The Smithfield Review

Studies in the history of the region west of the Blue Ridge

Volume IV, 2000

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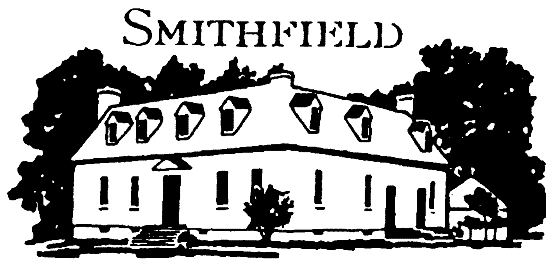

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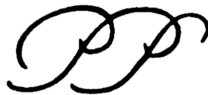

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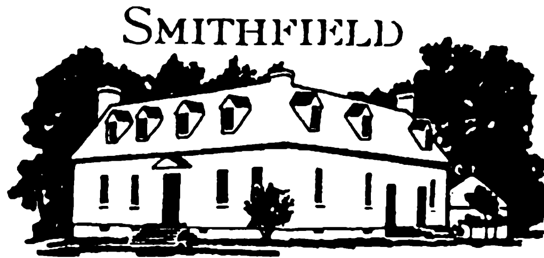

Smithfield is an historic property adjacent to the campus of Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University in Blacksburg, Virginia. The manor house, constructed around 1774 on the frontier, is a premier example of early American architecture and is one of few such regional structures of that period to survive. It was the last home of Colonel William Preston, a noted surveyor and developer of western lands, who served as an important colonial and Revolutionary War leader. Today, Smithfield is a museum that is interpreted and administered by a local group of volunteers.

In 1997 *The Smithfield Review* was founded with the purpose of helping to preserve the often neglected history of the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in Virginia and adjacent states. We seek articles about important personages and events, reports of archaeological discoveries, and analyses of the social, political, and architectural history of the region. Whenever possible and appropriate, the articles will incorporate letters, speeches, and other primary documents that convey to the reader a direct sense of the past.

A Note from the Editors

The choices made by individuals and societal institutions prior to the Civil War had enormous, and often horrendous, consequences. As one of our articles points out, thirty years before the war, the Virginia legislature debated a bill that would eliminate slavery in Virginia. William Ballard Preston, a Delegate and third generation owner of Smithfield, urged the legislature to remove "the curse of slavery ... because it is subversive of the well being of society... ." The Virginia legislature, however, chose to ignore the warning and to keep slavery. Thirty-five years later, Virginia was divided into two states, its economy shattered, and many of its citizens maimed or killed. The first four articles of this volume of *The Smithfield Review* examine other choices and consequences as western Virginians coped with various underlying issues of that tumultuous period. Two of them examine the crucial, but not well known, role that Appalachia played in Civil War politics. The other two articles are on a more personal level. They document the impact of the war on two white families and one black family as they tried to cope with the consequences of prior choices made by others. The fifth, and final, article provides a comprehensive overview of prehistoric southwest Virginia.

"Reconfiguring Virginia" examines the issues and events that led to the formation of the state of West Virginia by the northwestern counties of prewar Virginia. The citizens of those counties and their leaders possessed goals and held views that may be somewhat surprising to the reader. It is fascinating to observe how various points of view, when churned by the political process and solidified by war, produce results that may not have been foreseen or desired by a majority of citizens at an earlier time. It is also interesting to notice some very strange political alliances as strong-willed groups pressed their special agendas. The author, George Gilliam, a practicing attorney in Charlottesville, Virginia, is the producer and principal writer of Central Virginia's Public Television documentary series, "The Ground Beneath Our Feet: Virginia's History Since the Civil War." He has written several books and is a Ph.D. candidate in the Corcoran Department of History at the University of Virginia.

"Hickmans and Servants: Two Appalachian Families" tells the story of the relationship between a family of slaves and their masters' family. The story spans more than one hundred years and is told through excerpts from surviving letters and documents of the Hickman family of Bath County, Virginia — not a region that one normally associates with slavery. The family papers provide vivid documentation of how both struggling families coexisted. We find sobering accounts of the treatment of people as property. Yet, after the slaves were freed, the earlier personal ties and the necessities of daily life led to continued association for many years. The old Hickman documents were inherited by the author of the article, William Gabriel of Florence, Montana. Dr. Gabriel grew up in Virginia, graduated from Virginia Tech, and received his Ph.D. degree from the University of Montana.

"The Grinch That Stole Southern History: Anthem for an Appalachian Perspective" frames an alternative way of viewing the history of the South, one that emphasizes the decisive role played by Appalachia at various points in the past. Arguing that much of southern history can best be understood as a three-cornered struggle among blackbelt whites, blackbelt blacks, and the people of Appalachia, the author argues against what he calls a "plantation approach to southern history" (the "Grinch" of the essay's title), and more particularly a white plantation perspective. The author is Peter Wallenstein, who grew up in New Hampshire and earned his B.A. from Columbia University and Ph.D. from Johns Hopkins. For the past seventeen years, he has been on the faculty in the history department at Virginia Tech, where his courses have included Appalachian history, Virginia history, and the history of the South.

"Thomas Winton Fisher, Confederate Soldier and 19th Century Pilgrim from Wythe County, Virginia: Part 2" presents the concluding set of letters written by a farmer from Wytheville, Virginia. The letters were compiled from a variety of sources by Darlene Brown Simpson, his great-granddaughter. Fisher presents vivid accounts of the life of a Confederate soldier as he copes with battle, boredom, and unbelievable hardship. His writings provide us with insights into his innermost thoughts as he faces carnage in battle and eventual defeat after four years of service. Yet, he survives and returns home to pick up the remnants of his former life.

"Prehistoric Southwest Virginia: Aboriginal Occupation, Land Use, and Environmental Worldview" summarizes the archaeological evidence of native tribes in the region, assesses the impact of their use of the land on the environment, and reaches this conclusion:

> All of this behavior and its consequences stand in marked contrast to subsequent Euroamerican occupation. And while the fact of comparatively smaller Indian populations partially explains this contrast, the more profound basis for Indian behavior and attitude toward the environment lay in their view of the world and their concept of their own place in it.

The author is Will Sarvis of Eureka, California, who received the B.A. and M.A. degrees in history from Virginia Tech and did post-graduate work at the University of Virginia, University of Missouri-Columbia, and the Mandarin Training Center in Taiwan.

Because three of the five articles in this issue pertain in some way to slavery, the reader may find it helpful to read the Book Review first. Tom Costa of the University of Virginia's College at Wise provides an excellent review of Ira Berlin's *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America.*

The editors express gratitude to Robert E. Stephenson and Robert A. Paterson for their assistance in preparing this issue.

Hugh G. Campbell, Editor
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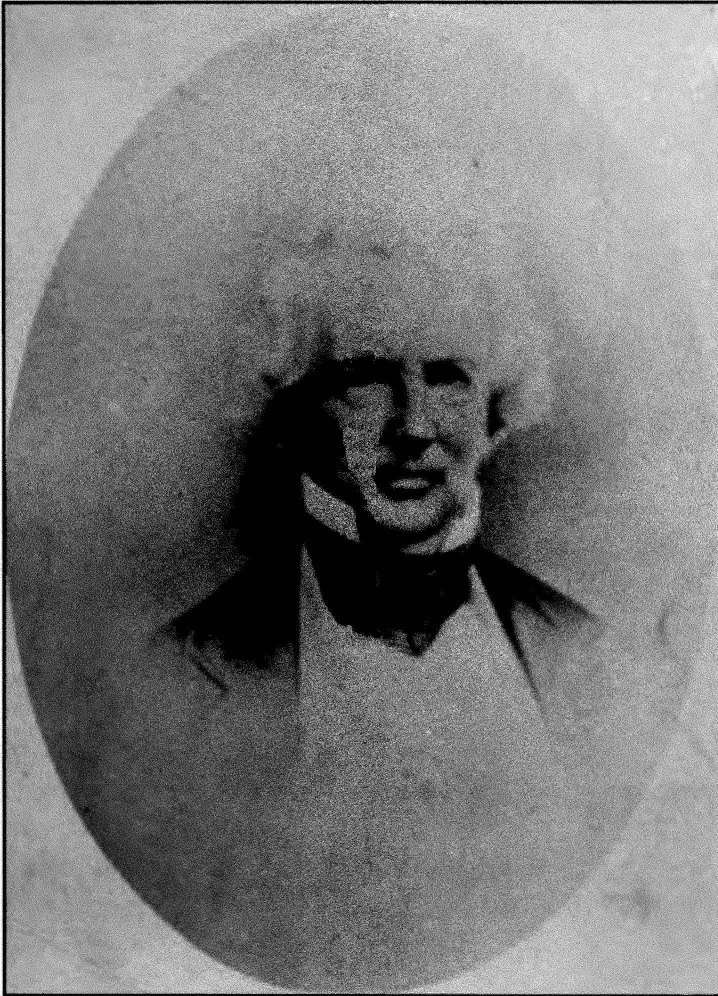
Reconfiguring Virginia

George Harrison Gilliam*

On April 4, 1861, one month after the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln as President of the United States, delegates to the Virginia State Convention meeting in Richmond defeated an ordinance of secession by an 88–45 margin.[1] Thirteen days later in a secret session following Lincoln's call for troops to put down the rebels surrounding Ft. Sumter, the delegates took a second vote. This time they voted to secede by an 88-55 margin.[2]

Before the final adoption of the secession ordinance, John J. Jackson, a delegate from Wood County in the northwest corner of Virginia, told those from the east "that we would stand by you in securing you the Constitutional guarantees necessary for the protection of your rights" but "that if you intended to hitch us on to South Carolina, we would not go with you."[3] Following the vote to secede, delegates from Virginia's northwest refused to follow those from the rest of the state to the southern Confederacy, and within days started the process to form a new state. These violent changes in the political map were forced by an eruption of tensions that had been building for many years. They were enabled by a confluence of political circumstances that had never occurred before, or since. The secession of Virginia from the Union was the result of a political decision; the separation of the western counties from Virginia was the product not just of political decisions but of war and military victories in some of the first battles of the Civil War. The issue of Virginia's secession from the Union was settled by the end of the Civil War; issues related to the formation of West Virginia remained contentious until the first decades of the twentieth century when the United States Supreme Court settled a question of the new state's obligation to pay a share of the mother-state's pre-war debt.

This is a story full of surprises. Virginia was divided, but not, as many have supposed, by the issue of slavery. While many people think that the mountaineers of western Virginia hated slavery, Virginians from the western part of the state were fully integrated into the slavery economy.



Whig John Janney, chair of the Virginia Convention, called for the Union flag to remain "with its crowning lustre undimmed and untarnished."

There were almost a half million slaves in Virginia at the beginning of the Civil War and more than 62,000 of them lived west of the Blue Ridge. John S. Carlile, a State Senator from Harrison County and leader of the western Virginians, proudly proclaimed that he had been "a slaveholder, not by inheritance, but by purchase." Slavery, he believed "is a social, political and religious blessing."[4] When western Virginians held a convention to form the new state first called Kanawha (and later changed to West Virginia) and adopt their own constitution, they had trouble deciding whether and how to free slaves and ultimately decided that no blacks — slave or free — could live in the new state. Though people think of slavery as tied to the plantation system of eastern Virginia, it in fact was ubiquitous, finding its way into every corner of the state and every facet of its economy. Slaves worked in the factories of western Virginia as well as on farms.

Many people think that Virginia's secession from the Union to join the Confederacy was inevitable. But pro-Union and anti-secession sentiment ran strong in all parts of Virginia, not just in the places with few slaves. Unionists and anti-secessionists won a majority in the election for delegates to the Virginia State Convention in 1861; secession was far from a certainty in the early months of 1861.

Divisions

Virginia had been divided by nature before being divided by man. The broad Shenandoah Valley, which defined the middle of the topographically symmetrical state, was bordered on the east by the Blue Ridge Mountains and on the west by the Appalachian range. On the eastern side, the waters of the James, the Potomac, and the Rappahannock rivers all flowed through the Piedmont hills and the plain of the Tidewater toward the Chesapeake Bay and the Atlantic Ocean. On the western side, streams flowed through more rugged terrain as they became the Ohio and Tennessee rivers, moving toward the Mississippi and the new frontiers.

Commerce, and then politics, divided with the watersheds and flowed with the rivers. In the West were subsistence farms, worked by white freeholders and tenants, salt and coal mines, and a scattering of small manufactories. In the Valley were more manufacturing establishments than in the West, and small farms on which white farmers raised wheat and fruit; but almost fifteen percent of the Valley population was

MEMBERS OF THE VIRGINIA STATE CONVENTION, 1861.

