reflective of regional material feature used by German craftsmen, especially when compared to Shaffer trigger guards (**Figure 48**). In width, size, and scroll length these two ornamental additions, like within the Honaker/ Shaffer comparison, do not necessarily reveal emblems of cultural association or hybridity. Nevertheless, these two comparisons do suggest the importance in local, regional exchanges of ideas, techniques, beliefs, and knowledge of modern consumer trends. Migrants and extended business across the nation over time ensured southwest Virginia's connection to the rest of the country. Yet, these compared materials do suggest the interconnected, historical importance of the local and regional perpetuation of distinct cultural elements, individually created styles copied and manipulated through a variety of mediums, and modern neoclassical consumer trends.¹⁰⁷

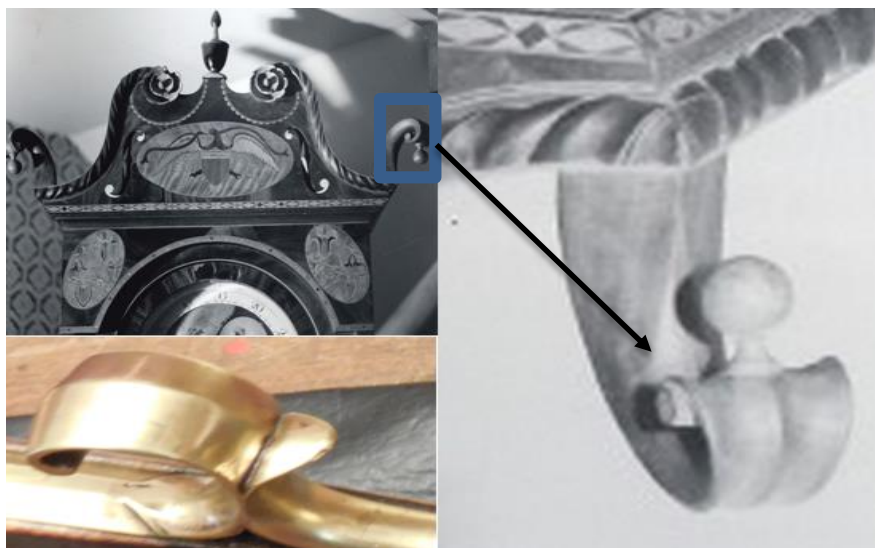


Figure 48: Comparison between Shaffer Trigger Guard and Rife Clock Hood Scroll (Flipped Upside Down).

¹⁰⁷ Anne Smart Martin makes this suggestion in *Buying into a World of Goods*, 109.

Jennifer Diane Elliot’s 2013 dissertation, “The Neoclassical Backcountry” demonstrated

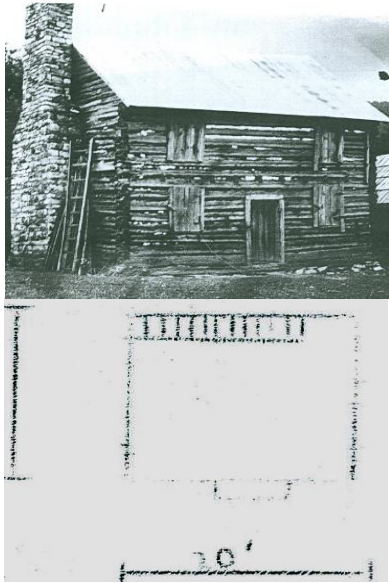


Figure 49: Patterson Log House, ca. 1780, Crockett’s Cove, Wythe County, Traditional Floor Plan of Single Pen Log House, Courtesy of Library of Virginia and Historic American Building Survey.

that backcountry merchants and store owners first presented genteel culture and its neoclassical objects to their neighbors via their dwellings. Earliest structures in Wythe throughout the New River Valley were made of felled trees, hewed, notched on ends, stacked vertically, and then mortared with a mixture of clay, wood scraps, horse manure and hair, rocks and water that solidifies between the log beams. The dwellings were derived from ancient West Ireland construction plans that included one big room, one little room, and one fire place that heated the big

room (**Figure 49**).¹⁰⁸ At Max Meadows, James McGavock, Sr. constructed one of the largest log houses within county.

Originally built as a single pen one and one half floor house, the McGavock Log Mansion later extended horizontally to incorporate an additional room, and vertically with a full second floor. Structures like McGavock’s over time were weatherboarded with wood planks to cover the exposed log beams, for protective and decorative purposes.

Into the 1820s and 1830s Wythe’s socioeconomic elite pursued a new architectural aesthetic to reflect their wealth and political influence. Within the age of neoclassical design, Greek revival forms became the aesthetic lexicon to publically display a families’ prominence. Built in 1838 or 1839, Fort Chiswell or McGavock Mansion is a two-story brick structure set on a foundation of irregular coursed limestone (**Figure 50**). The mansion’s brick work is laid in Flemish bond on the north (front) and west facades. With exception to its latter additions, the

¹⁰⁸ Henry Glassie, “The Appalachian Log Cabin,” *Mountain Life and Work*, 39 (1963): 5-14.

house demonstrates the blending of both Roman and Greek forms in neoclassical style. This is especially evident in the two-story diastole portico which is composed of two provincial Greek

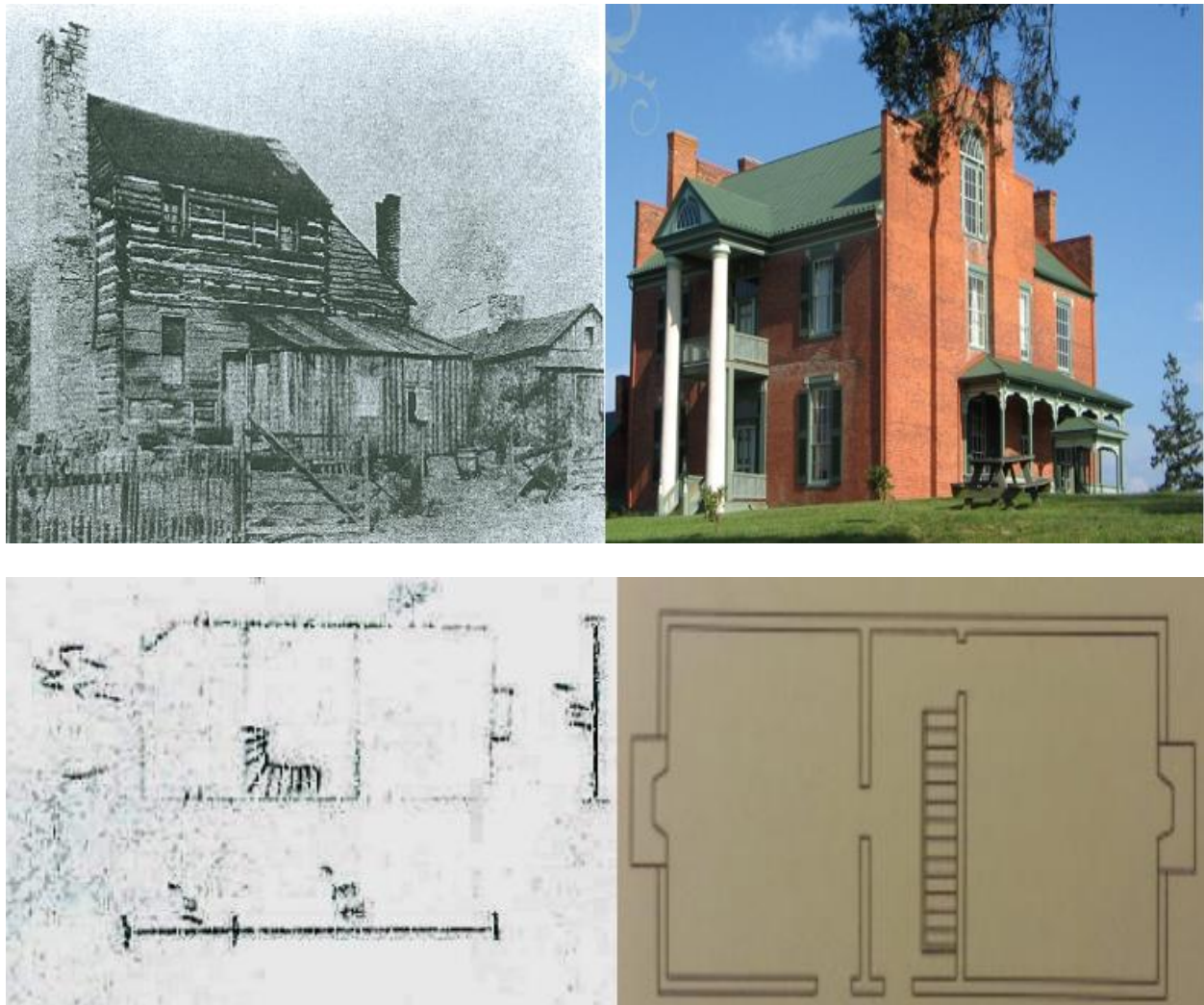


Figure 50: James McGavock's Mansion, ca. 1780 (Left) and Fort Chiswell Mansion (Right) near Max Meadows/ Ft. Chiswell, VA with floorplans of each. Courtesy of Historic American Building Survey.

Doric columns supporting a pediment without architrave or frieze. The tympanum of the pediment features a window with interlacing tracery nearly identical in appearance that which Thomas Jefferson designed for Pavilion IV at the University of Virginia. The one-story Italianate bracketed porches on the front and west walls appear to be very early additions. A distinguishing feature of the house is the step-gable ends, each of which incorporates a pair of projecting

chimneys. The mansion's floor plan matches perfectly to the neoclassical prototype, having a central hall plan with two even size rooms on each side. Inside, the house's windows and door trim throughout the house features classically inspired architraves with turned corner blocks.



Figure 51: A.C. Moore House, ca. 1825, near the Wythe Lead Mines, Austinville.

In sum, the mansion stands as a model

and guide to Wythe residents wishing to act more genteel and refined.

Evansham, early Industry and Wythe's First Factory

Wythe County's major commercial center is and has always been the county seat, formed and named in 1792 as Evansham, and renamed in 1839 as Wytheville. Ft. Chiswell housed county-wide business since the Revolutionary War. Over time, however, local leaders realized its terrain was too unlevelled for any major roads. Thus, on June 22, 1790, only one day after the county's formation three German residents, Stophel [Christopher] Zimmerman, his wife Margaret, and John Davis donated 100 acres of land for the town to be located on the south

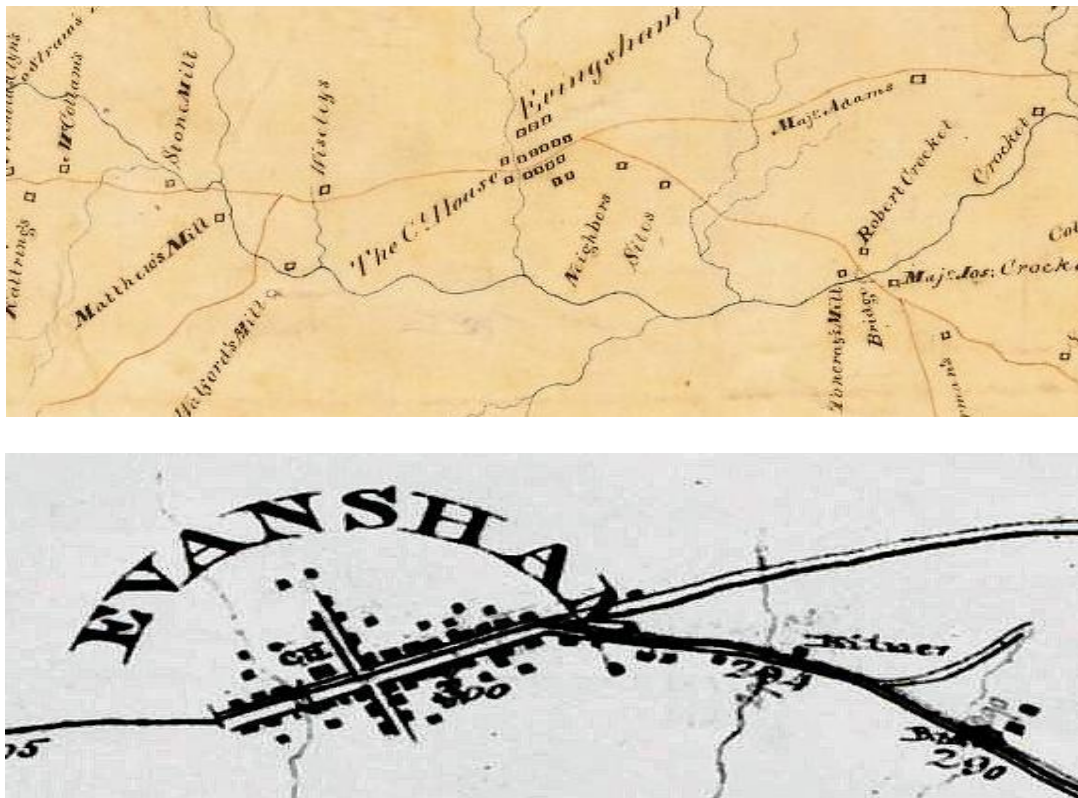


Figure 52: The Town of Evansham, VA, 1821 & 1827, as drawn on John Wood's 1821 and Claudius Crozet's 1827 Map

side of the future main road. On October 29, 1792, the Virginia legislature passed an act establishing the Town of Evansham (**Figure 52**).¹⁰⁹ Soon after Evansham was laid off, many well-known and established artisans from throughout the county began buying lots downtown to establish a more permanent shop location. Many newly arrived German residents took up one to several town lots. Based on the information logged into the database of this thesis' appendices, following families had sons, daughters, fathers and mothers perform their trade within Evansham (1810-1830):

Andress*	Fisher*	Johnston	Nye*	Sayers	Tate
Armbrister*	Flemming*	Jones	Oury*	Seagle*	Toncray
Baxter	Fox*	Kegley*	Pardee	Seavers*	Wampler*
Bayler	Fuller*	Kinder*	Perrin	Sexton	White*
Bevil*	Gannaway	Lane	Pickle*	Sheffey	Whitman*
Brown*	Gragg*	Leath*	Phipps*	Shores	Wilkinson*
Cook	Green*	Lindenbarger*	Rader*	Sikes*	Wills*

¹⁰⁹ Mary Kegley notes in her book, *Wythe County, VA: A Bicentennial History* that lots for the new town were being sold as early as 1791.

Cowin*
Davis*
Dillman*
Dutton*
Ewald*

Harrell
Harris
Hoback*
Huffard*
Johnson*

Love
Maddox
Miller*
Moyers*
Neighbors*

Reddick*
Reed
Rich*
Rider*
Saftly

Simmerman*
Smith
Sprinkle*
Steele
Stockley

Wilson*
Wolfenbarger*
Yonce*

*-- German Descendant

Evansham's merchants provided their county residents with items from Lynchburg, Baltimore, or even New York. Numerous craftsmen provided ready to hoist saddles, fix or construct

wagons, design and manufacture a piece of furniture, make a coffin or create a custom hat. For the wary traveler, Evansham had over four different taverns for food, drink, and lodging.

Dr. John Haller, a German-American originally from York, PA,

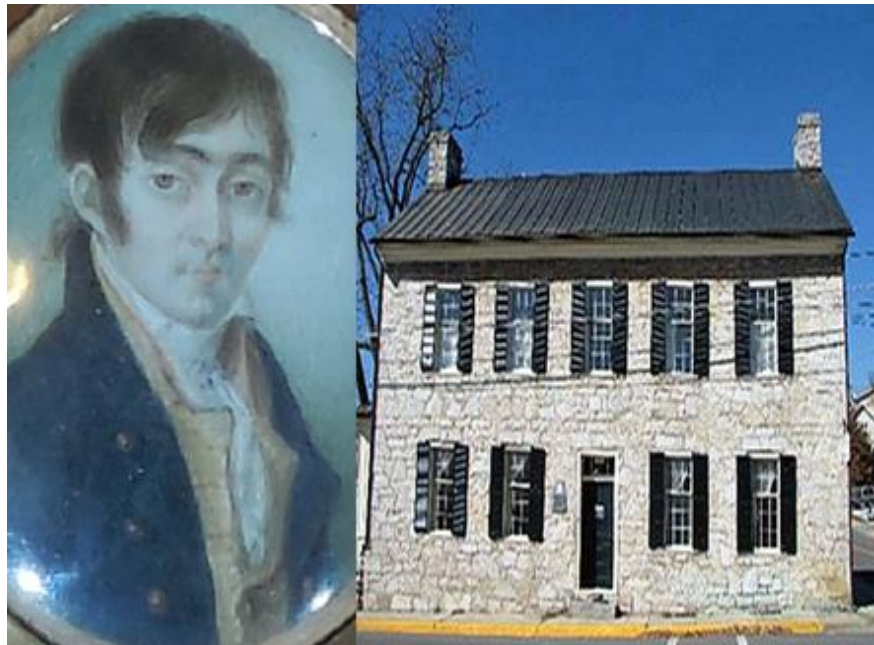


Figure 53: Haller-Gibboney Rock House Museum, Wytheville, VA, home of Dr. John Haller, (Left) pocket painting of Dr. John Haller given to his wife. While Haller lived an arguably prolific lifestyle, like most Virginian spendthrifts of his day, he died heavily in debt. Courtesy of WCHS.