U John Janney, (President,) *Loudoun.*
S William M. Ambler, *Louisa.*
U Edward M. Armstrong, *Hampshire.*
U William B. Aston, *Russell and Wise.*
U John B. Baldwin, *Augusta.*
U Alfred M. Barbour, *Jefferson.*
S James Barbour, *Culpeper.*
U George Baylor, *Augusta.*
U George W. Berlin, *Upshur.*
S Angus R. Blakey, *Madison.*
U George Blow, Jr., *Norfolk City.*
U Caleb Boggess, *Lewis.*
S James Boisseau, *Dinwiddie.*
S Peter B. Borst, *Page.*
S Wood Bouldin, *Charlotte.*
U William W. Boyd, *Botetourt and Craig.*
S Thomas Branch, *Petersburg.*
U George W. Brent, *Alexandria.*
U William G. Brown, *Preston.*
— James C. Bruce, *Halifax.*
U John S. Burdett, *Taylor.*
U James Burley, *Marshall.*
U Benjamin W. Byrne, *Braxton, Nicholas, Clay and Webster.*
S Frederick M. Cabell, *Nelson.*
U John A. Campbell, *Washington.*
U Allen T. Caperton, *Monroe.* Hof Del.
U John S. Carlile, *Harrison.*
U John A. Carter, *Loudoun.*
S William P. Cecil, *Tazewell, McDowell and Buchanan.*
S John R. Chambliss, *Greensville and Sussex.*
S Manilius Chapman, *Giles.*
U Sherrard Clemens, *Ohio.* Mem Cong
U Samuel A. Coffman, *Rockingham.*
S Raphael M. Conn, *Shenandoah.*
U C. B. Conrad, *Gilmer, Wirt and Calhoun.*
U Robert Y. Conrad, *Frederick.*
U James H. Couch, *Mason.*
U James H. Cox, *Chesterfield.*
S Richard H. Cox, *Essex and King & Queen.*
U John Critcher, *Richmond County & Westmoreland.*
U William H. B. Custis, *Accomac.*
U Marshall M. Dent, *Monongalia.*
U Harvey Deskins, *Floyd.*
U James B. Dorman, *Rockbridge.*
U William H. Dulany, *Fairfax.*
U Jubal A. Early, *Franklin.*
U John Echols, *Monroe.*
S Miers W. Fisher, *Northampton.*
— Thomas S. Flournoy, *Halifax.*
S William W. Forbes, *Buckingham.*
U Napoleon B. French, *Mercer.*
U Colbert C. Fugate, *Scott.*
S Samuel M. Garland, *Amherst.*
U Henry L. Gillespie, *Fayette and Raleigh.*
S Samuel L. Graham, *Tazewell, McDowell and Buchanan.*
U Robert E. Grant, *Washington.*
U Peyton Gravely, *Henry.*
U Algernon S. Gray, *Rockingham.*
S Fendall Gregory, Jr., *King William.*
S William L. Goggin, *Bedford.*
S John Goode, Jr., *Bedford.*
S Thomas F. Goode, *Mecklenburg.*
S Fielden L. Hale, *Carroll.*
U Addison Hall, *Lancaster and Northumberland.*
U Cyrus Hall, *Pleasants and Ritchie.*
U E. B. Hall, *Marion.*
S Leonard S. Hall, *Wetzel.*
U Allen C. Hammond, *Berkeley.*
S Lewis E. Harvie, *Amelia and Nottoway.*
U Alpheus F. Haymond, *Marion.*
U James W. Hoge, *Putnam.*
S James P. Holcombe, *Albemarle.*
U J. G. Holladay, *Norfolk County.*
U Chester D. Hubbard, *Ohio.*
U John N. Hughes, *Randolph and Tucker.*
U George W. Hull, *Highland.*
S Eppa Hunton, *Prince William.*
S Lewis D. Isbell, *Appomattox.*
U John J. Jackson, *Wood.*
U Marmaduke Johnson, *Richmond City.*
U Peter C. Johnston, *Lee and Scott.*
S Robert C. Kent, *Wythe.*
U John R. Kilby, *Nansemond.*
S John J. Kindred, *Southampton.*
U James Lawson, *Logan, Boone and Wyoming.*
S Walter D. Leake, *Goochland.*
U John F. Lewis, *Rockingham.*
U William McComas, *Cabell.*
U James C. McGrew, *Preston.*
U Paul McNeil, *Pocahontas.*
— William H. Macfarland, *Richmond City.*
— Charles K. Mallory, *Elizabeth City, Warwick, York and Williamsburg.*
— James B. Mallory, *Brunswick.*
U James Marshall, *Frederick.*
U John Q. Marr, *Fauquier.*
S John L. Marye, Sr., *Spotsylvania.*
U Thomas Maslin, *Hardy.*
U Henry H. Masters, *Pendleton.*
S Fleming B. Miller, *Botetourt and Craig.*
U Horatio G. Moffett, *Rappahannock.*
S Robert L. Montague, *Mathews and Middlesex.*
S Edmund T. Morris, *Caroline.*
S Jeremiah Morton, *Orange and Greene.*
U Samuel McD. Moore, *Rockbridge.*
S William J. Neblett, *Lunenburg.*
U Hugh M. Nelson, *Clarke.*
— Johnson Orrick, *Morgan.*
U Logan Osburn, *Jefferson.*
S William C. Parks, *Grayson.*
U Spicer Patrick, *Kanawha.*
U Edmund Pendleton, *Berkeley.*
U George McC. Porter, *Hancock.*
— William Ballard Preston, *Montgomery.*
U Samuel Price, *Greenbrier.*
U David Pugh, *Hampshire.*
S George W. Randolph, *Richmond City.*
S George W. Richardson, *Hanover.*
U Timothy Rives, *Prince George and Surry.*
U Peter Saunders, Sr., *Franklin.*
U Robert E. Scott, *Fauquier.*
U William C. Scott, *Cumberland and Powhatan.*
S John T. Seawell, *Gloucester.*
U John D. Sharp, *Lee.*
S James W. Sheffey, *Smyth.*
U Thomas Sitlington, *Alleghany and Bath.*
S Charles R. Slaughter, *Campbell.*
— Valentine W. Southall, *Albemarle.*
S John M. Speed, *Campbell.*
U Burwell Spurlock, *Wayne.*
U Samuel G. Staples, *Patrick.*
U Alexander H. H. Stuart, *Augusta.*
U Chapman J. Stuart, *Doddridge and Tyler.*
S James M. Strange, *Fluvanna.*
U George W. Summers, *Kanawha.*
U William T. Sutherlin, *Pittsylvania.*
U Campbell Tarr, *Brooke.*
U George P. Tayloe, *Roanoke.*
S John T. Thornton, *Prince Edward.*
— William M. Tredway, *Pittsylvania.*
— Robert H. Turner, *Warren.*
U Franklin P. Turner, *Jackson and Roane.*
S John Tyler, *Charles City, James City and New Kent.*
— Edward Waller, *King George and Stafford.*
U William White, *Norfolk County.*
S Robert H. Whitfield, *Isle of Wight.*
U Williams C. Wickham, *Henrico.*
U Waitman T. Willey, *Monongalia.*
S Samuel C. Williams, *Shenandoah.*
U Benjamin Wilson, *Harrison.*
— Henry A. Wise, *Princess Anne.*
S Samuel Woods, *Barbour.*
S Benjamin F. Wysor, *Pulaski.*

Union 90 Secession 50 | Doubtful 12

black and not free. In the East were plantations, worked by slave-labor, and a number of factories. The East had more manufacturing facilities, and a higher number of workers per factory, than the Valley or the West. The East and the South also provided fertile ground for families farming vegetables and, importantly, tobacco. And at the fall line of the rivers that flowed toward the Atlantic were the small cities that served as centers of trade.[5]

Persistent Differences

Differences between the sections, and among the people within each section, over apportionment, taxation, and internal improvements, had defined Virginia's politics since colonial times. In early 1861, some of Virginia's leaders thought that these arguments had been mooted by political compromises made in the previous decades, or at least had been pushed aside by the urgent debate on whether Virginia should follow the seven Cotton States that had already split from the Union. When 152 elected delegates gathered in the Convention on February 13, 1861, to consider dissolving their connection with the federal Union, those from eastern Virginia expected their deliberations to center on the external, North-South issues that had already disrupted the Union.[6] Thomas F. Goode, a delegate from Mecklenburg County, warned, "The sword is to be sent upon a mission of peace into the heart of the Southern country."[7] The delegates were unprepared and unwilling to deal with the internal issues which, though dormant for most of the previous decade, would awaken and find powerful expression at the Convention. Demands that the old issues dividing eastern from western Virginians be resolved were woven through the debates and proved as insistent, and as resistant to solution, as did the issues dividing northern states from the southern states.

The central North-South issue was slavery. Though Virginia's General Assembly in 1832 had by a vote of 67–60 condemned slavery as an "evil," Virginia had refused seriously to consider emancipation.[8] The abolitionist movement in Virginia was by the 1850s all but invisible; even western Virginians adjured abolitionists. Instead, Virginians had argued over issues growing out of slavery, and defined them in terms that forced sectional colorations: the retention of disproportionate political power by slave holders, disguised as debates over "suffrage" and "apportionment," pitted westerners against those east of the Blue Ridge; the shift-

ing of the tax and other common burdens from slave holders to non-slave holders, masked as arguments over the tariff and military service, likewise developed into East-West fights. The refusal to confront the slavery issue head-on and the failure adequately to resolve the other issues caused Virginia twice to divide: first within itself, and then, almost inevitably, from the Union.

A Convenient, But Not Wholly Accurate, Paradigm

Sectionalism has provided historians a paradigm for the antagonisms that split Virginia's northwest from the rest of the state, and the southern states from the Union, in 1861. It has been an explanation painted in black and white, without shadings. Granville Davisson Hall wrote in 1902 in *The Rending of Virginia* of the "natural incompatibility" between the "developing West" and the "dominant East." Charles Henry Ambler, in *Sectionalism in Virginia from 1776 to 1861*, first published in 1910, described "inevitable conflicts" between a "cismontane and a transmontane people," between an "older society" and a "new society fundamentally different." More recently, in *Revolution to Secession: Constitution Making in the Old Dominion*, Robert P. Sutton argued that Virginia's history of constitutional development is a story of a "sectional struggle over whether or not its fundamental law should rest upon and be responsive to the will of the people." Jack P. Maddex, Jr., in *The Virginia Conservatives, 1867–1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics*, called sectionalism a "principal theme" of Virginia politics until 1851.[9]

There is abundant evidence of persistent sectional differences. The people west of the Blue Ridge were united against those to the east in seeking more political power. Western Virginians were convinced they were carrying an unfair share of the tax burden, and were sending more than their share of men to serve in the state militia. Sectional cohesion existed as to certain issues and at certain times. Historians have, however, not critically challenged sectionalism as an adequate explanation for political alignments on most issues or at most times. Further, historians frequently have ignored both the deep antagonisms among the people of the respective sections, particularly on economic and taxation issues. Similarly, they have under-emphasized the ligaments which connected people in the west with those in the east. The fact that a majority of the slave holders were east of the Blue Ridge has made the mountains a graphic though not necessarily accurate demarcation for other antago-

nistic divisions. In the early days of the Commonwealth, sectional differences had been pronounced on several issues; those same issues had less sectional definition by the mid-nineteenth century as a result of changes in the economy and evolving political accommodations. The expressions of sectional loyalty which were voiced at the 1861 secession convention minimized differences among the people within each section, and at the same time exaggerated differences between the sections. Paradoxically, these exaggerated expressions of intra-sectional cohesiveness contributed to the inter-sectional polarizations which caused Virginia twice to divide in 1861.

Haves and Have-Nots

The widest gulf among freemen in Virginia was between white men who owned slaves and those who did not. In many respects that same line divided those who held entrenched power from those who were out of power. The slave holders were the most powerful group in Virginia, economically and politically. They were concentrated largely (but not exclusively) east of the mountains; 428,351 of Virginia's 490,865 slaves lived east of the Blue Ridge in 1860. But slave holders nowhere constituted a majority: only about 35 percent of the eastern white males owned slaves. The planter/proprietor class of slave holders considered itself, and was considered by other Virginians, an elite. The majority of the eastern as well as western white population, however, did not own slaves and was divided among merchant or professional men, farmers, mechanics, and poor yeomen.

Ligaments

The slave holders enjoyed complex commercial and political relationships. The entire eastern seaboard had since colonial days been active in world trade involving tobacco, rice, indigo, and then cotton. Some wanted to connect with, and open markets to, the West; the farsighted thought the best way to protect slavery was to expand the slave-labor system to the West. Joseph Eggleston Segar, a slaveholding member of the House of Delegates, in 1838 sought a "generous system of internal improvements" to "fortify" slavery. Some eastern leaders, like Henry A. Wise who was to be elected Governor in 1855 on the basis of heavy majorities in the western counties, thought that improved canals and railroads would funnel western resources into the ports and markets of

the East; Westerners would purchase slaves with their new wealth.[10] Many of the eastern elite, however, saw no benefit in constructing canals to connect the rivers of the East with those of the West, or, later, in tunneling through the mountains to tie the regions with rails. As we will see, many members of the General Assembly (and delegates to the secession convention) from the western counties had developed close business and professional ties with men in the East.

Many of the western farmers and many of the non-slaveholding majority of the East were relatively isolated from the world economy. They were content with the status quo. An abundance of land provided white Americans with the opportunity to live reasonably well without depending on landlords, creditors or commercial relationships. Some felt threatened by a market economy. As a result, many continued to practice "safety-first" agriculture, growing crops for the family dinner table before planting crops for market. Historian Harry L. Watson has written, "Having no real chance to change their manner of living, and seeing no reason to do so, the white majority steadfastly refused higher taxes for education or internal improvements."[11]

Not everyone in the West, however, was satisfied with the status quo. Some were already involved in the market economy and wanted broader commercial opportunities. The extension of the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad west from Lynchburg to Bristol, the Virginia Central west from Charlottesville to Jackson's River, and, most important, the Baltimore & Ohio from Baltimore to Wheeling, in the late 1840s and 1850s, facilitated commercial connections. Wheeling was the second largest city in Virginia before the Civil War.

Since colonial days, because of differences between their economies, the sections had made different demands upon government. The use of tax revenues for internal improvements had been an issue with sectional gradations and overtones since the days of George Washington. As early as 1753, Washington suggested the desirability of canals between eastern and western sections of Virginia. He saw that "a country of such vast extent and variety of territory...could not be held together except by a community of interests between the various sections, and that this community of interest could only spring from easy and continuous commercial intercourse."[12] In 1787 Washington and others formed the James River Company with public as well as private financing. Virginia formed the Board of Public Works in 1816; the object of its

program of internal improvements was "to win the trade of the West for cities along the Atlantic seaboard."[13] Many eastern slave holders, however, opposed these programs which they knew would shift population —and political power — westward.

Antagonisms

Political power had not been apportioned equitably among the sections or between the slave holders and non-slave holders. The planter minority of the East had held a tight rein on government since colonial days, and its grip was formalized by the Virginia Constitution of 1776. To protect their position, the slave holders had arranged, from the first, to favor themselves with extra votes: slaves were considered property and not citizens, but they were counted as three-fifths of a person for purposes of apportioning members of the legislature. Salmon P. Chase, who later served in Lincoln's cabinet, wrote in 1849 that the southern "aristocracy is held together and made a unit, not so much by its property in slaves, as by the political power which the Constitution has deposited in their hands as the representatives of slaves. They represent their slaves. They put into the Houses of Congress, and into the Electoral College of the United States, the political power which is the exponent of their slaves; and, of course, they are bound together, just as any other aristocracy could be, by the strongest possible ties..."[14]

Since that first Constitution, non-slave holders had resented, and had continued to challenge, the distribution of power. As historian Larry Gara has shown, more people — in the West and the North — feared and resented Slave Power than hated slavery. Opposition to slavery was seen as opposition to the political influence and power of the South. "It is a fear of losing the balance of power, as they call it," Chase observed.[15] Because of the pervasive power of slave holders, and their success in maintaining power, they had been able to keep slavery from the center of public debate in Virginia.[16]

The northwestern portion of the state — that section which held the fewest slaves — thought it was under-represented and held the short end of the balance-of-power straw. Unfair apportionment had led to unfair taxation. Since slaves had not been taxed as property, voters who lived west of the Blue Ridge believed the white farmers and mechanics of their regions, all of whose property was fully taxed, were carrying a disproportionate share of the burden.

Attempts at Constitutional Resolutions of Differences

Twice between 1776 and 1861 Virginia tried to resolve these issues in state constitutional conventions. The 1829-30 convention was dominated by a struggle over apportionment. Eastern delegates were determined to maintain numerical control in the Assembly. Since population was moving to the West — the white population east of the mountains had increased only 15 percent, to 362,745, during the previous forty years, while that west of the Blue Ridge had shot up by 150 percent to 319,516 — maintenance of a majority in the future could not depend on apportionment based solely on population. Property must, the eastern majority decreed, remain a fundamental element of representation. Conservatives advanced a theory of "representation of interests." Delegate Abel P. Upshur argued that the constituent elements of society, and the subjects of legislation, were "Persons *and property.* Was there ever a society seen on earth, which consisted only of men, women and children? The very idea of society, carries with it the idea of property, as its necessary and inescapable attendant..."[17]

With the eastern majority firmly in control, few substantive changes were made in the existing order. The Constitution of 1830 was viewed as so partial to the "eastern aristocrats" that every convention delegate from the West opposed it. When it was submitted to popular referendum, the older counties heavily supported the preservation of the status quo reflected in the new constitution (Sussex voted 259-2 in favor), while the western counties just as overwhelming opposed it (in Harrison County the vote was 1,112-8). The counties of the Valley were about evenly divided. Statewide, the new constitution passed with an 8,500 vote majority; but only two of 26 trans-Allegheny counties voted for it.[18]

By 1840 the white population west of the Blue Ridge had surpassed that of the East, and in the East slaves outnumbered whites. The 1849-50 session of the General Assembly yielded — in the face of secession threats from the western counties — to calls for another constitutional convention. The apportionment formula for convention delegates guaranteed a seventeen-vote majority for the wealthier East: the 135 delegates to the convention were divided so that each represented either $7,000.24 in taxes or 13,151 whites.[19]

Apportionment, again, and suffrage dominated the 1850-51 convention; four of the first six months were spent on these issues. The

suffrage was expanded from simply white male freeholders to include all white male citizens over the age of 21 who satisfied certain residential requirements. For the first time, the Governor, the Lieutenant Governor and the Attorney General were to be popularly elected. But the all-important question of apportionment of the legislature resulted in a grudging compromise: the House of Delegates would be apportioned on the basis of white suffrage, resulting in a western majority of fourteen. The East, however, retained 60 percent of the Senate. Apportionment of the Senate was to be based on the mixed suffrage-property basis (advocated earlier by Upshur), with the East surrendering four seats to which it would have been entitled in return for a postponement of the next reapportionment until 1865. In exchange for the gains granted to the West, the Convention lowered the tax on slaves from 38 to 36 cents. An *ad valorem* tax was imposed on all other property; but the tax on slaves was limited, so that slaves age 12 and under were exempt, and older slaves could not be taxed at a value greater than $300, a fraction of fair market value. Slaves became, as historian Craig M. Simpson has observed, a kind of tax shelter. "Westerners came to regard slave holders' special advantage as the most obnoxious feature of the constitution."[20]

Dissipation and Declension

Just as the Compromise of 1850 dissipated North-South tensions nationally, the Constitution of 1851 eased many East-West tensions in Virginia. The General Assemblies of the 1850s granted charters for ten new banks in counties west of the Blue Ridge, and made appropriations for the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. So many new turnpikes were approved in the West that Governor Johnson said in 1855 that the western "portion of the state is most happily situated."[21] But neither the North-South nor the East-West tensions would remain stilled for long.

Virginia — and the South generally — were declining in relative influence within the country. In 1790 Virginia had been the most populous state; by 1860 four northern states exceeded Virginia in population. Throughout the world slavery was receding. Along the middle Atlantic, free-labor sectors of the economy were growing more rapidly than the slave-labor sector. As the border states developed anti-slavery movements, slave holders feared — probably irrationally, as it turned out — that Virginia's free-labor farms, cities and small industries might become centers of abolitionist subversion. As the influence of the Slave Power

states declined in Congress with each decennial reapportionment, the anti-slavery movement gained momentum, and Virginia slave holders foresaw and feared gradual conversion to a free state. The Richmond *Enquirer* warned: "The ruin and degradation of Virginia will be as fully and fatally accomplished as though bloodshed and rapine ravished the land."[22]

By the mid-1850s, internal divisions began to reappear in Virginia. When the *Kanawha Valley Star* — in one of the few remarks of its kind printed — denounced slavery as an "unmitigated curse to the soil of Virginia," the eastern press condemned abolitionism as a political heresy "brought from France by Thomas Jefferson." The Kanawha paper countered that "we venture the assertion that there are more abolitionists east of the Blue Ridge than west of it" but admitted that the "people of the west are pro-slavery from principle."[23] Much of the political debate centered on internal improvements, and seemed to respect no geographic lines; arguments over railroad routes splintered the state. The Richmond *Enquirer* recognized that "a large portion of the military strength of the state" was in the West, "containing as it does a majority of the white population," and sought a good rail connection with that section. Others believed that the way to entice traffic away from New York and Philadelphia would be to provide better connections from Richmond and Norfolk to the frontier west. People who lived along the James River were afraid that the Covington & Ohio Railroad would convert James River traffic headed for Richmond and Norfolk into rail traffic headed for Baltimore. The Northwest did not support new railroad construction once it had the Baltimore & Ohio Railroad, and the Southwest opposed the use of state funds to build any line in competition with the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad.

The 1855 election of a Democrat from the Tidewater, Henry A. Wise, as Governor presented an opportunity to bridge the differences. A slaveholder, Wise had been nominated in a convention by a coalition of western and eastern interests on an economically progressive platform. Though his campaign attacked the opposition Know-Nothings as "abolitionists," Wise had blamed the planters for Virginia's economic stagnation. But Wise's agenda for a program of public works and free public schools — which attracted support in the West — failed in the General Assembly.

At the next election, in 1859, the former Whigs (now running as the "Opposition," "American" or "Constitutional Union" party) opportunistically ran a candidate for Governor who was "sound" on slavery and State Rights, but he was defeated by Democrat John Letcher of Rockbridge County. Letcher, who won by only 5,509 votes, probably owed his election to his straddling the slavery issue: he received a 4,500 vote majority in the two congressional districts which bordered Pennsylvania and Ohio where some early anti-slavery comments he had made were favorably reported; his official platform was, as was his opponent's, ardently pro-slavery. [24]

Virginians Vote

In the 1860 presidential election, the Democratic leaders supported John C. Breckinridge, the Southern Rights faction candidate, who attracted 74,323 popular votes. Breckinridge finished behind Unionist Whig John Bell who received a bare plurality of 74,681, with Douglas (16,290) and Lincoln (1,929) trailing far behind. The fact that Bell carried Virginia, with his heaviest vote coming in the counties which stretched westward along the North Carolina border, and in the Northwest — the same areas carried by Democrat Pierce in 1852 and Democrat Buchanan in 1856 — alarmed the eastern-slaveholding Democrats. In the popular vote they saw further evidence of both their loss of influence and the westward shift of political power. Lincoln's vote reflects the utter absence of overt support for abolitionism.

After Lincoln's election in November 1860 the eastern members of the General Assembly pushed the call for the election of delegates to a state convention which would deal with the secessionist pressures building in the East and from the South. Despite the opposition of Governor John Letcher, the Assembly issued a call to hold a convention in Richmond. At a special election on February 4, 1861, only about 30 of the 152 convention seats were won by "immediate secessionists," a result which embarrassed the planter-elite. To add insult to injury, the voters overwhelmingly insisted that the action of the convention be advisory only, and that any secession ordinance be put to referendum — a requirement bitterly opposed by the secessionists.

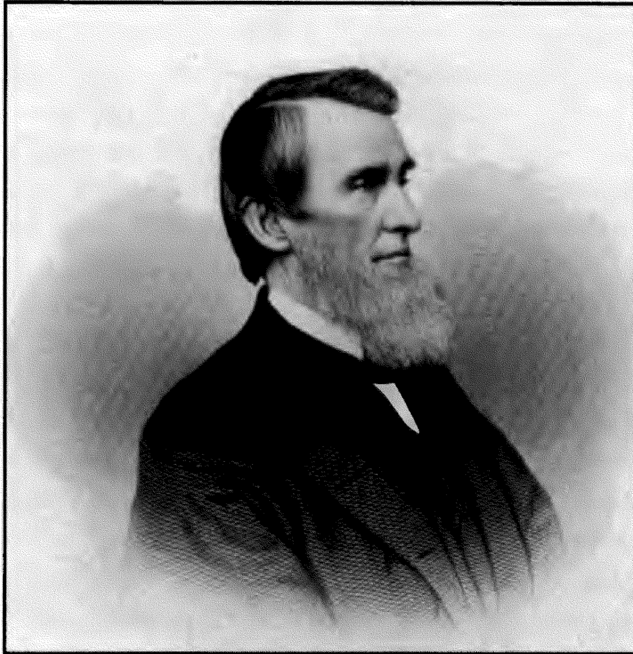
When the Virginia State Convention opened in Richmond on February 13, the delegates understood that they were, as one said, "on the verge of a civil war that will be forced upon the people of Virginia, unless

by wise and prudent counsels it may be averted."[25] All recognized that they needed a united Virginia. The challenge of the convention, one western delegate observed, was "to make all right within our own borders; seek to heal all and every dissension among our own people, bind ourselves together as a band of brothers, and come up to the work as a united people with one object and purpose."[26] The Convention elected moderate Whig John Janney of Loudoun County as its President, by a vote of 70-54. Janney recognized that the Union was in "imminent peril" but invoked the memory of Washington and Madison, declaring that "Virginia has come to-day to the rescue" of the Union. Delegates applauded his call for the Union flag to remain "with its crowning lustre undimmed and untarnished."[27]

Slaves and Strong White Men

It would not take long to scuff the veneer of unity. Western delegates demanded that the apportionment and taxation issues, compromised in 1851, be reopened. An eastern delegate charged that raising the slave-tax issue was "calculated to create division and to throw a firebrand in our midst."[28] While some issues, such as apportionment and the slave-tax, divided the delegates along sectional lines, other issues, such as the economy and the tariff, caused the delegates to split along other lines: whether Virginia's commercial interests were more closely tied to the North or to the Cotton States aligned the delegates more by economic than by sectional interests. The first sustained assaults on convention harmony, however, were bitter accusations that the strong white men of the West were again being called upon to defend the eastern planters and their slaves.

On the eighth day of the convention, Waitman T. Willey — a delegate from Monongalia County who had been a delegate to the 1850 Convention — rose to speak about the sectional tensions: "This seems to be an age of distrust and suspicion." He reminded the delegates from the East that during the War of 1812 "the cry of your distress and for help had scarcely echoed back from our western mountains and died along the Eastern shores of your coast, when the crack of the Western rifle was heard defending your firesides and your families."[29] The bitter plaint that Western riflemen had defended Eastern firesides — a provocative image of the rugged outdoorsman fighting for the effete planter, attended by his slaves, lolling with his family before his comfortable fire



Waitman T. Willey

— or that eastern soil was consecrated with the remains of some of the "bravest and noblest sons" of the West, would be repeated many times at the Convention.