offers a great chance to explore the external forces of Neoclassicism and the complex ways frontier cultural baggage melded to fit national demands within Evansham. Haller and his wife, Catherine Goerring's late Federal period home speaks to his wealth and participation within the greater Atlantic world. The first record of Dr. Haller in Wythe County is an account from Col. Robert Sayers' daybook in December 1806 for medical services. By 1809, Haller and his brother George owned a merchant store in Evansham. In 1815, John Haller returned to Pennsylvania and married Catherine Goerring, and by 1816 both resided together in Evansham. In 1823, Haller purchased the Rock House on Monroe Street which had originally been built and owned by German Adam

Saftley [Saufitley]. A two-story, five bay limestone-built house, it demonstrates the builder's efforts to combine the natural effects of indigenous limestone with the fine design of the late Federal and Neoclassical period—i.e., parallel, chimneys on both sides, rectangular, double pile central passage floor plan, identical sized rooms on each side of the staircase, and symmetrically balanced window and door placement (**Figure 53**).¹¹⁰

Further investigation into Haller's daily life confirms his level of education and his status in society. Yet, of the 250 pages of his 1815-1830 ledger, two pages reveal the hidden, cultural baggage Haller brought with him to Evansham, as evidenced by his practice of Gothic-calligraphic handwriting (**Figure 54**). In addition, a look at Haller's decorative arts and furnishings built by a local artisan similarly demonstrate more hidden mediums of cultural expression. Cabinetmaker Jacob Fisher, along with several neighbors from York, PA, migrated around the same time as the Hallers. Fisher's business engagements within the county consisted mostly of house joinery work and small furniture. He is documented in Andrew Kincannon's account book as a debtor in 1809 to 1817, where Fisher's account is credited for making two cradles.¹¹¹ Nowhere is Fisher more noticeably documented, however, than Dr. Haller's daybook. While a resident of Evansham, Fisher performed tasks such as "coopering," and "cutting out a place for chimney and hearth." Yet, his most intriguing work is documented on June 1815 when Fisher is recorded making several items for the Hallers, ranging from furniture to domestic items (**Figure 55**).¹¹² One marzipan rolling pin Haller paid his Pennsylvania neighbor to make is inscribed with both familiar and newly introduced German motifs. The commonplace flora and dove stick out on several sides of the pin. Other sides of the pin consist of the stag, medieval castle, and fruit basket motifs, which are rare

¹¹⁰ Kegley, *Early Adventurers in the Town of Evansham*, 154-159.

¹¹¹ "Account of Jacob Fisher, 1809-1817," *Andrew Kincannon Account Book* (Williamsburg, VA: Earl Gregg Swem Library, Special Collections, College of William & Mary): 8.

¹¹² "Payments to Jacob Fisher, June 11, 1815," *Dr. John Haller Account Book, 1815-1830* (Wytheville: VA, Wytheville Culture Preservation Center): 414.

motifs used by Wythe’s German artisans. Also an 1831 and ca.1830 butter stamp and mold compare greatly to Fisher’ rolling pin. As consumers arrived in Evansham for sundry goods such as butter, German families could easily use these decorative stamps—this one with Germanic motifs of the heart, five point star, vine and leaves—to make their products seem more attractive to customers while illustrating the cultural association of the producer. As major exported commodity, butter produced within southwest Virginia could be sold either individually in market towns or sold to local merchants. Robert Kent, for instance, is frequent purchaser of butter from Wythe’s German residents, as evidenced by his merchant store’s account book. Afterward, Kent could then sell the butter to eastern towns.¹¹³

Fisher still was refined enough to know modern tastes and designs in furniture as seen in one of the two “half round tables” adorned with downward spiral, neoclassical inspired leg turnings



Figure 54: Title Heads from three pages of Dr. John Haller’s Account Book (1815-1830), Signifies that even a successful, Refined Physician Retains the Complex Cultural Baggage of the Greater-Wythe Area, Notice the Holographic, Gothic Style Lettering written by Dr. Haller

¹¹³ “1835 Accounts within Wythe Court House,” *Robert Kent Store Account Book, 1830-1841* (Wytheville, VA: Wytheville Culture Preservation Center).



Figure 55: The Material World of Dr. John Haller: Account from Haller DB, 1815-1830, Haller family tin cookie cutters, half-side table with spiral turnings, dough pin with each side showing motifs.



Figure 56: Wythe Butter Stamp and Folk Mold, Courtesy of Case Antiques.

Dr. Haller's material culture world may have been more hidden and private, yet, cultural heritage and tradition is visible in more public social events seen through some eyewitness accounts. Few travel accounts narrate the sociocultural world of early southwest Virginia communities better than those recorded by John Francis Hamtramck Claiborne. A resident of Natchez, Mississippi, Claiborne arrived to Wythe County on May 3, 1826, to study law with General Alexander Smyth; War of 1812 veteran, US Congressman, and Virginia Delegate. Smyth actively published in newspapers across the nation to solicit young, aspiring lawyers of his intent to "open a law school at Wythe Court House," where he promised students a license within six months if they sought his services.¹¹⁴ Two days after Claiborne's arrival he wrote to Judge W.G. Moore of Alabama:

The population is principally German, and it is about equal to the State of Buncombe in N.Carolina. I saw one fellow jump up on the Court house steps, flap his arms like wings and crow like a rooster. He swore he could whip any chicken on the dunghill without gaffs, for a pint of whiskey. Gallanting some girls to meeting & complaining of a sick stomach, one of them whips out a tickler of Apple brandy and by of recommending it, took a hearty pull herself. The girls here walk four or five miles to preaching, and tho' they generally have shoes, never put them on til they approach the tabernacle. When they come to a stream, they have nothing to do but to raise their petticoats above their ancles, and wade over. Many a pretty maid has toated me across a creek, rather than put me to the trouble of pulling off my boots. They ride with a great deal of grace, but not onside-saddles as ladies usually do.

Claiborne was taken aback by Wythe's German residents' suppose lack of 'grace.' In a world where refinement was a public affair, violation of patriarchal gendered norms likely made Claiborne think less of the town's residents. Nevertheless, later that evening he attended a "pealing frolic," and his account of the evening's events evidently made him rethink his past judgments the people, as he would later write in September that "Indeed Va has always been my asylum—my refuge in the hour of distress." He continued with his May 4th narrative:

The young people all assemble in a large room, where there is an immense heap of apples to be prepared for slices. A large brown mug, with burnt toast swimming on its surface goes merrily round, and jokes & laughter closely persue it. After five o'clock, after a hearty dinner on saur Krut and Pork, soup made of roasted flower & salt, noodle, broadwarsht made of liver, lights & heart of a hog; apple butter, lotwaneck, and Schmeakeise mixed and spread on large slices of white bread, we arranged ourselves for the dance. At length the fiddler came with his odd three stringed instrument, and the call was loud for "Possum up the gum tree"...I was excused from dancing as I had stumped my toe in walking across the floor, but unwilling to be a passive spectator, I seized upon a brass kettle, and gave them what they had never heard before—a little of the triangle. This is to go then with the fiddle & dulcimer made a very respectable orchestra...The young fellows exerted themselves anew, and the perspiration was pouring from the rosy

¹¹⁴ Alexander Smyth, "Advertisements," *United States' Telegraph*, May 27, 1826.

cheeks of the girls. Very few handkerchiefs—and some forgetting the length of their white aprons, would raise their gowns a little too high. This accident frequently happened, but whether it was a cunning artifice in the girls to shew their beautiful ancles older connoisseurs must judge. A general hilarity was now diffused over the company, and the reel being ended, two of the best dancers.¹¹⁵

Claiborne's reports on Evansham are reflective of two important sociocultural realities of the day: 1) the difficulty for an established, refined, law student as himself to negotiate politeness—participate in some capacity in the Virginians social affairs—within what he obviously saw as violations of social-gendered norms, and 2) provides the historian with a rare view into the social world of a people and how their cultural traditions manifest over time. Claiborne's account also makes a rare historical observation of the use of the dulcimer: a long, hollow neckless wooden soundbox—with curved or straight sides—multiple wire strings, and wire frets laid out to play the diatonic music scale (**Figure 57**). As an extension of an Old World tradition that arrived via the Great Road, the dulcimer came to North America with eighteenth-century German immigrants, primarily through the ports of Baltimore and Philadelphia.¹¹⁶ Roddy Moore and Vaughn Webb have recently found a direct correlation between German settlements in America to the presence, construction, and dissemination of dulcimers. Over several years Webb and Moore examined will books across the eastern seaboard. During their search, they found the earliest and only historical documentation of a dulcimer maker being Jacob Hanshew, a German gunsmith of Wythe (today Bland) County, based on his 1834 estate's inclusion of "1 set of dulcimer tools."¹¹⁷ Further examination into the estates of other Wythe Germans revealed several dulcimer owners, including: carpenters and possible blanket chest makers Gideon Huddle, Jacob Spangler, John Huddle, Peter Huddle, Gideon Huddle, local potter Felix and Abraham Buck, in addition to eminent tavern keeper and waggonmaker, Frederick

¹¹⁵ "Extracts from Letters and Desultory Compositions," *J.F.H. Claiborne Papers*, vol.4 #151 (Chapel Hill: Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill).