The Exposed but Strong West

Not only did the western delegates remind the East of the previous sacrifices made on her behalf, but also Willey found it easy to affix the blame for leaving exposed "450 miles of hostile borders" with Kentucky, Ohio, Pennsylvania and Maryland. "And you, gentlemen, of Eastern Virginia, have not seen proper to give us enough legislative aid to transpierce these mountains that we might have direct communication with you."[30]

Willey continued to voice resentment of what he viewed as the West's disproportionate contribution to defense of the Commonwealth. On Monday, March 4 — the day of Lincoln's inauguration — Willey predicted that the eastern part of Virginia would be protected from attack from the West by "the almost impassable barrier of the Allegheny mountains."

The same mountain barrier, he warned, would prevent the eastern Virginians from coming to the aid of the those in the western counties. "We would be swept by the enemy from the face of the earth before the news of an attack could reach our Eastern friends. Will you leave us in that condition? Will you drive us out of the State and leave us at the mercy of our enemies?" [31]

Three weeks later, on March 26th, Hugh Nelson, a Unionist from Clarke County (which abutted Maryland), cried to the eastern delegates that his own wife and children "will be much nearer to the seat of war, much more exposed to its dangers than you will be."[32]

On April 2 (two days before the first secessionist vote) Willey seemed to apprehend the coming of war, and again asked the East: "Where will you get the strong arms to defend your slaves? From our glorious mountains of the West. There, where the white man lives with true and loyal heart, you will find men now, as aforetime, to defend your institutions and your firesides." Four days later, on April 6th, Willey cried, "if the worst comes to the worst, it will be again as it has been heretofore: Western men will have to fight your battles. It is on our own mountain men that you must rely at last for the vindication of Virginia's rights, Virginia's honor, and Virginia's integrity."[33]

Apportionment Revisited

The divisive language of sectionalism also colored the apportionment debates. Early on Delegate Samuel McD. Moore, from Rockbridge County in the Valley, reminded the Convention, "We demanded an equal representation and it had been denied to us. We were told in the Convention of 1829–30, that they could not consent to give us the basis of representation that we desired, and to which we were entitled. They said they would prefer to divide the State rather than to do so."[34] The question refused to be stilled.

In early April, when events in South Carolina were forcing the secession issue to a head, C. C. Stuart, a Unionist elected by Doddridge and Tyler counties, called for the Virginia constitution immediately to be amended to change the basis of representation. The compromise of 1851 was not a true compromise, he argued, but "was forced on us by our Eastern friends." Even if the Convention would not agree to amend the Constitution, "we have a right, under any circumstances, to demand of you the representation we are entitled to under the bases you forced

upon us."[35] Since the census of 1850, the white population of Virginia had increased, Stuart showed, by 152,000, of which 109,000 were in western Virginia. According to Stuart's calculations, the western portion of the state was entitled to an increase of ten representatives in the lower house (and at the Convention), giving it a 23-vote advantage over the East. In response to the argument that the Constitution of 1851 provided for this issue next to be addressed in 1865, Stuart said he found no language in the Constitution to preclude amendment by the usual processes. He demonstrated the inequality of the present apportionment by showing that three members from his section represented a constituency of 35,383 people, while six members from the Shenandoah Valley represented a smaller number.

Delegates from the Northwest cast the apportionment debate in explicitly sectional terms. Since the Northwest contained far fewer delegate votes than the rest of Virginia, it was bound to lose any vote cast along strict sectional lines. Had the delegates framed the issue as an attack on the Slave Power, they might have won because there were far more non-slave holders than slave holders. By unnecessarily making the issue sectional, they exaggerated or exacerbated sectional divisions and may have eliminated any opportunity for a trans-sectional coalition. They made the same mistake in framing the slave-tax issue.

Slave Tax

In the first days of the Convention, Willey suggested that while fighting outsiders "would it not be wise on our part to remedy the causes of difficulty and strife at home? Whilst we are engaged in an effort to roll off the burthens of oppression from outside Virginia, would it not be well to remedy the odious distinction of unequal burthens which are resting upon our own citizens?" The odious and unequal burthen, of course, "is that anomaly in our organic law, whereby a large portion of the property of this Commonwealth is wholly exempt from taxation." Willey produced census figures showing that there were, in 1859, 272,073 slaves over 12 years of age, and 239,081 under 12. The older slaves were taxed at no more than $300 each; Willey suggested that their true value was greater than $500 each (in Georgia the average slave was assessed at $612.63 each), resulting in a substantial tax loss to Virginia. Slaves under 12 were exempt from taxation, and Willey calculated that this provision exempted from taxation $119,540,500 of property. Willey, a

slaveholder, confessed to "a sense of mortification" when he remembered that "the property of my non-slaveholding neighbor is subject, every cent of it, to rigid tribute" while his own equally valuable property was exempt. He called for amendment of the Virginia Constitution to provide for uniform taxation.[36]

Willey's neighbor in the Northeast, C. C. Stuart, said that the eastern delegates "are willing to legislate in any way, so long as it does not tax your little negroes." He questioned the fairness of exempting young (and arguably unproductive) slaves from tax when western land — which "in its native state is of no value towards supporting his family, but absolutely requires years of toil and labor to bring it to value" — is fully taxed. "Many a noble and brave heart has sunk under the effort," Stuart said.[37]

William G. Brown of Preston County forced the slave taxation issue to the floor of the Convention. Using the language of sectionalism (rather than the language of class), he hinted that the failure to resolve the slave-tax issue would cause the western counties to secede or revolt. "We acknowledge the right of revolution when all efforts to obtain our rights shall be exhausted, but not before. . . " He was unwilling to compromise. "Sir, they are unwilling to see partial legislation in reference to this. . ."[38]

The issue of taxation did not travel on a one-way street. Miers W. Fisher, a Northampton County secessionist, used a sectional attack when he suggested taxing those "lands in which the oil springs are situated" as a way to come "to an adjustment of this question."[39] Thomas Branch of Petersburg could not believe that a delegate who advocated taxing slaves "apprehends the subject in all its bearings." He edged away from sectional appeals and showed a way to compromise by calling for amending the constitution, not to tax slaves but to exempt wages of laborers.[40]

Nobody, perhaps, recognized the power of the taxation issue to be used as a sectional wedge — and the danger in so using it — more clearly than former Governor Henry A. Wise. He said that the taxation question "is to divide the State" and, as the author of the compromise reached in the 1850-51 Convention, he admitted that the only progress made had been from "bad to better." Nonetheless, he advised his constituents "to relinquish" the exemption "now." As a slaveholder himself, Wise said, "I am willing to pay it, if that is all you have to complain of against the East." But, of course, that was not all the West had to complain of against the East, and the Convention would not yet consent to amend the Con-

stitution — even to collect the $3.60 which Wise would have owed on his slaves under the age of twelve.[41]

Brown, who had served in the Congress and been a delegate at the 1850 Convention, finally demanded a Finance Committee be appointed to consider a tax on slaves, ostensibly to raise money for military preparedness. In support of his bill, Brown challenged the East: "I want those true and brave men of the East, who have delivered such patriotic speeches here, to come forward and help us now raise the sinews of war. Sir, I do not want our army to be fed with patriotic speeches and resolutions."

On March 7, 1861, Brown's slave-tax resolution was defeated on a 69-41 vote which closely followed sectional lines: delegates from the Northwest supported the slave-tax proposal 30–7, those from the South and East opposed it 42–2, while the Valley and Southwest were more evenly divided. Though the supporters of the slave tax tended to be Unionists who voted against the *first* secession ordinance on April 4th, the vote on Brown's slave-tax resolution did not prove to be a particularly reliable predictor of the *final* vote on secession. While 49 of those who ultimately voted for secession on April 17th wanted to table the slave-tax debate, and 26 of those who opposed secession favored the slave-tax resolution, 15 of those who opposed secession also opposed raising this issue (including John Janney and Jubal Early), and 11 who favored secession supported the slave-tax resolution.

Economic Interests Shape New Alignments

Arguments over whether Virginia's economic interests were more closely linked to the North or to the Confederacy usually did not divide the delegates by section. Delegates agreed that Virginia suffered a poor economy and had not grown commercially as rapidly as many other states, but broadly disagreed as to the causes. James Bruce of Halifax, an apologist for slavery, used a scattergun approach: the tariff policy of 1789, supported even by James Madison, favored the "infant manufactories of the North. . .without this protection they would never have made a start even in commerce and manufactures"; the War of 1812 "was a protection to the manufacturers of the North;" and "all of the progress that had been made by the North was under the protecting care of the General Government." Bruce believed that the North would not negotiate on Virginia's behalf for a lower European tariff on tobacco but argued that if Virginia were part of the Confederacy it could say to Europe, "If

you don't reduce the duty upon tobacco, we will put a duty upon your manufactures" and within one year "the tariff upon tobacco would be lowered in every part of Europe."[42] George W. Randolph of Richmond City argued, "The true competitors of our laboring whites are the gigantic manufacturing corporations of the North which flood our markets with everything that white labor can produce."[43]

Some delegates tried, however, to cast the debate in political or sectional terms. Easterners blamed the federal government for Virginia's woes; westerners blamed the eastern-controlled General Assembly. Moore, from Rockbridge County, claimed that easterners blocked construction of "a macadamized road from, Buffalo, N. Y. to the city of New Orleans, through our country" and kept Baltimore from extending "her road up the Valley and down the Kanawha. . ."[44] Benjamin Wilson of Harrison County said that "for a quarter of a century we knocked at the door of your capitol, asking permission to build roads over our soil, with our own money, and for many years it was refused."[45] All of these steps by the East were seen as blocking commercial opportunities for the West.

The delegates who, like John B. Baldwin of Augusta County, felt "bound to look at the material interests of our people" and "what is essential for their prosperity" understood the splits among Virginians. Even Baldwin, however, found it convenient to frame the debate in sectional terms. "The interests of one half of Virginia. . .commercially and industrially, are identified and bound up with the free States of the border. . ." He urged the delegates not to "forget that Eastern Virginia is not this entire Commonwealth."[46]

To recognize the fact of deep divisions was not to agree on where the various economic interests led. Delegate Leonard S. Hall, of Wetzel, said that the most important market for the western part of Virginia was New Orleans in the Confederacy, "and whether we start from the North-West with a boat load of coal or of plows, wagons or anything else necessary for the use and consumption of the Confederated States, or whether we start with a boat load of grain, apples or potatoes, every mile we go, every sail we make, we have to meet with the competition of the Northern States in that whole route. . ."[47] Historian Alison Goodyear Freehling has argued that as early as 1832 eastern slave holders had also looked to the Deep South, not as buyers of coal or plows but "as purchasers of Virginia slaves, as a means of ridding Virginia of both slavery and blacks."[48] Convention delegate Robert E. Scott of Fauquier County, who ultimately

voted for secession, pointed out that the salt, coal and oil of Kanawha was sold in the west and that cattle were sold in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Scott argued that the "diversity of its soil and climate, the variety of its products, and the social and commercial relations of our people" strongly promoted a reconstruction of the Union and the preservation of all of the commercial connections "which a common government provides."[49] Likewise, George W. Summers of Kanawha said that the whole trans-Allegheny area was connected commercially to Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee and Missouri.[50]

Some of those who recognized the need for expansion of Virginia's trade argued that joining the Confederacy would be best for Virginia. James Barbour, of Culpeper, observed that "Nations act on their interests, not on sentiments" and reasoned that even if Europe disapproved of slavery it would have to recognize and open trade with the Confederate States. Further, he claimed that "the whole industrial system of New England would be prostrated by losing the Southern markets to their manufactures."[51]

Several delegates from various parts of the state used the complexity of the Virginia economy, and the necessity for ties with the more fully developed northeastern and European markets, as a reason for staying in the Union. George Baylor of Augusta County said that while in the Cotton States "Cotton is King...we have more than one King in our own State. We have got at least half a dozen Kings here. We have got King Wheat, King Corn, King Potatoes [laughter], King Tobacco, King Flax and King Hemp...."[52] Hugh M. Nelson, from Clarke County, observed that agriculture "is said to be the nursing-mother of the arts and sciences, but, like some other nursing-mothers, she is often poor while the children are the reverse."[53] Nelson argued that "any country which depends upon agriculture alone, however rich and productive its soil, will, as compared to countries which combine manufactures and commerce with agriculture[,] be poor — and that wealth...will accumulate at the great commercial centres..." The "great commercial centers" were all located to the North and East. Summers of Kanawha said that the "Southwestern portion of Virginia furnishes an immense quantity of salt to Tennessee, and Tennessee furnishes cattle and corn to Virginia." Tennessee cattle, fattening in the "fields of Fauquier and Loudoun farms" would be sold in "Baltimore, Philadelphia, and New York. You are so inseparably

connected in every form of trade and commerce, that you cannot cut the ligaments which bind us, without destruction."[54]

Threats of New Taxes Cause New Alignments

Arguments over the tariff split delegates from the same region. The language of sectional division seemed to take a back seat to the language of class division. Moore argued against joining the Confederacy of Cotton States because the seceded states wanted to substitute direct taxes for the tariffs on the imports which had financed the Union government. "And sir," Moore asked, "who pays the duties that are now derived from imports? They are levied almost invariably upon luxuries — luxuries that are consumed by the wealthy. . .Adopt the policy of these Southern States and the great mass of the people who now pay no portion of the taxes will be overwhelmed with taxation." Moore voiced the fear, harbored and expressed by many, that the "laboring white population" would have to make up for taxes no longer collected from the rich.[55] John I. Goode, from Bedford, attacked Moore for raising "imaginary ills" which have "no foundation in fact" and assured the convention that the Confederacy would not levy a "direct tax."[56]

James Bruce, in contrast, said that he had once been a "Southern planter" but all his "profits went North, and all I got was the support of my negroes, and money enough to pay the overseer." He argued that if Virginia were part of a separate nation with its own tariff of 15 or 20 percent, "all the manufacturers which Virginia now has, and which hang by a feeble threat, would be encouraged."[57]

All the White Men Support Slavery

Curiously, attacks on the institution of slavery were almost wholly absent. Slave holders and non-slave holders addressed the Convention on every imaginable subject, but no avowed abolitionists spoke. On the contrary, speakers as diverse as James P. Holcomb of Albemarle County, George Richardson of Hanover County and Waitman T. Willey of Monongalia County defended slavery.[58]

Not all slave holders advocated casting Virginia's lot with the Confederacy. John S. Carlile (who stated that slavery was a "blessing") argued — presciently, as it happened — that if the Union were dissolved "a military despotism, the licentiousness of the camp and ragged poverty will be substituted in its place." He feared hitching on "to the tail of a

Southern Confederacy, to stand guard and play patrol for King Cotton," and downplayed secessionist claims that failure to join the Confederacy would close the southern market for Virginia slaves. "I say they cannot get them anywhere else. I have no fear of their ever re-opening the African slave trade.... They are bound to buy our negroes."[59]

The more orthodox position for slave holders was to advocate immediate alliance with the Confederacy. Randolph foresaw that slaves would not be recognized as property beyond the borders of the slave states. Republican judges, he warned darkly, would consider them "persons" and not "property" and "will prevent the exercise of any control by the master over his slave."[60]

Separation: I

By April 4, 1861, those who sympathized with South Carolina and the other Cotton States were desperate for a vote on secession. In the middle of a debate on taxation, and in a room about which one delegate complained "It is impossible to hear," pro-secessionists forced the first vote on an ordinance of secession. It failed, 88–45. Interestingly, this first vote did not reflect sectional divisions as nearly as it did earlier alignments on the slave-tax and apportionment issues. Only the Northwest voted as a block (43–3); other sections were divided. The Valley opposed the ordinance 8–7, the Southwest opposed it 11–7, and the East and South were almost evenly split, favoring the ordinance by a one-vote margin.

Amid growing frenzy, the delegates found it difficult to agree on anything. They were unwilling to answer Lincoln's call for the Virginia militia to fight the Cotton States, but many tried to postpone another vote on secession. Rumors swirled back and forth indicating that a federal invasion was imminent. Delegates such as Robert Y. Conrad of Frederick County wanted to believe that telegraphed reports on the events at Ft. Sumter were untrue, and that war could still be avoided. But the secessionists, who were unified when all around them was chaotic, pressed for adoption of their ordinance. As debate on the secession ordinance drew to a close on April 16, Willey warned the Convention that "if this ordinance of secession goes out naked and alone, it will either be voted down by the people, or it will dissolve this State."[61] Governor Letcher, who had opposed dis-union, took Lincoln's call for troops to defend Sumter as "a virtual declaration of war" and urged that it "be resisted by

all of the power at the command of Virginia." On April 17th, the Governor of ordered the state militia not to answer Lincoln's call, but to prepare to defend the state. That same day, in a secret session, the secession ordinance was adopted by a vote of 88 to 55.[62]

The final secession vote did not split along strict sectional lines. Eleven of the western delegates voted for secession. Twenty-two eastern delegates voted against the ordinance. A majority of the representatives of the Shenandoah Valley — destined to suffer some of the heaviest ravages of the war — voted to remain with the Union. A majority of the counties that later formed West Virginia voted with the secessionists on April 17th; the 19 counties west of the Blue Ridge which voted to stay with the Union represented, however, the greater part of the population and wealth of the area. Though a powerful influence, sectionalism was not determinative of the vote. As stark evidence of the political instability which had overtaken the Convention, thirty-three delegates switched their vote between April 4th and April 17th on this defining issue.

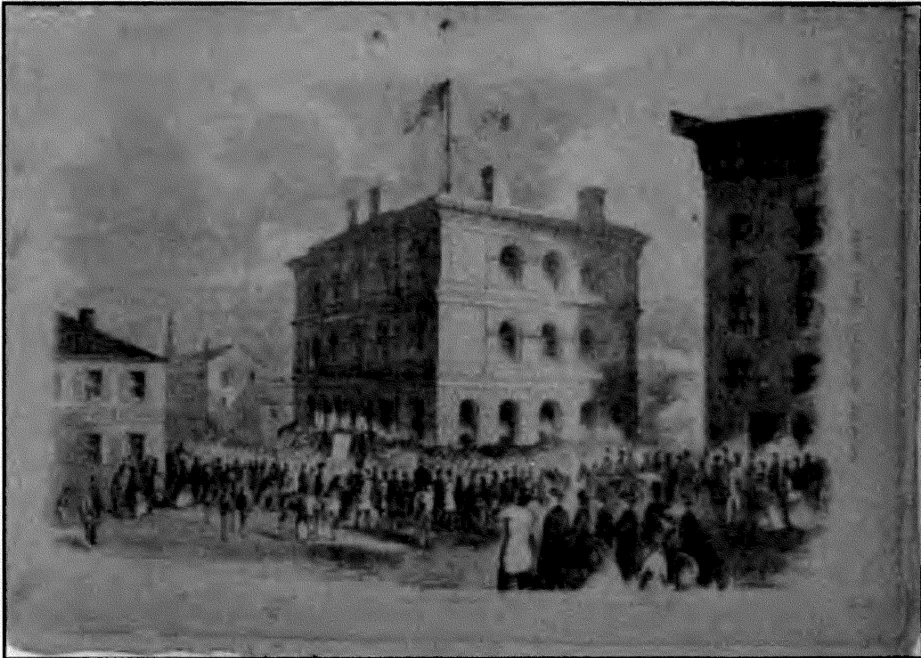
On April 25th, the Convention adopted the Constitution of the Confederate States, appointed a commission to act as delegates from Virginia to the Confederacy, and offered Richmond as the capital. In a closing irony, on Friday, April 26th, with most of the northwestern delegates having departed the convention, the remaining members amended the Virginia Constitution to provide for the taxation of slaves without exemption, by a vote of 66-26, as a war-time revenue measure.[63] Most of those who earlier had opposed the slave-tax now supported it--but only to pay for defense of the peculiar institution. An issue which had proven divisive and intractable while both eastern and western delegates were on the floor was resolved despite — or, perhaps, because of — the absence of its most passionate advocates.

On May first, the Virginia State Convention adjourned to await the results of the forthcoming May 28 referendum on secession. The outcome was never in doubt. Still employing the archaic practice of *viva voce* voting (which tended to intimidate dissenters), the ordinance was ratified by a substantial 125,950 to 20,373 statewide. Only the militarily vulnerable panhandle area near Wheeling voted against (by an overwhelming 20-1 margin). Curiously, especially for a vote so important, there was no *official* canvas of the vote; newspapers carried only unofficial polling results. In the eastern part of the state, the result was about 6 to 1 in favor of secession. In the counties west of the Blue Ridge, the

results were much closer, and obscure: 11 favored secession while 27 rejected it. In twelve western counties the vote was never reported.[64]

Separation: II

The separation of the northwestern counties from Virginia to form West Virginia followed.[65] Leaving the convention before adjournment, some northwestern delegates called for a convention to be held in the old federal building in Wheeling on May 13, 1861. Selected in a variety of unorthodox ways (many were simply self-selected), the delegates in June declared all federal offices in Virginia vacant and filled them with men loyal to the Union. The convention wanted to establish a new state. But since the United States Constitution required the "mother" state to consent to the creation of a new state from within her territory, the convention passed an ordinance "reorganizing" the Virginia state government to offer that consent. The convention elected state officers, all of whom were recognized by the United States as the "Reorganized Government of Virginia."



The old federal building at Wheeling, West Virginia

The "old" Virginia (then part of the Confederate States of America) was unwilling to let the western counties go without a fight. Lincoln considered control of the western counties crucial to the military success of the Union. By the end of June, he had ordered more than 20,000 U.S. troops into western Virginia, 6,000 to guard the Baltimore & Ohio railway line which had a militarily important terminus in Wheeling. The Confederacy responded by sending more than 20,000 troops to recapture western Virginia. On August 20, 1861, the Reorganized Government adopted an ordinance authorizing the creation of a new state, tentatively to be called Kanawha. While the politicians talked, the soldiers fought. Robert E. Lee, commanding the Confederate forces, lost successive battles and returned to Richmond in October, 1861. He had been defeated by George B. McClellan and was hounded by the Richmond press for his losses. Union military control of western Virginia ensured that the convention in Wheeling, called to establish a separate state, could proceed.

A statehood referendum passed on October 24th, and early in 1862 some 430 convention delegates adopted a new West Virginia constitution. An early draft of that constitution provided for the continuation of slavery, with emancipation to occur gradually, over a period of years. But under pressure from Lincoln and the United States Congress, the final draft made West Virginia a "free" state. In fact, it not only barred slavery but it barred free blacks from the state as well. West Virginians overwhelmingly supported the new constitution. Only 514 voted to oppose it. The Congress passed legislation to admit West Virginia to the Union in late 1862.

The final decision, however, was not made by Congress or by the delegates who had gathered in Wheeling. It was made by the President. Lincoln was uncertain about the unusual procedure and asked his cabinet whether the creation of the new state was constitutional. They split. Three said it was constitutional, three said it was not. Lincoln was desperate to save the Union. "We can scarcely dispense with the aid of West Virginia in this struggle; much less can we afford to have her against us, in congress and in the field. . .The division of a State is dreaded as a precedent. But a measure made expedient by a war is no precedent for times of peace. . .I believe the admission of West Virginia is expedient."[66] With a stroke of his Presidential pen Lincoln admitted West Virginia to the Union.

President Abraham Lincoln

The day after Lincoln admitted West Virginia, a state which barred free blacks from its territory, he used another Presidential pen to sign the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves — but only in areas under the control of the Confederate government.

Both the Reorganized Government and the new West Virginia government sent Congressmen and Senators to Washington. West Virginia became an important part of the war effort. Men from West Virginia organized into units; some fought for the Union Army of the Potomac. Others — unable to fight against their Virginia brothers — fought for the Confederacy.

Following the war, Virginia was re-admitted to the Union, and West Virginia remained a separate state. The Commonwealth of Virginia could

not let its dispute with its former western counties end with the Civil War.[67] It took the matter to the United States Supreme Court. Virginia demanded that since West Virginia had taken about a third of the people and about a third of the land from Virginia, the new state should assume responsibility for a third of Virginia's pre-war state debt. The Supreme Court agreed. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes, a veteran of the Union Army, wrote that West Virginia did have to pay its share of Virginia's pre-war debt and determined the amount of be $7,182,507.46. Holmes ordered West Virginia to pay its debt to Virginia "with all deliberate speed." This decision, Holmes said, should bring the matter "to an end."[68]

Some Conclusions

Other states have been bitterly divided by sectional rivalries as intense as those which divided Virginia. Disputes over representation and the benefits and burdens of state finance are seldom without rancor. Yet Virginia divided itself permanently.

Virginia was much less stable than she appeared. The Mother of Presidents was slipping in power and unsettled by the rapid economic and political changes in the country. She was no longer the most powerful state in the nation and had not adjusted to her evolving position as the fulcrum of the border states. Social and economic differences within the regions stood in the way of sectional hegemony, except in the Northwest. The East contained slave holders who wanted to remain in the Union, and the delegates from West of the Blue Ridge voted, by a narrow majority, for secession. Exaggerated expressions of sectionalism at the convention caused people to overlook common interests. Expressions of intractable differences between the sections, particularly between the Northwest and the rest of the state, made trans-Allegheny compromises and coalitions seem impossible to obtain. A disunified state, as well as the convention, was unable to resist the pressures from the Confederacy and was unable to accept Lincoln's call for Union.

Slavery was always there. The convention delegates talked about apportionment and taxation and tariffs and economic interests. They never wanted to address but never could fully avoid the need to deal with the variegated social, economic, political and moral responses to the peculiar institution. The differences separating slave holders from non-slave holders were so vast, and antipathies so powerful, that separa-

tion could only be avoided if the parties could compromise on important issues.

Compromise never came. Non-slave holders from the Northwest — motivated by an unwillingness to fight the slave holders' battles, by their resentment of the Slave Power of the East, and by their unhappiness with what they saw as unfair representation and taxation — stumbled upon a distinctive opportunity for a unique political solution that would enable them to escape the dilemmas of Virginia and form their own government. They seized it.