¹¹⁶ The Dulcimer was also played in Norway, Sweden, Holland, France, Denmark, and Iceland.

¹¹⁷ Roddy Moore and Vaughn Webb, "The Virginia Dulcimer," *The Magazine Antiques* (July/ August 2013), <http://www.themagazineantiques.com/articles/the-virginia-dulcimer/>

Cullop of today-Smyth County. From 1820 to 1850, however, as seen in Claiborne's accounts as well, non-German populations in America slowly grew to appreciate the use and sound provided by the dulcimer. This fact is evidenced by Moore and Webb's identification of over two-thirds of dulcimer owners past 1840 being of British ancestry. In construction, decoration—often including the ubiquitous vine, leaf, and Germanic tulip motifs—and origins, the dulcimer proved to be a distinctly German instrument used within the age of refinement and neoclassicism as an emblem of social as well as cultural status. Hybridization did occur with dulcimers as they eventually had the non-German alteration of a raised fret board, yet remained almost entirely Germanic in its origins. Thanks to those German artisans, this sociocultural resource was readily available throughout early America.



Figure 57: Early Dulcimers of Southwest Virginia, 1) 1897, Jacob Michael Neff, Wythe Co., 2) 1825, John Scales Jr., Floyd, Co., 3)1900, Lee Co., Courtesy of Roddy Moore

A prosperous furniture empire was born in 1830 when artisans Fleming K. Rich (1806-1861) and German Thomas R. Moyers (1786-1843) united their talents as cabinet makers and businessmen. In the late 1820s, Fleming Rich moved to Wytheville, married Ann Catherine Moyers, and worked in his father-in-law's cabinetmaking shop. The firm of Moyers and Rich expanded their trade to include manufacture of beds, repair of furniture, wardrobes, sofas, signboards, coffins, and musical instruments as well as a delivery service offering

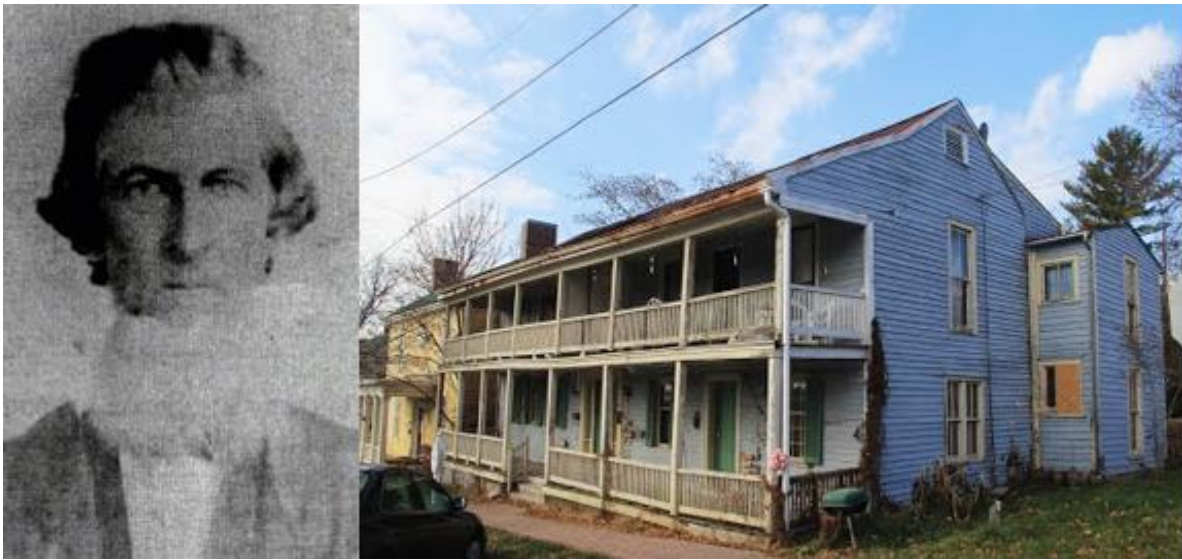


Figure 58: The House, Shop and Store of Fleming K. Rich, Main Street, Wytheville, VA, Photo Courtesy of Michael Gillman and WCHS

transportation of goods throughout southwest Virginia also enabled Moyers and Rich to prosper.

Moyers & Rich's owning and using their own wagons facilitated long-distance individual client and wood supplier contracts with other Great Road communities. This is evidenced by a February 1832 letter from Burkes Garden (Tazewell County) by German carpenter Peter Gose who indicated to the cabinetmakers his sending of "about 300 feet of plank." Gose then requested post script in the same letter for Moyers and Rich to make him a candle stand as credit to their account if they "take [his] plank."¹¹⁸ As their business expanded local residents began to request Moyers & Rich's wagon delivery service for their own individual uses. One client wrote to them in 1835 who wished to have them "deliver to Mr. Spiller 200lb of lead."¹¹⁹ Shrewd merchants, Moyers and Rich also offered funeral services to complement their fine, often lined, coffins. Moyers and Rich's shop received such regional acclaim that by 1840 individuals on the east coast of Virginia requested them specific pieces of furniture. In 1841 Rich responded to

¹¹⁸ "Letter from Peter Gose to Fleming Rich and Tho. Moyers, February 1832," *Rich Family Papers*, Folder 1:1, Correspondence, 1832-1839 (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wytheville Community College).

¹¹⁹ "Letter from William Barringer to Thomas Moyers, May 15, 1835," *Rich Family Papers*, Folder 1:1, Correspondence, 1832-1839 (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wytheville Community College).

John H. Allen of Richmond, VA a list of furniture he could provide and each one's quoted prices **(Figure 59)**.

Within town the apprenticeship system revolved primarily around advertisement or via assignees of the county court. This system of apprenticeship assignments differed from those seen within families craft dynasties. In early America if a girl or boy loses their father before their 16th birthday, the court legally considered them an orphan. Afterward, the county's Overseers of the Poor and Orphaned received that child's case and then found a local resident to bind the child to work as an apprentice for a certain number of years. In urban market centers like Evansham artisans played an important role in teaching orphaned children a specific trade to learn. In 1835 and 1836 Rich purchased two adjoining lots where his home and furniture business operated **(Figure 58)**. Customers entering into the lower level's east end would be introduced to the display room that showed off premade pieces of furniture made by Moyers and Rich. The second floor of the house and shop construct served as the quarters for apprentices. At one point it is estimated the structure held twenty-five rooms for apprentices.¹²⁰ Within ten years, Rich had enough apprentices, suppliers and local partners to be considered a contemporary small furniture factory.¹²¹

¹²⁰ Kegley, "Seven Log Houses on East Main Street," *Wythe County Historical Review*, 54 (July 1998): 4.

¹²¹ Moore, "Wythe County Punched Tin: Its Influences and Imitators," 604-605; also see Jay and Patty Gray, "Legacy from our German Ancestors: A Brief Survey of their Work in Furniture and Fraktur," *Wythe County Historical Review*, 29 (1986): 1-6.



Figure 59: Rich Bros. Wall Clock with Inserted Looking Glass, Fleming Rich's Quote of Prices to Customer in Richmond, VA, ca.1835-40, Wythe County, VA, Photo by Author, Courtesy of James Spraker.

The Rich shop's rapid growth was within the context of a global appreciation in refined consumer goods and buildings, fueled originally by neoclassical consumer demands. One item attributed to Rich demonstrates not only the master of his craft but also his awareness of regional and national consumer trends in neoclassical America. One wall clock is particularly reflective of how American nationalism attached to the neoclassical aesthetic (**Figure 59**). In choosing dark and bold colored mahogany and maple wood, Rich was able to accentuate some of the clock's neoclassical features. Rich was well aware of Greek column orders as exhibited by the flanking Doric columns with fluting and reeding on each side that encompass the inserted looking glass. His painting skill is also exhibited on this item. The applied bottom image of, likely, George

Washington's Mount Vernon is reflective of early America's attachment to the neoclassical style as representative of American republicanism.



Figure 60: Example of Wythe Punched-Tin and Built-In Pantry from House in Rural Retreat, VA, ca.1830, today only remnants of its tins exist, Photo by Author.

As early as 1830, the Rich shop began to produce a large number of punched-tin pie safes (**Figure 61 & 62**). Some have suggested that the shop sold over 300 safes from 1830 to 1840 alone. Typically constructed of walnut, cherry, or poplar with and without drawers, these safes had sheets of tin nailed to the outside or inside of the doors. As a late neoclassical product, the pie safe is a complex furniture piece that holds hidden and projecting features of cultural hybridity. While some cabinetmakers at this time simply made repeating holes punched into the tins, Wythe County safes with tin all received a design reflective of the German artisan either teaching the motif or decorating himself. Within the Moyers & Rich (after Moyers' death known as Rich & Co.) shop Fleming Rich's half-brother and town cooper-smith, Nimrod Rich likely did the majority of the tin work. Within the 1820 Census of

Manufacturers, Nimrod Rich is listed as an owner of a "Cooper factory" within Wythe Court House with two men employed and making primarily stills and kettles to the value of \$2,000 annually.¹²² While the census record indicates that Rich's business was not "carried on as well...the Demand not being as great as usual," it is likely Rich faced fierce competition within town from other tradesmen.¹²³ Nearby, German tinsmith William A. Philips [Phipps] absorbed

¹²² Even though the county seat was named Evansham and Wytheville by 1839, many letters and pieces of mail still referred to the town as Wythe Court House up to 1900.