Author's Note: Readers of *The Smithfield Review* are invited to visit the website that supports the Central Virginia Public Television series on Virginia history, "The Ground Beneath Our Feet." The website is located at www.vahistory.org The site contains copies of primary source materials cited in the foregoing article, as well as photographs, interactive maps, and newspaper articles. The site is designed for use both by scholars and in the classroom; teachers may assign students to write papers based upon the archival material located at the website as a way of introducing students to the way history is researched and written.

Endnotes

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2. Reese, ed., 4:144.
3. Reese, ed., 3:287.
4. Reese, ed., 1:468.
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7. Reese, ed., 1:109.
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9. See Hall, *The Rending of Virginia*, p. 29; Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, p. 3; Robert P. Sutton, *Revolution to Secession: Constitution Making in the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), p. 154; Jack P. Maddex, Jr., *The Virginia Conservatives, 1867–1879: A Study in Reconstruction Politics* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1970), p. 13.
10. Craig M. Simpson, *A Good Southerner* (Chapel Hill and London: The University of North Carolina Press, 1985), p. 79.
11. Harry L. Watson, "Slavery and Development in a Dual Economy: The South and the Market Revolution," in Melvyn Stokes and Stephen Conway, eds., *The Market Revolution in America* (Charlottesville and London: University Press of Virginia, 1996), pp. 45, 62.
12. Henry C. Adams, *Public Debts*, New York, 1893, p. 322, quoted by A. E. Dick Howard, *Commentaries on the Constitution of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1974), p. 1101.
13. Richard L. Morton, "The Virginia State Debt and Internal Improvements, 1820-38," *J. Pol. Econ.* (1917), p. 350.
14. Salmon P. Chase, quoted by Larry Gara, "Slavery and the Slave Power: A Crucial Distinction," *Civil War History*, XV, No. 1 (March, 1969), p. 6.
15. Ibid.
16. See generally, William Lee Miller, *Arguing About Slavery: The Great Battle in the United States Congress* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1996).
17. Howard, *Commentaries on the Constitution*, p. 326.
18. Howard, *Commentaries on the Constitution*, p. 10.
19. Simpson, *A Good Southerner*, p. 80.
20. Simpson, *A Good Southerner*, p. 85. On the 1829-30 and 1850–51 Virginia Constitutional Conventions, see, generally, Robert P. Sutton, *Revolution to Secession: Constitution Making in the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), pp. 72–140.
21. Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, pp. 300–01.
22. Richmond *Enquirer*, July 10, 1860, reprinted in Maddex, *The Virginia Conservatives*, p. 17.
23. Ambler, *Sectionalism in Virginia*, p. 311.
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25. Reese, ed., 1:41.
26. Reese, ed., 3:51.
27. Reese, ed., 1:7,8.
28. Reese, ed., 2:3.
29. Reese, ed., 1:137,136.
30. Reese, ed., 1:370.
31. Reese, ed., 1:369 ff.
32. Reese, ed., 2:354.
33. Reese, ed., 3:289.
34. Reese, ed., 1:280.
35. Reese, ed., 3:53.
36. Reese, ed., 1:765, 766, **766**.
37. Reese, ed., 3:155.
38. Reese, ed., 2:5,6.
39. Reese, ed., 2:8.
40. Reese, ed., 2:18.
41. Reese, ed., 3:44.
42. Reese, ed., 2:268, **267**.
43. Reese, ed., 1:753.
44. Reese, ed., 1:280.
45. Reese, ed., 2:15.
46. Reese, ed., 3:554, 555.
47. Reese, ed., 3:59.
48. Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift Toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831–1832* (Baton Rouge and London: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).
49. Reese, ed., 3:59.
50. Reese, ed., 3:568.
51 Reese, ed., 2:687.
52. Reese, ed., 1:289.
53. Reese, ed., 2:354, **351**.
54. Reese, ed., 3:581.
55. Reese, ed., 1:179.
56. Reese, ed., 1:185.
57. Reese, ed., 2:263, 267.
58. Holcomb's speech is reported at Reese, ed., 2:75; Richardson's at Reese, ed., 3:105 ff.; and Willey's at Reese, ed., 1:366 ff.
59. Reese, ed., 1:468, 477, 476.
60. Reese, ed., 1:736.
61. Reese, ed., 4:52.
62. Reese, ed., 4:144. The roll call of the vote, on April 4, 1861, which defeated an ordinance of secession, is printed at Reese, ed., 3:163. Thirty-four delegates who voted Against secession on April 4, 1861, voted For secession on April 17, 1861.
63. Reese, ed., 4:545.
64. The account of the vote on ratification of the Ordinance of Secession, as well as much of the account of the separation of the western counties from Virginia, relies

heavily on George E. West, "The West Virginia Incident: An Appraisal," *West Virginia History*, Vol. 47, p. 26 (1988).

65. In addition to the source cited in note 64, see Delf Norona, "West Virginia Political Chronology," Archives of Marshall County (W. Va.) Centennial Commission.
66. Abraham Lincoln, "Opinion of the Admission of West Virginia into the Union," December 31, 1862, Roy M. Basler, ed., *The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln* (New Brunswick, N. J.: Rutgers University Press, 1953), VI, 26.
67. Complete accounts of the litigation between the two states are contained in Elizabeth J. Goodall, "The Virginia Debt Controversy and Settlement," *West Virginia History*, Vol. 24, p. 42, and in the opinion of Mr. Justice Holmes in *Virginia v. West Virginia*, 220 U.S. 1 (1911).
68. *Virginia v. West Virginia*, 222 U. S. 17, 20 (1911). This decision dealt with this amount of damages and ordered the time of payment.

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Hickmans and Servants: Two Appalachian Families

H. William Gabriel*

Some there are who have left behind them a name to be commemorated in story. Others are unremembered; they have perished as though they had never existed, as though they had never been born; so too it was with their children after them. Ecclesiasticus, 44:8-9

Some tend to think that only important and famous people save their letters to preserve the history of their time on earth. However, the way ordinary people once lived can be as interesting and historic as the lives of the rich and famous — if we can find the traces of those lives.

The material presented here is from a collection of documents telling the story of several generations of farmers, preachers, judges, teachers, and soldiers as they participated in the growth of the country. In compiling those papers I was struck by how two families, white and black, remained associated for more than a hundred years — before and after the Civil War. The documents mention four generations in one black family and provide glimpses of their lives among the Hickmans of Back Creek in Bath County, Virginia.[1] Such records of black ancestry are rare and usually come, as here, from the history of the former masters.

This record of the black family begins with an 1822 bill of sale in which James Elliot sold a woman named Sophia to his brother-in-law, William Hickman:[2]

> Know all men by these preasents that I James Elliot of Rockbridge County & State of Virginia hath this day Bargained & Sold to William Hickman of Bath County & State aforesaid on Negroe Girl Named Sophia together with all her preasent & future Issue for the Sum of Three Hundred & Fifty Dollars in hand paid the recept whereof is hereby Acknowledge & doth warrant the Same Girl to be healthy so far as my Knowledge Extends & doth warrant & defend the wright

from the Claim or Claims of any person or persons whatever. Witness my hand & Seal this Seventh Day of January 1822
Signd in preasents of James Elliot [seal]
Arthur Hickman
James E Hickman

Although we have no record of her date of birth, Sophia was probably eighteen to twenty years old and had a two-month-old son named Benjamin. She must, indeed, have been healthy, for in twenty-three years Sophia bore eleven children, only one of whom died in infancy — a remarkable record for that time. The name of their father was not noted, but the names and dates of Sophia's offspring were recorded as follows by the Hickmans:[3]

Births of the Blacks

Sophias Children	[Sophia died in 1847]
Benjamin was born Oct. 27th 1821	Benjamin died May the 21st 1888
Samuel was born Feb. 14th 1825	
Jacob was born March 17th 1827	
Peter was born Feb. 20th 1830	
Mary was born Jan. 26th 1832	
Celia was born Aug. 30th 1833	
Martha was born Aug. 28th 1835	
Jesse was born Sept. 23rd 1837	
Sarah was born Oct. 17th 1839	
Huldah was born Feb. 19th 1842	Huldah Died the 11th Feb. 1862 at 8 Oclock:
George was born Sept. 10th 1844	George died Sept 1845

The Hickman farm on Back Creek could support only so many people, and eight of the nine children of William Hickman (1770-1843) left that narrow mountain valley to seek their fortunes elsewhere. Their youngest brother, Roger Hickman (1813-1889), remained at the ancestral home and saved the letters they wrote home to him. Later, some of Roger's eighteen children wrote letters to their brother Peter Lightner Hickman (1858-1937), who stayed on the family farm when most others of his generation moved on.

A growing black population also strained the resources of the farm so that, as with William Hickman's children and grandchildren, it would be the fate of many of Sophia's offspring to leave Back Creek and live

The home of William Hickman (1770–1843), Roger Hickman (1813–1889) and Lula Georgia Hickman Rose (1874–1943) in 1936, the year the federal Works Progress Administration (WPA) determined the home to be of historical significance.[4]

their lives elsewhere. The first date we have of her children leaving is 1837, when William gave Peter, Sophia's fourth child, to his son Andrew Johnson Hickman (1811-1880). Andrew took the seven-year-old boy across the mountains to Greenbrier County where he was expected to help look after Andrew's infant son, George Johnson Hickman (1837-?). It was the custom of the time, for those who could afford it, to have a black child serve as "nurse" and companion for their children. As the children grew older, the relationship changed to that of a personal servant, valet, or whatever.

> Williamsburg Greenbrier County January 26 AD1838
>
> Honored Friends
>
> ... G. Johnson stood the ride verry well fretted none oandley the night at Calisons; Mother to you he has been a verry good Child since wee got to house Keeping and looks fine his Cheeks has gotton as red, and looks harty; him and Peter is playing on the floor now and Nancy is Spinning and I am writting that is our imployment to night
>
> ———
>
> ...tell Sofa that Peter is well and doing well and is getting as fat as a pig;

In letters home to Roger, Andrew usually sent word to Sophia about the growth and progress of her son.

Sinking Creek. Nov 9th AD 1838

Honored Brother
...I have not got any grain yet only as I use it I am ferfull this will Bee a hard winter for me to put over grain is not to Be Bought at any prise hardly Crops was so light that people has not got it to share...
...tell Sofa that Peter is well and grows fine:

Peter was a great help to Andrew's wife,[5] but it would be a number of years before he grew large enough to help Andrew with the heavier work of a pioneer farm in the mountains where master and slave worked side-by-side to grow the food and fiber needed to support the household. By 1841 he was large enough to help repair rail fences as Andrew hacked a new farm out of the Nicholas County forest.

Nicholas Co. February 23th AD 1841

Most Dear Brother
...I went 2 trips to Cannaway for salt salt is worth 2 cts pr lb. by the Barrel 2 1/2 retale I hawled 43 Bush one load with 3 horses...
...tell Sopha that Peter is well and grows fast and is a fine Boy; wee are now reparing fence he sets the stakes while I hull them and rider...

Andrew mentioned Peter in other letters over the years.

Nicholas Cty Beaver Creek Jen. 17 1843

Honored Brother
...I want to make another trip this winter Either there or to Lewisburg with venison hams; I cilled 21 deer 19 Turkeys that is my hunt this fall; I miss my tan yard very much...
...tell Sofa that Peter is well and I will try and Let him go and see her as soon as I can...

Nicholas Cty Va. February 20th: AD 1844

Honored Brother
I rased a noble crop of corn last summer and Better rye could hardly Be My meaddow was fine Oats and wheat modderate...
...tell Sofa that Peter is well and grows finely ——

Nicholas C H Va Feb 5th 1845

Honored Brother
I do not know when wee will get to pay you a visit as you know that I am cept Busy on a knew place like this I am still trying to clear a little I am still chopping the timber down...
...Give Howdy to Lanty and Lizzy to Arthur and Reb — tell Sofa that Peter is well he is nearly as tall as I am — ...

Six years later, in the spring of 1851, the twenty-one-year-old Peter ran away from Andrew's home and, as far as I know, that was the last time Andrew owned a slave. We do not know where Peter went, but Andrew thought he had crossed the Ohio River.

There is no record of how far, or how hard, anyone searched for Peter, but Andrew's nephew, William W. Hickman (1828-1872), did go to Ohio looking for the runaway. Ohio was on the trunk line of the "Underground Railroad," an organization that smuggled runaway slaves to Canada. Thousands of slaves were said to have passed through Ohio before the Civil War and whole towns there ignored the Fugitive Slave Act to help them.

Two letters from William P. Hickman (1810-1864), brother of Roger and Andrew and uncle of William W., mention the search for Peter.

Wytheville Nov. 19th 1851.

Dear Brother
...I recd. a letter from Wm. last May informing me that Andrew had lost Pete. Do you know whether he has had any account of him yet? I neglected to answer Wm's letter immediately, & now I do not know where to address him....

Wytheville Jan. 7th 1852.

Dear William:
I received a letter from you when in Ohio hunting for Pete; but from multiplicity of business, cases &c. I failed to answer it directly, & then after delaying some time, I hardly knew whether it was worth while to address you at Summersville....

An 1853 letter from Andrew, written more than two years after Peter took off, contains the last mention of Peter in the Hickman papers.

Beaver Creek Nicholas Cty July 26th 53

Honored Brother

...George is now sitting in the Deore reading Nancy is in the Other House Spinning; the little children is playing in pourch the 2 Oaldest Girls is a cross the river a going to school they purpossed coming home next Saturday and the Leady they are Boarding with...