¹²³ 1820 Census of Manufacturers, Wythe County, VA, Microfilm no.279, roll no.18, item no.258.

the majority of town customers, averaging \$15,000 a year, while James Fuller's smaller tinsmith establishment brought in a meager \$300 annually. Soon after Fleming Rich and Thomas Moyers' business merger, Nimrod united his talents with the new furniture business and founded a tinsmithing shop alongside. It appears Nimrod continued to make stills and kettles on the side, however, as evidenced by an 1839 letter from Tazewell County resident, William Dills who wondered if Rich "had any stills made by [him] or...whether you could make one."¹²⁴ Nevertheless, once Nimrod began working with his half-brother his chief production was sets of punched tins. Cabinetmakers throughout the county and the Great Road could purchase these sets of tin and then place them directly onto their furniture or within architectural features (**Figure 60**). Fleming Rich's brother-in-law George W. Moyers in Grainger County, Tennessee, for instance, ordered in 1841 thirty-five sets of tins for his safes¹²⁵

Wythe pie safes stand as a hybridized form of decorative furnishings. They demonstrate the craftsman's knowledge and awareness of modern day styles, while indicative of the cabinetmaker's cultural baggage (**Figure 61**). In the former, the majority of these safes show a great appreciation to detail on Sheraton-style turnings. Sheraton styles represented popular furniture turnings during the latter part of the neoclassical movement (1800s-1820s). The styles typically emphasize twist turnings, spiral arms, and scalloped legs.¹²⁶ Other safes demonstrate leg turning features typically seen on Hepplewhite furnishings. Associated within the earlier neoclassical period (1790-1810), these pieces typically have squared, tapering legs. Yet, in construction and applied decorative aesthetic, these safes reveal a cultural lexicon representative of German influence. In construction these safes typically were fitted with shelves, all of which

¹²⁴ "Letter from William Dills to Nimrod Rich, September 6, 1839," *Rich Family Papers*, Folder 1:1, Correspondence, 1832-1839 (Wytheville, VA: Kegley Library at Wytheville Community College)

¹²⁵ Moore, "Wythe County, Virginia, Punched Tin: Its Influence and Imitators," *Magazine Antiques* (September 1984): 606-607.

¹²⁶ Comstock, 195-196.

constructed with the typical Germanic-inspired dovetail joinery. In addition, most safes were built from walnut, with poplar being the common secondary wood. Within their applied aesthetic decoration, the punched tin designs placed onto these safes could include a variety of motifs. Similar to the Huddle/ Spangler family blanket chests, the tulip and urn combination is the most common applied motif. The Germanic tulip's formation on these safes varied from a single tulip, two tulips, or a sunflower. Oftentimes the urn and tulip combination was accompanied by other common Wythe-German motifs like stars, grapes, and diamonds. One extant safe even includes the fylfot, a motif used heavily within the German-Lutheran cemetery of Sharon in Ceres (**Figure 62**). This active and intentional choice to add German-inspired motifs to these safes reflects the subtle, hidden ways cultural memory and baggage penetrated



the realm of public, refined expression. The Rich shop provided in their select pieces of furnishings a means to remember the county's cultural heritage, while simultaneously providing refined furnishings.

Figure 61: Rich Shop Pie Safes, Wythe County, VA, ca. 1830-1880



Figure 62: Side View of Wythe Pie Safe, Tombstone from Sharon Lutheran Cemetery (Ceres, VA), Courtesy Green Valley Auctions and (left) Photo by Author.

The process of modernization in Wythe County was greatly facilitated by its location along the Great Road into Kentucky and southeast Tennessee. Yet, as this chapter has shown, growth and development was the result of both external and internal pushes. Eastern rural communities and merchants first reaped the business opportunities, knowledge, and skills that migrants and entrepreneurs brought into southwest Virginia from Philadelphia, Baltimore, Winchester, Richmond, and Lynchburg. Their artisans used their local, culturally-constructed traditions in craftsmanship and design to their advantage. By demonstrating their awareness of

national, contemporary consumer trends brought on by the age of neoclascism, German artisans obtained lucrative contracts with some of the areas most established elite families. While the products these craftsmen produced personified their own ability to achieve a state of “vernacular gentility,” they also spoke to the ability of hybridizing cultural elements and regional, idiosyncratic innovations.

The growth and development of Evansham similarly reflected Wythe County’s inclusion in the national economy and international pursuit of a better quality of living. Newly arrived or established Germans from Wythe’s western end played a significant role in the shaping Evansham’s consumer market. They provided travelers with shops for repairs and travelling goods, while offering local residents luxury decorative arts and furnishings reflective of the national lexicon of the early American republic, wrapped within the rhetoric and symbolism of neoclassical design. As artisan businesses quickly grew and specialized, more long distance trade connections were established more west into Virginia and south into Tennessee. As wagons left Evansham filled with punched tin sets, chairs, hides, clocks, and custom made rifles, so too did they accompany the material culture lexicon that their German artisans imbedded within them. This comparatively small hub of southwest Virginia by 1840 was entirely incorporated within the national economy, or as historian Anne Smart Martin phrases the “World of Goods,” yet not at the expense of their own locally established cultural traditions.

Epilogue & Conclusion

Returning to Western Wythe

We remained all day and night and the following day (Sunday) at Straw's a German. I found him obliging and intelligent. His father purchased the estate, at the close of the revolutionary war, at one to three dollars per acre. It is becoming poor, comparatively, but would bring ten to eighteen dollars. No new settlers come into this part of the country; but any land, offered for sale, is taken up by the neighbours, who are compelled either to buy more land, or cut down their woods, or adopt a system of improvement, in order to keep up their stock, their old lands, under the improvement system of cultivation, hitherto common in Virginia, becoming every year less productive...but they are evidently beginning to feel the inconveniences which drove their fathers further west; and will probably, gradually imitate their example, in spite of their old steady German habits.

-Adam Hodgson, 1824¹²⁷

North up the old stage road—today, Route 11, south of I-81—off Black Lick and then Brushy Mountain Rd., sits an old I-frame house and farm complex. Today owned by a retired Wythe County minister and his wife, the main house sits high up on a hill that forms the bottom base of Brushy Mountain within Rural Retreat's Black Lick district (**Figure 63**). Previous owners of the house indicated in 1986 that the house's original builder and residents were from the Ward family. The Ward family name's presence within Wythe County dates back to when the region was still considered a part of Fincastle and Montgomery County. German-descendant, John Ward arrived to the Black Lick community from Augusta County, VA in 1773, at which time he also purchased 347 acres of land. Ward served in the Revolutionary War and by 1784 had obtained the rank of Captain. John's son William established himself at his father's homeplace on Black Lick, where he made five surveys amounting to 452 acres of land. Over time, Ward descendants solidified their prominence as large landholders, farmers, inn keepers, and tradesmen of western Wythe County.¹²⁸

¹²⁷ Hodgson, 294-295.

¹²⁸ Kegley, *Early Adventurers*, vol.5, 602-608.



Figure 63: Aerial View of the Ward Farm and House, Black Lick Community of Rural Retreat, VA, Courtesy of Google Earth.

The Ward house off Brushy Mountain Rd was originally built around the 1820s as a two-room and two-floor, double pile, hall and parlor log house. Likely, the house would have been weatherboarded with wood planks shortly after its construction to protect its exposed log beams. Just around 1865 the house was sold to Cpt. Eli Davis. To add additional rooms and a separate kitchen, Davis incorporated an additional two-floor hall and parlor to the back of house around the same time.¹²⁹ It is within the house's original, two-floor construction, however, that reveals striking material culture evidence of the area's historical, cultural legacy. The inside's woodwork is an outstanding example of superior craftsmanship and quintessential use of neoclassical features of the day: hand-carved curly maple paneling and wainscoting, grain painted, mortised and paneled fireplaces, and raised panels throughout the house run across the sides. The downstairs primary hearth and mantle is carved in basic Doric order columns and are topped, in lieu of an entablature, with stretched, oval whorls (**Figure 64**). As a neoclassical motif in early American furnishings and

¹²⁹ "Wythe County, VA House, ca.1800, Owner Submitted Photos and Provenance, November 18, 1986," MESDA file, Photo #: NN-373: Architecture & Woodwork, Wythe County, Virginia; the owners in 1986 believed the house to be built just near 1800, yet I believe after preliminary survey work of the site that the house was likely erected between 1820-1830, as is the case with other more permanent, extant log structures throughout southwest Virginia.

architecture whorls were commonly used with particularly Windsor chairs as accents to each one's top right and left corners. In place of the more Georgian influenced pediment, an additional, enlarged, and horizontally flipped whorl accentuates the upper row of the fireplace's mantel.¹³⁰



Figure 64: Main Fireplace and Mantel of Ward House, Photo by Author.