...I have not gotton any infermation respectting Peat — whare he has landed himself I have not any idea: ...

In 1842 William Hickman the patriarch sold to his youngest son Sophia's tenth child, an infant girl named Huldah, for only $1.00. The infant continued to live with her mother because Roger remained on his father's farm and inherited it a bit over a year later. The bill of sale is notable as the only place in the Hickman papers where the word slave was used to describe a person.

Know all men by these presents, that I, William Hickman of Bath County for and in consideration of the sum of one Dollar to me in hand paid by Roger Hickman of said county at and before the sealing and delivery of these presents (the receipt whereof I do hereby acknowledge) have bargained, sold, granted and confirmed and by these presents do bargain, sell grant and confirm, to the said Roger Hickman a certain female negro slave named Huldah: To have and to hold the said female negro slave, and her future increase to the only proper use and behoof of the said Roger Hickman his executor, administrators and assigns for ever. And I the said William Hickman, for myself me executors and administrators the said female negro slave, with her future increase to the said Roger Hickman, his executors, administators and assigns, against me, the said William Hickman my executors, administrators and assigns, and against all and every other person and persons whatsoever, shall and will warrant and forever defend, by these presents. In witness whereof I have here unto set my hand, and affixed my seal this 1st day September in the year of our Lord 1842

Wm Hickman

Sealed and delived, and possession
delivered, in presence of
Jno. D. Hamilton

The only other references to Huldah in the Hickman family papers come nearly twenty years later. Huldah died just before her twentieth birthday.

Births of the Blacks
Huldahs Child was Born Jan. 6st 1860
Huldah Died the 11th Feb. 1862 at 8 Oclock:
& Her Child a 1 Oclock the saim day

William Hickman had been ill for some time when he prepared his will just five days after selling Huldah to Roger.

> I, William Hickman, of the County of Bath and State of Virginia being in perfect health and of perfect mind and memory do make and ordain this my last will and testament.
>
> First I give and bequeath to my eldest daughter, Martha wife of Stuart Taylor, to her and her heirs forever a negro girl named Mary and her future increase.
>
> Second I give to my Granddaughter, Nancy wife of Isaac Hartman, to her and her heirs forever a negro girl named Celia and her future increase, upon the following conditions (to-wit) That the said Nancy, wife of Isaac Hartman, to pay or cause to be paid unto her seven sisters and one brother being the children of my daughter Jane Bradshaw Dec'd. the sum of Twenty-two Dollars and twenty-five cents each.
>
> Third, I give to my eldest son Arthur Hickman the land which I have heretofore conveyed to him by deed upon conditions that he pay or cause to be paid unto my third son William Hickman the sum of One Hundred Dollars.
>
> Fourth, I give to my second son James E. Hickman all the property that he took away with him when he left me.
>
> Fifth, I give to my third son William Hickman and his heirs forever a negro boy named Jesse and a negro girl named Sarah and her future increase.
>
> Sixth, I give to my third daughter Huldah, wife of Isaac Callison, all the property that she took away with her when she left me.
>
> Seventh, I give to my fourth son Andrew Hickman all the property that he took away with him when he left me.
>
> Eighth, I give to my fifth son Roger Hickman, the plantation upon which I now live and all my adjoining lands and its appurtenances to him and his heirs forever and also one negro man named Benjamin

and a negro woman named Sophia and a negro girl named Martha and their future increase to him and his heirs forever, and also all my carpenter tools, farming utensils, household and kitchen furniture of every description upon the following conditions (to-wit) that he pay or cause to be paid unto my third son William Hickman the sum of Two Hundred Dollars. Lastly I do make and ordain my fifth son Roger Hickman sole executor of this my last will and testament; In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 6th day of September in the year One Thousand Eight Hundred and forty-two.

Wm. Hickman (seal)

Signed and sealed in
presence of:

Thos. Campbell
Peter Lightner

Whereas, I, William Hickman of the County of Bath and State of Virginia have by my last will and testament in writing duly executed, bearing date on the 6th day of September 1842, given and bequeathed to my third son William Hickman a negro girl named Sarah; Now, I, the said William Hickman being desirous of altering my said will in respect to the said negro girl Sarah do therefore make this present writing which I will and direct to be annexed as a codicil to my said will and taken as a part thereof, and I do hereby revoke that part of my said will which gave to my third son William the said negro girl Sarah; and I do give and bequeath the said negro girl named Sarah and her increase to my eldest daughter Martha, wife of Stuart Taylor; and I do ratify and confirm my said will in everything except where the same is hereby revoked and altered as aforesaid.
In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this 14th day of October in the year of our Lord One Thousand eight hundred and forty-three.

Wm. Hickman (seal)

Witnesses:

Thos. Campbell
Peter Lightner[6]

Three of the eight bequests concerned the distribution of personal property in the form of servants — the children of Sophia — who would leave the plantation to live with William's children elsewhere. Roger inherited the plantation, its appurtenances, and the tools and equipment

required to operate it. He also inherited Sophia and two of her children (he had purchased another child the previous year).

Three of Sophia's sons are not mentioned in William Hickman's will or the appraisal of his personal property, but we know that Peter was given to Andrew J. Hickman in 1837. It is possible that William gave Samuel and Jacob to his sons Arthur and James Elliott some time before his death. Unfortunately, few letters survive from those two sons, and none mention slaves.

At the bottom of the inventory of William Hickman's personal property were listed the names and appraised values of five servants whose value made up $1,300 of the total $1,466.50½ appraised personal property in his estate. Sophia and Benjamin, purchased for $350 in 1822, were now appraised at $650, and two of her other children, Jessie and Sarah, were appraised at $225 and $200. Patsy was unrelated to Sophia and was said to be the wife of Benjamin.

...	...	...
1 Negro Woman named	Sophia	150.00
1 Boy	Ben	500.00
1 Girl	Patsey	225.00
1 Boy	Jessie	225.00
1 Girl	Sarah	200.00
Cash on hand		$2.50
		1466.50½

Since no other names appear on the list, William Hickman's heirs may have received most of their inheritance before the appraisal was compiled. But two of those named were too young to leave their mother and too small to be of much help to their new masters, so Jesse and Sarah had been left behind. Sarah was supposed to go to Martha Elliott Hickman (1800-1875), the wife of Stuart Taylor. About a year later Martha wrote to Roger concerning the disposition of the five-year-old Sarah.

Rockbridge County Oct. 30th 1844

Dear Brother

... we have been consulting what we had best be don with the little black girl Father left us and have concluded to let you keep her at the appraisment as you Said last Spring you ware willing to do we have a good dail of help of hir size and it Seams hard to take her away from her mother and the famaly So young and if you think proper to keep

her at the appraisment and pay interest from then and charge nothing fer her keeping you may do so and may have the use of the money perhaps fo some years if you should not wish to keep her plese let us know amediatly by letter directed to Ceder Grove or otherwise — or send her by some waggoner if conveneint with whom you can trust her to Lexington to Thomas Kirkpatrick one door above Doct. Pains and if so you will be receipted for her the first chance we have ...[7]

Mr Roger Hickman Martha E. Taylor
Stuart Taylor

NB plese let us know your will as to the above amedietly
S. T. & M. E. T.

Sarah had been appraised at $200, so Martha and Stuart Taylor asked for that amount, with simple interest on the unpaid balance, and gave Roger a number of years to pay the debt.[8] Thus Sarah was able to remain with her mother on Back Creek. The Taylors probably had taken Sarah's older sister, Mary, who was then almost twelve, the year before.

We know that people's attitudes may change over time and that actions may not conform to words, so this letter from Martha Hickman and Stuart Taylor raises questions about how attitudes toward slavery may have changed in that family. Stuart Taylor was a lay preacher in the Methodist Episcopal Church which, about four months after their letter was written, divided into northern and southern churches over the question of slavery. Their first son, William Taylor (1821-1902), was a well-known Methodist Episcopal preacher riding a circuit in the mountains of Virginia. He was to become famous as a missionary, an opponent of slavery, and finally the Bishop of Africa. William Taylor owned no slaves, but when he married in 1846 his wife did. Taylor described his solution to that problem in his autobiography:

> ...I said, "Mr. Chairman, since the session of Conference last year the Lord has given me a wife. My wife is an heir to an undivided estate in which there are about a dozen slaves. She is anxious to manumit her portion of them, but they will not come into her possession, nor hence be at her disposal in any way, till the youngest heir reaches her majority by age or marriage. As we shall have much to do with the training of her coheirs—her young brother and two younger sisters—we hope, by the will of God and the concurrence of all concerned, to manumit the whole of the slaves together and thus avoid the separation of families...."

> Within four years from that time the youngest heir was married, and on the night of her marriage a deed of manumission was executed, signed by all the claimant heirs, and from my own pocket I gave them one thousand dollars in gold and my father engaged their passage and put them aboard a ship bound for Liberia, where they arrived safely in due time.[9]

Did his parents, who said "we have a good deal of help of her size" also free their slaves? It has been said that Stuart Taylor gave his slaves their freedom and $50 each, but I do not know if, or when, that actually happened. Nor do I know if they also went to Liberia, a new country in West Africa purchased in 1821 for the purpose of resettling freed slaves, or if among those freed was one named Mary, a child of Sophia.

This was a particularly hard time for Roger Hickman. His mother died in 1842; his father, his wife, and one daughter all died in 1843; and his brothers and sisters had left home, so he was left to operate a mountain farm of over 1,000 acres without the accustomed support of an extended family. Usually in those days there were spinster aunts or sisters in a household to help out when children were orphaned, but Roger had no such aid in the three years between the death of his first wife and his second marriage.[10] Nor did he have male kin to help with the heavier work.

In that situation Sophia and her children were critical to the farm's success, and it was a hard time for them also. In the absence of Hickman women, Sophia (pregnant with George), Patsy, and Martha (only eight years old herself) took on all the household chores and looked after Roger's surviving two children and also Sofia's youngest children. In the stress of the time Sophia's youngest, George, died in 1845 and Sophia herself died in 1847.

The farmers on Back Creek cooperated in many of their tasks and most particularly at harvest time, hog-butchering time, house or barn raising, and so forth. Roger had other male slaves, unrelated to Sophia, to work on the day-to-day operations of the farm, but Benjamin was probably his chief help in the fields, the grist mill, and the sawmill that were parts of the Hickman property. It is doubtful that Roger and the Hickman ancestral farm could have carried on without the slaves. But, survive they did, and Roger Hickman eventually prospered and became a Justice of the Bath County Court, a ruling elder in his Presbyterian Church, and the father of eighteen children.

With Roger's siblings dispersed to other counties in Virginia — and a sister in Illinois — the family kept in touch through letters and the occasional visit by horseback over very poor roads. While maintaining their own contacts, the Hickmans also helped the black family to stay in touch through occasional visits and frequent mention in the letters home to Roger.

The next series of letters is from the Rev. William P. Hickman, a Presbyterian minister and the only one of that generation of Hickmans with a college education. By the terms of William Hickman's will, his son William P. was to receive Sophia's six-year-old son Jesse and $300 to be paid to him by two of his brothers. However, Jesse was too small in 1843 to be of much help, and William P. left him on Back Creek with Roger for a couple of years.

Scottsville July 9th 1844

Dear Brother

You say that father left me Jesse, & some moneys to be paid me by you & Arthur. Is Jesse worth his victuals & clothes to you? & are you willing to keep him a few months for me? Mrs. Kerr says that she will take him, if I can do no better. And would it be convenient for you & Arther to let me have a little money now? I owe a little which I should like to pay soon. If you could let me have fifty or a hundred dollars between you, it would relieve me. Let me know as soon as you can.

Remember me to Arthur & his family. And give my love to Sophia.

Scottsville Oct. 3rd 1844

Dear Brother

We have been very dry here this Fall; but had a fine rain last Saturday. The river has been so low that there was not watter enough to keep up the canal, so that there has been very little boating done for some weeks past.

...Come down & see us as soon as you are done seeding; & stay a week.— Margaret sends much love to you. Remember me to Arthur & family; & to Sophia ...

Scottsville April 14th 1845

Dear Brother

...Margaret & the little one are both very well. Our little babe grows finely. We are very much in need of a nurse for it & have been trying

for some time to get one either for love or moneye, or for both, but have hitherto failed in geting one that is any thing like suitable. How would Jess do? Do you think that he could mind the child? Would he be able to carry her for Margaret when she wants to go to visit neighbors? How old is he? for I really have no idea of his age? And Margaret asks, has he learned to talk plainly yet? I want you to write me as soon as you can after you get this; & let me know whether you think that he could nurse for Margaret or not....

Write forth with on the reception of this & let me know whether you think that Jess woul answer our porpose.

Remember me to Arthur; Rebecca & family. And to Sophia.

By 1845, however, his wife needed help with their first child, and William took Jesse to his new home in Wythe County. The eight-year-old black boy was to be a "nurse" for their first child just as his brother Peter had been for Andrew's first child.[11]

This willingness to own a slave also represents a change in attitude. About ten years earlier William P. Hickman had written an essay as a student at Washington College in Lexington, Virginia, expressing his belief in the benefits of freeing his country from the ruinous consequences of slavery and supporting the role of the American Colonization Society in the transportation of freed slaves to Liberia. His statements as a student reflected the general skepticism of the benefits of slavery among the Scots-Irish Presbyterians of trans-mountain Virginia at that time. While not actually advocating abolition of slavery, such feelings were particularly strong around Lexington and at Washington College in the 1830s.[12]

Wythe County Dec. 3rd 1845

Dear Brother

...Jesse has been well, & is doing very well & seems to be very well contented. The truth is, I believe that he would be contented any where if he could only get enough to eat & to ware; but the eating seems to him the most important....