To the left of the fireplace is an entrance into the house's kitchen, and to the left of that entrance is a half attic entrance. The short steps leading up to this half attic are shadowed along the staircase line with neoclassical inspired motifs of half-rising suns, resembling a Roman-Greco spa (**Figure 65**). Throughout the first floor, the paneling's curly maple wood finish

¹³⁰ L.G.G. Ramsey, ed., *The Complete Encyclopedia of Antiques* (New York: Hawthorn Books, Inc., 1st ed. 1962, 2nd reprint, 1965): 376.



Figure 65: Entrance to Half-Attic and Descending row of Half-Rising Suns or Quarter Fans, Photos by Author.

is left exposed with only grain painting to accentuate the wood's natural pores and grooving. A series of four side-by-side, built-in cabinets sit alongside the east end of the same room. Rather a built-in cupboard, the builder decided to use cabinets to properly store away his private possessions. Similar to the fireplace mantel, each top left and right corners of entryways, cabinets, or break from a particular room, includes two whorls. Unlike the fireplace's whorls, however, these cut-in motifs are more regularly shaped in their circular pattern (**Figure 66**).



Figure 66: Example of Whorls used in Cabinets and Entryways Downstairs and Fireplace Mantle in Bedroom Directly Above, Photo by Author.

While all the above mentioned architectural features illustrate the house builder's knowledge and proper use of modern, neoclassic inspired designs, a stark juxtaposition is also present within the house's interior. Following the wainscoting along the house is a continuous, or no more than temporarily broken, stream of cut-in motifs that contrast from others already mentioned. Along these rows is a consistent ratio of three flower leaves to one eight pointed star. When compared to other material mediums produced within Wythe County from 1780 to the 1830s, these motifs do not follow any of the classical features used by builders and craftsmen. Instead, the leaves are characteristic of those from the often depicted, Germanic-influenced tulip motif seen on pie safes, blanket chests, and Fraktur. The eight-pointed star, also a common German-inspired embellishment, can be witnessed on gravestones located just two miles down the road from the Ward house at Kimberling Lutheran Church, or in receipts of payments to stonecutters. In addition, rather than use any type of metal ware, the house's interior includes small, wooden pins—a construction technique typically used by German cabinetmakers and joiners. The inclusion of these pins likely indicates places where the craftsmen struggled to keep more troublesome cuts of maple to stay secured to the wall's plastering (**Figure 67**).





Figure 67: Detail of Germanic Features and Motifs within Ward House's Interior, (Top)
Photo by Author and (Bottom) Courtesy of MESDA.

If vernacular architecture can be read like a historical document, the Ward house then exemplifies a palimpsest of different languages and associations. On the one hand, the house's floor plan is consistent with the pervasiveness of Virginia I-frame houses constructed throughout the Valley and southwest Virginia. Additionally, all of the house's interior wood work paneling and corner embellishments speak to the neoclassic-inspired individual's quest for refinement in early America. Simultaneously, however, the inclusion of familiar Germanic motifs within the interior's wood framework indicates a manifestation of cultural heritage and identity that is not understandable without historical context. Socioeconomic achievements and affluence did not absorb, or acculturate, German-American identity, rather it hybridized. The Ward offspring who built this house provided an unspoken statement of German-American cultural association in face of neoclassicism, a catalyst of change that effected nearly every aspect of American material culture until the 1830s.

Similar to the world of Dr. John Haller of Evansham, the Ward house is an example of the oftentimes hidden ways cultural association traits penetrate the ethos of individuals across generations. Within the heartland of the earliest Wythe German settlements, this cultural lexicon

reestablished through the facilitation of its church congregations, congregants, and ministers. Yet, even before those religious foundations solidified, German artisans were the first source of cultural remembrance and soon after cultural association. These Germans on the western waters demonstrated from 1780 to 1830 an ability to accommodate or renegotiate their trades to participate within the county, the Great Road, and, thus, the national economy, without eliminating their cultural identity. Whether witnessed through structures like the Pennsylvania-cantilever bank barn, decorative artwork applied in Fraktur, the construction techniques and designs on blanket chests, the regionally renowned styles imbedded onto punched-tin pie safes, or even on their decorative gravestones, German-American cultural hybridization defined the skill and finesse of these craftsmen who would call Wythe County, VA their home.

Appendix A

Definitions of Craftsmen and Terms^I

Artisan, Craftsmen, Mechanic, or Tradesman: 1. A person skilled in an applied art; a craftsperson, 2. A person or company that makes a high quality or distinctive product in small quantities, usually by hand or using traditional methods. The contemporary distinction between these four terms is minimal at most. Ian M.G. Quimby has said this was a person within a “preindustrial society...who possessed specialized skills that set him/ her apart from a common laborer.” Nevertheless, historians have had differing opinions in which terms should be used within certain contexts. As recent as 1985, historiographical consideration to this debate has shown an interchangeable use of these four terms within historical discussions. Thomas J. Scherelth has illustrated a suggestion by some historians of a progression that would accord *artisan* more popularity in the seventeenth and eighteenth-centuries, also *craftsmen* becoming vogue, while *mechanic* gained more ascendancy in the late eighteenth and nineteenth-centuries. Yet, Scherelth still sees a tentative consensus among contemporaries that the terms *artisan*, *craftsmen*, *mechanic*, or *tradesman* “are roughly synonymous.”^{II}

Blacksmith: 1. A person who makes horseshoes and shoes for horses, 2. A person who forges objects from iron or black metal, unlike whitesmiths.

Bricklayer: One who lays bricks in a building or structure.

Brickmaker: One who makes and produces bricks as his trade.

Cabinetmaker: A person whose business is to make cabinets and other fine kinds of joinery, furniture or woodwork.

Carpenter: A person who builds or repairs wooden structures, such as houses, scaffolds or shelving, 2. An artificer of wood who does the heavier and stronger work in wood.

Clothier: 1. A person who makes or sells clothing, 2. One who performs the operations subsequent to weaving, 3. A maker of woolen cloth.

Cooper: A craftsmen who makes or repairs casks, barrels, staves, buckets, tub, etc.

Currier: A craftsmen who treats tanned leather, especially by incorporating oil or grease.

Gunsmith: A person, who designs, makes or repairs guns, rifles or small firearms.

Hatter: A maker or dealer of fine hats and caps.

Joiner: A craftsmen whose occupation who constructs things by joining pieces of wood; a worker in wood who does more lighter and more ornamental work than that of a carpenter, such as the construction of the furniture and fittings of a house, ship or other wooden structures.

Lathe: A machine for use in working wood, metal, bone, etc., that holds the material and rotates it about a horizontal axis against a tool that shapes it.

Mason: 1. A skilled worker who builds by laying units of substantial material (i.e. brick, stone), 2. A workman who dresses or lays stone or brick in a building, or one who can quarry and dress stones in preparation for a burial site.

^I The structure and formatting of these appendices are modeled from Lewis' *Artisans in the North Carolina Backcountry* (1995): 139-154; most definitions provided by Merriam-Webster Dictionary.

^{II} Quimby, ed., 5, 37.

Miller: A person who works in or is in charge of a flour mill or other water-powered, processing mill; differs from a millwright, charged with building mills.

Milliner: 1. A vendor of fancy 'wares' and articles of apparel, 2. A person who designs, makes, trims, or sells women's hats.

Millwright: A person who designs, erects and/or builds mills and mill machinery, 2. A person or repairs or maintains machinery in a water-powered mill.

Painter: One who applies, mixes, prepares and/or applies paint as an occupation.

Potter: A maker of pots or vessels from earthenware or stoneware materials.

Saddler: One who makes, repairs or deals in leather saddles or saddlery

Saddletree: The framework which forms the foundation of a leather saddle; sometimes specialized in the creation of by specific craftsmen.

Seamstress: 1. A woman who seams or sews, 2. A needlewoman whose occupation is plain sewing as distinguished from dress or mantle-making, decorative embroidery, etc.

Shoemaker: One whose trade it is to make or repair shoes.

Silversmith: A person whose occupation is making or repairing articles of silver, sometimes gold as well.

Spinster: 1. A woman (also rarely a male) who spins, esp. one who practices spinning as an occupation, 2. Appended to women originally to denote their occupation, but after the 17th-century used as a pejorative for unmarried women.

Tailor: A person whose occupation is the mending, making or altering articles of clothing; especially suits, coats and other outer garments.

Tanner: One whose occupation is to tan hides or convert them into leather by tanning.

Tinner: A person who makes or repairs tinware or items of other lighter metals; a tinsmith, tin-platter, tinman.

Turner: One who turns or fashions objects of wood, metal, bone, etc. on a lathe;

Waggonmaker: One who builds or repairs four-wheeled vehicles designed for the transport of heavy goods.

Weaver: A gender neutral term to describe someone who weaves articles as an occupation.

Wheelwright: A person whose trade it is to make or repair wheels, wheeled carriages or wagons.

Whitesmith: 1. A worker in "white iron" ; a tinsmith, 2. One who polishes or finishes metal goods, as distinguished from one who forges them.

Wicar: 1. A maker of wicks for or maker of candles, 2. A maker of baskets.

Appendix B

Craftsmen of Wythe County, VA (1780s-1830s)^{III}

NAME	TRADE	LOCATION	YEARS ACTIVE	BIRTH-DEATH
Adley, Horatio	Hatter	Crockett, Wythe Co.	N/A-1817	N/A-N/A
Andrews [Andress, Andruss], Harvey	Tinner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-N/A
Armbrister, John	Tanner/ Currier	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1802-N/A	1779-1847
Armstrong, Benjamin D.	Cabinetmaker/ House Joiner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1819-1827	1800-N/A
Baxter, Septimus	Tinner	Evansham, Wythe Co./ Pulaski Co.	1820- 1870	1798-1870
Bayler, Harrison	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1813-N/A
Bevil, Benjamin	Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1840	N/A-N/A
Bowman, Esaias	Stonemason	Washington/ Wythe Co.	1810-1837	1794-1837
Brown [Braun], Daniel	Potter	Black Lick/ Speedwell, Wythe Co.	1822-1835	1813-1870s
Brown, William H.	Cabinetmaker	Evansham/ Kents Mill, Wythe Co.	1830-1870	1811-1893
Brunner [Prunner], William	Carpenter	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1818-1860	1794-1870s
Buck, Jacob	Waggonmaker	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1825-1870	1806-1870s
Buck, John	Potter	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1801-1870s
Buck, John [Johannes] Christian	Potter	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1796-1844	1769-1844
Buck, Joseph	Waggonmaker	Pine Glade, Wythe Co.	1825-1830	1803-1850
Cain, Eli	Potter	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1837-1850	1815-1850
Cain, Leonard	Potter	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1800-1814	1782-1842
Catron [Kettering], Elizabeth	Carpenter/ Day Laborer	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1803-1858
Catron [Kettering], Jacob	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1772-1821	1737-1821
Catron [Kettering], Jacob	Miller	Stage Road, Wythe Co.	1770-1821	N/A-N/A
Catron [Kettering], John Lawrence	Blacksmith	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1780-1820	1748-1820
Catron [Kettering], Michael	Weaver	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1775-1809	1737-1814
Cook, Clayton	Cabinetmaker/ Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1827-1860	1800-1863
Cooley, Joseph	Miller	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1818-1862	1793-1862
Cooley, Thaddeus	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1782-1814	1745-1814
Cowan [Cowin], Elizabeth	Weaver	East Wythe/ Pulaski Co.	1820-1870	1792-1870s
Cowan [Cowin], James	Shoemaker	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1810-1830	1781-1850
Cowan [Cowin], Mary 'Polly'	Weaver	Ft. Chiswell/ Locust Hill, Wythe Co.	1800-1819	1768-1819
Creager [Crigger], Benjamin	Chairmaker	Black Lick/ Evansham, Wythe Co.	1820-1878	1799-1878
Cress, Nicholas	Gunsmith	S. Fork of Holston, Wythe Co.	1790-1799	1762-1799
Crockett, Andrew	Blacksmith/ Gunsmith	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1780-1799	1745-1821

^{III} This also includes journeyman and itinerants who worked between county lines; the sources examined in the creation of this database are numerous and diverse in typology, thus, listing each one here would be impractical. I ask readers to consult the bibliography for a more particular examination of primary sources consulted. For now, it is sufficient to say that my sources included both published accounts (i.e., will books, court records, censuses, secondary literature) and unpublished manuscripts (i.e., account books and ledgers especially, private correspondence, invoices, receipts, bills, etc.).

Cullup, Frederick	Wagonmaker	Stone Tavern, Smyth Co.	1795-1825	1772-1825
Davis, Jacob	Carpenter	Speedwell, Wythe Co.	1790-1826	1758-1826
Davis, John	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1840	1765-1840s
Davis, John	Stonemason	N/A	1790-N/A	N/A-N/A
Dillman, Christopher	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	1760-1840
Dillman, William	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-1835
Dutting [Dutton], Elizabeth	Weaver	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-1840s
Dutting [Dutton], Peter	Blacksmith	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1815-1850	1795-1870
Early, John	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-1840s
Etter, Daniel	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1790-1803	N/A-1803
Etter, Henry	Hatter	N/A	1800-1806	1783-1856
Ewalt [Ewald], Anthony	Tanner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1827-1877	1806-1877
Ewalt [Ewald], Jacob	Whitesmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1872	1816-1872
Ewalt [Ewald], Stephen	Harnessmaker	Evansham/ Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1812-1880
Felty [Velte], Jacob	Blacksmith	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1810-N/A	1794-N/A
Felty [Velte], John	Cooper	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1810-1860	1790-1869
Felty [Velte], Peter	Carpenter	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1800-1820	1782-1820s
Felty [Velte], William	Wheelwright	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1868	1800-1860s
Fisher, Jacob	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1806-1835	1775-1852
Florh, George Daniel	Cabinetmaker/ Pastor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1826	1719-1826
Flemming, James	Wheelwright	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-N/A	N/A-N/A
Fox [Fuchs], Jacob W.	Blacksmith	N/A	1810-1860	N/A-1860s
Fuller, James	Tinsmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-N/A	N/A-N/A
Fuller, Thomas J.	Basketmaker	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1810-1850	1786-1870s
Gannaway, Isaac	House Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-N/A
Gillaspie, John	Tailor	Tazewell/ Wythe Co. Area	1820-1850	1803-1878
Glass, James	Hatter	N/A	1810-1840	1781-1847
Gray, William	Blacksmith	Washington Co.	1810-1830	1780-1846
Groseclose, Jacob	Miller	Ceres, Bland Co.	1820-1850	1791-1850
Gragg, Hugh	Silversmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1813-1830	1781-1850s
Green, Daniel	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1808-1816	1775-1816
Grubb [Grob], Henry [Heinrich]	Millwright	Ft. Chiswell/ Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1750-1835	1723-1807
Grubb [Grob], Lewis	Gunsmith	Tates Run, Wythe Co.	1815-1861	1776-1861
Hamilton, Gilbert	Tanner	N/A	1810-1820	N/A-N/A
Harkrader, Conrad	Waggonmaker	Cove Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1837	1745-1837
Harrell [Harril], Jacob	Stonemason	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1853	1778-1853
Harris, Nathaniel	Hatter	Evansham Wythe /Chilhowie, Smyth Co.	1820-1840	1801-1873
Helvey, Henry Sr.	Millwright	W. Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1780-1792	1744-1792
Hanshaw, Jacob	Gunsmith	Ceres, Bland Co.	1815-1833	1795-1833
Hoback, Jacob	Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1850	1797-1886
Hoback, William	Carpenter	Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1814	N/A-1814
Honaker [Honegger], Abraham	Gunsmith	Bland/ Pulaski/ Wythe Co.	1800-1860	1774-1869

Honaker [Honegger], Hans Jacob	Gunsmith	Draper, Pulaski/ Wythe Co.	1784-1795	1718-1796
Hoofnagle, Daniel	Cabinetmaker	Western Wythe/ Smyth Co.	1820-1882	1790-1882
Hoppess [Hoppas], Henry	Blacksmith	Carroll/ Wythe Co.	1820-1855	1798-1855
Horn, David J.	Tanner	Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1834	1760-1834
Huffard, Henry	Stonemason	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1850	1781-1850
Huddle [Hottel], David	Cabinetmaker	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1809-1887
Huddle [Brown], Elizabeth	Weaver	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1880	1806-1885
Huddle [Hottel], Gideon	Cabinetmaker/ Carpenter	Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1835	1770-1833
Huddle [Hottel], Henry	Carpenter/ Blacksmith	Kimberling, Wythe Co.	1820-1841	1768-1841
Huddle [Hottel], John, Jr.	Cabinetmaker	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1800-1829	1772-1830
Huddle [Hottel], John	Carpenter	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1797-1870s
Huddle [Hottel], Jonas	Carpenter/ <i>Scrivener</i> / Weaver	Kimberling, Wythe Co.	1825-1880	1806-1881
Huddle [Hottel], Sarah (Ann)	Weaver	Kimberling, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1793-1872
Jayne, Zopher	Blacksmith	N/A	1780-1790	N/A-1790
Johnson [Yonson], John L.	Waggonmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1825-1880	1808-1883
Johnston, John	Tailor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1860	1780-1860
Johnston, Robert	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1808-1850	1790-1850
Jonas, Daniel	Miller	Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1820-1860	1797-1869
Jones, Henry M.	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1860	1810-1860s
Kegley [Goeckel], George	Blacksmith /Wheelwright	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1840	1796-1871
Kegley [Goeckel], Martin	Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1813-1882
Kitts [Kitz] , Jacob	Miller	Ceres, Bland Co.	1820-1860	1794-1870
Kinder [Gunter], John	Tanner	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1800-1850	1779-1851
Kinder [Gunter], Peter	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1817-1830	N/A-N/A
Krone, Laurence	Stonemason	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1805-1836	N/A-1836
Lane, John	Waggonmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1807-1850s
Leath [Leathe], James	Harnessmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1783-1852
Lindenbarger, John L.	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1850	N/A-N/A
Lockett, Richard W.	Tanner	N/A	1820-1830	1794-1868
Love, William	Blacksmith	Speedwell, Wythe Co.	1790-1800	1772-1835
Maddox, John	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1835-1870	1823-1879
McHood, Alexander	Wheelwright	Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1795-1820	N/A-1840s
Miller, Jacob	Saddler	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1829-1860	1810-1864
Miller, Samuel	Blacksmith	Pulaski/ Wythe Co.	1829-1860	1810-1860s
Moore, Frederick	Potter	Crockett/ Cripple Creek, Wythe Co.	1775- 1795	N/A-N/A
Moyers, Jacob	Blacksmith	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1803-1870s
Moyers [Myers], John	Potter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1805-1820	1785-1862
Moyers, Jacob	Blacksmith	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1800-1872	1816-1872
Moyers [Moyer], Michael	Carpenter	Black Lick/ Evansham, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1799-1870s
Moyers [Myers], Peter	Potter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1814-1830	N/A-N/A
Moyers, Thomas R.	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1840	1786-1843
Musser, Adam	Wheelwright	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1800-1860	1780-1862

Musser, George	Wheelwright/ Turner	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1860	1805-1874
Myers, George	Blacksmith	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1820-N/A	N/A-N/A
Myers, Henry	Saddle Tree Maker	Black Lick, Wythe/ Smyth Co.	1820-1850	1773-1854
Myers, Jacob	Shoemaker	Ft. Chiswell	1820-1870	1803-1870
Myers, John	Potter	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1800-1840	1785-1862
Myers, Michael	Tailor	Speedwell, Wythe Co./ Smyth Co.	1820-1850	1803-1877
Neace [Neece], James	Blacksmith	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1880	1800-1880s
Neace [Neece], George	Carpenter	Rocky Gap, Bland Co.	1820-1870	1800-1870
Neff, John	Blacksmith	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1835-1850	1822-1895
Neighbors, Andrew J.	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1815-1850s
Neighbors, James	Cooper	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1869	1788-1869
Neighbors, Elizabeth A.	Weaver	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1813-1882
Nye, John P.	Saddler/ Tanner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1798-1826	1775-1826
Oury, Christopher	Tailor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1828	1778-1860s
Oury, George	Tailor	Evansham/ Foster Farms, Wythe Co.	1800-1820	1767-1828
Painter [Bender], Isabella	Seamstress	N/A	1830-1850	1798-N/A
Pardee, Philo	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1815-1820	1790-1821
Patterson, William	Tinner	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1830-1870	1796-1870s
Patterson, William Jr.	Wheelwright	Crockett's Cove, Wythe Co.	1790-1824	1760-1824
Peery, John	Silversmith	Montgomery/ Wythe/ Tazewell Co.'s	1786-1844	N/A-1844
Perrin, Nathaniel	Ropemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1820	N/A-N/A
Pickle, Henry	Tanner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1795-1820	N/A-1820s
Pickle, Philip	Tanner	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1850	1796-1870s
Pierce, David	Tanner	Poplar Camp, Wythe Co.	1800-1833	1756-1833
Phillips [Phipps], William A.	Tinsmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1825	N/A-N/A
Puckett [Penkett], James	Chairmaker	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1790-1850
Rader [Roeter], Casper	Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1830	1780s-1830s
Rader [Roeter], John	Tailor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1839	1793-1839
Rakes, Levi	Gunsmith	N/A	1830-1840	N/A-N/A
Reddick, John	Gunsmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1818	N/A-1818
Reed, Elias M. D.	Painter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1828-1850	1799-1852
Rich, Fleming K.	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1861	1806-1861
Rich, Nimrod	Coopersmith/ Tinsmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1845	1790-1845
Rider, Henry	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1805-1850s
Rider, Isaac O.	Shoemaker/ Tailor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1862	1804-1862
Rider, John	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1830	1770-1839
Rider, William	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1867	1799-1877
Saftly, Adam	Tanner/ Currier	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1801-1830	N/A-N/A
Sayers [Sawyers], James	Blacksmith	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1809-1850	1790-1850s
Seacatt, Philip	Harnessmaker	Newbern, Pulaski/ Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1779-1859
Seagle [Siggle], Jacob F.	Tanner/ Currier	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1806-1822	1771-1822
Seagle [Siggle], James	Cabinetmaker	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1801-1881

Sehorn, Marion	Hatter	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1830-1900	1817-1901
Seavers [Sivers], John	Waggonmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1835	1795-1835
Seavers [Sivers], William	Waggonmaker	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1820-1860	1799-1869
Sexton, David	Tanner	Wytheville/ Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1830-1880	1810-1882
Sexton, John	Saddler	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1866	1811-1865
Sexton, Joseph	Currier/ Saddler/ Tanner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1804-1829	1772-1829
Sexton, Zadock	Currier/ Saddler/ Tanner	Wythe/ Chatham Hill, Smyth Co.	1830-1880	1801-1883
Shaffer, J.G. Frederick	Potter	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1800-1810	1755-1855
Shaffer, Jacob	Gunsmith	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1802-1870	1783-1874
Sheffey, Daniel	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1795-1817	1770-1819
Shores, Christian	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1816-1835	1791-1835
Sikes, William M.	Stonemason	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1814-1820	N/A-N/A
Simmerman [Zimmerman], Mary "Polly"	Carpenter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1830-1841	1794-1850
Slack, Simon	Carpenter	Speedwell, Wythe. Co.	1830-1850	1781-1850s
Smith [Smyth], Larkin	House Painter	Black Lick/ Evansham, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1795-1870s
Smith [Smyth], Lasker	Windsor Chairmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-N/A	N/A-N/A
Snavelly, William	Miller	Western Wythe/ Smyth Co.	1825-1869	1807-1869
Spangler, Jacob	Carpenter	Ceres, Bland Co.	1780-1827	1756-1827
Spangler, Peter	Carpenter	Ceres, Bland Co.	1830-1860	1780-1860s
Sprinkle, William	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1852	1780-1852
Staley, Benjamin	Miller	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1810-1852	1793-1852
Stanger, Sylvester	Potter	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1830-1854	1807-1854
Steele, Arthur	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1840	N/A-N/A
Stockley, Nehemiah D.	Tailor	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1823-1840	N/A-N/A
Surratt, Leonard	Hammerman	Ft. Chiswell, Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1794-1850s
Tate, Richard	Hatter	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1811-1816	N/A-1816
Tobler, Jesse E.	Waggonmaker	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1830-1850	1813-1850
Toncray, James	Master Builder	East Evansham, Wythe Co.	1810-1838	1772-1838
Umberger, Henry	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1860	1783-1866
Umberger, John	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1800-1850	1782-1850
Umberger, Leonard	Blacksmith	Reed Creek, Wythe Co.	1810-1860	1782-1866
Utt, John W.	Carpenter	N/A	1820-1840	N/A-1849
Wampler, George	Miller & Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1804-1830	1757-1837
Weaver [Weber] George [Jorg]	Cabinetmaker	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1790-1842	1762-1842
White, Bloomer	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1830	N/A-N/A
White, George	Brickmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1830	N/A-N/A
Whitman, Henry	Saddler	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1800-1850	N/A-N/A
Whitsell [Wetzel], John F.	Tanner	Mt. Airy (Rural Retreat), Wythe Co.	1820-1841	1807-1841
Wilkinson, William	Ironmaster	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1850	1801-1880
Wills [Wells], Samuel H.	Cabinetmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1830	N/A-N/A
Williams, George W.	Carpenter/ House Joiner	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1804-1880
Williams, Isaac	Blacksmith	Speedwell/ Wytheville, Wythe Co.	1810-1870	1791-1871

Wilson, George M.	Brickmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1835	N/A-N/A
Wilson, William	Tanner	Black Lick/ Rural Retreat, Wythe Co.	1820-1870	1806-1894
Wolfenbarger, Benjamin	Wagonmaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1810-1815	N/A-N/A
Worley, Frederick	Wagonmaker	Cripple Creek, W-ythe Co.	1800-1810	1773-1845
Wirick [Wyrick], Samuel	Blacksmith	Black Lick, Wythe Co.	1825-1870	N/A-N/A
Yonce [Yont], John	Shoemaker	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1850	1798-1854
Yonce [Yont], Mary	Weaver	Evansham (Wytheville), Wythe Co.	1820-1840	1810-1880

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