Remember me to Arthur & Rebecca &c. & to Sophia.

Yours most affectionately

W. P. Hickman

In letters home to Roger, William P. Hickman included items on Jesse's progress for Roger to pass on to the boy's mother.

Wythe County Jan. 21st 1846

Dear Brother
I rec.d your letter day-before-yesterday. I was glad to hear from you. We have been generally very well since I wrote with the exception of colds, which we all have had. Eliza Jane grows finely.– is beginning to talk a little, & is very mischievous. Jesse is also well ...

The weather has been very unfavourable for preaching this winter. My congregations have been small. But as large as I expected....

Wythe County Va. March 18th 1846

Dear Brother
...Tell Sophia that Jesse is well, & grows fast. & is upon the who a pretty good boy. He is beginning to be a great help to Margaret. He has improved very much in his mode of doing business latterly. I expect to bring him with us whenever we come to see you. I asked Jesse what I should tell his mama: & he said to tell her that he was well & liked to stay here....

I have been very hard at work for three days. On Monday I made me a sled. Tuesday Jesse & I halled wood in the forenoon & in the afternoon halled manure on the garden. to day I have been repairing the pailing around it; which were in a very delapidated state. I was exceedingly tired this evening. But after eating a very hearty supper & smoaking <u>two</u> pipes of tobaco, & penning this espistle I feel quite rested....

Wythe County Aug. 4th 1846

Dear Brother
...I was very much surprised to hear of your marriage. Tho' I need not have been. Well I congratulate you; & hope that <u>your</u> Mag will divide <u>your sorrows</u> & <u>double</u> your joys....

Our health is good. Mine is better than it was when I was in Bath last Fall. Eliza grows finely, And can talk pretty well. Jesse is well; & is doing very well. I dont know how Margaret could do without him. ...Tell Sophia that Jesse is well, & I will bring him to see her whenever I come....

Wythe County Oct. 20th 1846

Dear Brother
...I do not expect to get to see you before next Spring, unless you pay us a visit. But I have been laying my plans to go on to Bath from

Presbyty which is to meet in Blacksburg the first Thursday in May. Could not you meet us there Jesse is well & doing well. He can catch & saddle my horse for me.

Jesse's mother died in 1847. There is no record among the Hickman papers of Sophia's date of birth, but if she was about eighteen when she had her first child, then Sophia died at about age forty-three and a bit over a year after the death of her youngest child.

March 1st 1847

Dear Brother

...I was truly sorry to hear of Sophia death. You must miss her very much indeed. We have no black woman yet, & get along very well without one, by geting our washing done at Mr. Crockett's.

I have had some thought of trying to get Matilda M. Bradshaw to come & live with me. Is she at home yet? what kind of girl is she? do you know anything about her? How would she do? I think that I could do as much for her perhaps as her father....

Friday 5th. I have not been to town since I wrote. Hence the delay. Jesse is now going to the office. All well.

Sophia had served in the Hickman household on Back Creek for twenty-five years, and Roger and his siblings must have truly missed her, for they had known Sophia much of their lives. Her youngest son, Jesse, was almost ten years old, and he would take the letter to the post office.

William said they got along well without a black woman servant because they had their laundry done at a neighbor's. But he often inquired about getting one or another of his nieces to live with them to help Margaret. In turn, William offered to provide the girl's education. In this instance he asked about the second daughter, then fifteen, of his deceased sister, Jane Elliott Hickman (1802-c.1841).

In the next two letters William P. inquired about Benjamin, at twenty-six the oldest of Sophia's children. We have no hint of what may have been wrong — possibly Ben was grieving for his mother — but it is likely that he had suffered some injury on the farm or in the mills.

Wytheville Jan. 13th 1848

Dear Brother

...We have moved to town. And are very comfortably fixed. we occupy a house belonging to Mr. Walker, the use of which I get for instructing his two daughters privately.... I hall my own wood, & so I

am gitting a long very cheaply. I have a little one horse waggon which answers admirably well, I cut & load & Jesse drives. —...
...The children both grow finely. Mary is beginning to talk some. I am anxious to hear from you, to know how you all are, & how Ben has got....

Since William P. Hickman continued to put news of Jesse in his letters long after Sophia's death, we must conclude that he had not been doing so only for her benefit. Of course the news was important to Ben, Martha, Sarah, and Huldah — Jesse's siblings on Roger's farm — but the Hickmans had their personal interests in the black family.

Wytheville Nov. 21st 1848

Dear Brother
...Jesse is well, & grows very well; but he is still very thoughtless. I hope however when he get older he will get over it. I bought a black woman & child in May. The woman is about 28 years old; & her child — a female — was born the 30th of March. I gave $500. for them. She is very industrious, &, although she had the reputation when I bought her, of not being very truthful & honest, yet she has thus far done very well, & I hope she will continue to do so. Her name is Jane. Her child is also quite sick today. She is effected very much like my children, & I suppose, she is also taking the whooping-cough....

I am very anxious to hear from you; I suppose that you can also say another, by this time. How has Ben got? I want you to write to me soon....

Not being able to find free domestic help among his family, William decided to purchase a black woman to do the washing, ironing, cleaning, and other work required to maintain a rural household full of small children in nineteenth century Virginia. By acquiring additional slaves William was following a trend among landowners in Southwest Virginia where, contrary to trends in other parts of the state, the slave population was growing in both numbers and as a proportion of the total population. In Montgomery County alone, the slave population increased by 50.9 percent during the 1850s.[13]

He left us no explanation, but two years later William sold the servant and her child. Since he also sold some of his wife's property, it may be that he needed to raise cash.

July 29th 1850

Dear Brother

It has been a long time since I wrote to you. Indeed, I believe it is near two years. For I do not remember of writing to since a few weeks after James Brown was born; & he will be two years old the 18th of next November....

... I have sold the negro woman & child that I bought some time ago. I sold them the 12th of last month $600. I gave $500 the 12 day of May 1848. I have also sold Margaret's interest in the land near the iron works, I got $500 for it. — ...

Montgomery Co. Va. June 22nd 1853

Dear Brother.

...We think it probable that we – Myself wife – five children & Jesse – will pay you a visit about the first day of Sept. if we can make the arrangements, & provided also, you think you could find room for such a swarm, a few days....

Pulaski Co. Aug. 9th 1855.

Dear Brother.

...We are all very well. The children had a very hard time of it last summer with the whooping-cough. But we all have enjoyed excellent health this summer thus far; except Jesse, who has been laid up for two weeks with sleight brush of fever. He is better & beginning to get about a little again. Lizzie, Mary, & James are going to school this summer; & two of Moses Hoge's daughters are boarding with me, which with my own five & an orphan boy we have makes us quite abundant in children....

William was again looking for domestic help for Margaret when he wrote the following letter to Roger and the second one to his nineteen-year-old niece, Mary Elizabeth Hickman (1840–1909), Roger's oldest daughter.

Blacksburg Montgomery Co. Va Dec. 20th 1858

Dear Brother.

...Bring Lizzie & let her stay several months with us it would do her good. We have pleanty of room now, as I enlarged my house last Summer. And I have corn enout to feed her on for a few months any how....

... Margaret is in her chamber caring for the little one, & the girls are at school & James has gone with Jesse to the field with a load of

manure & to bring back a load of fodder for the cows — they would all join in much love to you & family one & all.

Yours as ever
W. P. Hickman

By this time James Brown Hickman was ten years old and Jesse was twenty-one.

Blacksburg Va. Sept 16th 1859

Dear Lizzie,
...Could not your Pa bring you out to Synod, & leave you with us all winter; & Lanty could come after you in the Spring, or I could take you home in the Spring, if he could not come....
...Tell Ben that Jesse is to be married tomorrow night, if his fair-lady-love does not jilt him; of which she gave some symptoms a week ago....

Jesse, the youngest surviving son of Sophia, was twenty-two years old in 1859, and there is no further word about him or his marriage, nor do we know the name of the bride, or that of her master. Nor is there any record of the surname Jesse might have taken if he lived long enough to gain his freedom after the Civil War.[14]

First mentioned in 1843 in the inventory and appraisal of William Hickman's estate, Patsy turns up next in the Hickman records as the mother of six children. Ben was said to be the father of Patsy's children. So here we have Sophia's grandchildren, the third generation of her family on the Hickman farm.

Births of the Blacks

Patsies Childrens Births
George Henry was born Nov. the 14th 1852
Archey [—?—] was born June 6st 1854 — Archey died the 4th May 1856
Charles Lewis was born January 11th 1856
John Anson was born the 4 day of June 1858
Jesse Stuart was born the 2nd of Jan 1861
Lucy Jane was born Sept. 5ft 1863

Patsy bore her last children in 1861 and 1863, but deaths exceeded births on Roger Hickman's farm during the Civil War. Among the slaves, Sophia's daughter Huldah and her two-year-old child both died in February 1862.

Lanty William Hickman (1838–1906), Company F, 11th Virginia Cavalry Regiment, was the eldest child of Roger Hickman and Martha Ann Lockridge and brother of Mary Elizabeth Hickman, pictured on page 52 of The Smithfield Review, *vol. 3 (1999).*

Roger lost a fourteen-year-old daughter in 1861, and his second wife died in 1862. A son died about 1864, but in the confusion of the times the date was not recorded in the family bible, and he has no headstone in the family cemetery.[15] Roger Hickman married a third time, and the first two children of that marriage died as infants in 1867 and 1868.[16] No letters survive from the Civil War period, so we have no record of the cause of all the deaths during that time, but disease and malnutrition associated with the war and reconstruction are likely culprits. Roger's eldest son, Lanty William Hickman (1838–1906), served in a Confederate cavalry regiment and survived the war, although his service record noted that he was sent home twice to recover from illness or disease.

William P. Hickman did not survive the war. He was killed, and his fifteen-year-old son James Brown was wounded, not far from their home in Pulaski County, at the Battle of Cloyd's Mountain in May of 1864.[17] Andrew's son, William Robert Hickman (1844–1864), died of disease in 1864 while serving in a Confederate infantry regiment.

Sophia's family is mentioned rarely in letters after the Civil War, and fewer records exist of the births and relationships of the free blacks after emancipation, so we must look to memoirs and stories passed down through the Hickman family for word of her descendants. Among those stories is one of how some of Sophia's children and grandchildren remained on Roger Hickman's farm after emancipation:

Aunt Patsy was mentioned frequently by all the older members of the family when I was a child. It took me some time to figure out who she was, but because I asked a lot of questions, someone finally told me. She and Uncle Ben had been two of the devoted slaves that had remained on the farm after the Civil War. At the end of the conflict Roger Hickman had called the slaves together to announce their freedom. The younger ones left, but the older ones had no place to go and they were too old to start life over again in a strange place so many of them stayed. John, Bill, and Charlie Robinson, Aunt Patsy's sons stayed too. Charlie died on the farm, and I have mentioned John before....[18]

By custom, older slaves had been addressed as "aunt" and "uncle", and that is how Benjamin and Patsy were remembered by my grandfather and his siblings and mentioned in their letters. In the following letter Emma Susan Sabina Hickman (1852–1919) asked her sister Lizzie about Uncle Ben.

Monday Morn Jan 18 /79

Sister Lizzie:—
...How is Pappys health this winter & how is Cousin Polly with much love to all I will close. How is old Uncle Ben tell him he might have come to see me Xmas as none of the rest would come ...

Benjamin, born in 1821, spent all but two months of his life with the Hickmans on Back Creek, where he died on 21 May 1888. Emma Sue's pappy, Roger Hickman, died in 1889, and the farm was more-or-less divided between two of his surviving children.

In an 1891 letter Roger's daughter, Virginia Alice Hickman (1848-1933), whose husband discovered two gold mines in California after serving in the Civil War with her older brother, Lanty, asked a younger brother, Peter, about Patsy and two other ex-slaves.

Julian San Diego Co. December 3rd, 1891

Dear Brother
...tell Aunt Patsy I often think of her & uncle Bill how is mother & John getting along are they still with you all John I would like to hear him pick the bango, from you dovoted

Sister Jennie

Patsy was probably about seventy-six years of age when she died in January 1909 and was laid to rest in the old slave cemetery across the

road to the west of the Hickman home. An old RECEIPTS book belonging to Lula Georgia Hickman's husband[19] shows the following entries:

> Jan 20, 1909, From John A Robinson,
> $6.00 Dollars on Patsys Coffin
> Jan 21s 1909, From C. R. Robinson,
> Patsys Coffin 1/2 6.00 dollars

John Anson Robinson, Charles Lewis Robinson, and Jesse Stuart Robinson were sons of Patsy and Benjamin, and thus grandsons of Sophia. They took the surname Robinson after emancipation, but I could not determine its origin.[20] The three brothers were born before the war at about the same time as my grandfather, Peter Lightner Hickman (1858–1937), and all four boys grew up together on the Hickman farm. The Robinson brothers remained on Back Creek into the 1920s.

Another of the Hickman stories was of Peter L. Hickman and Sophia's grandchildren playing during the Civil War:

> ...One day...she came upon several of the children of the family and of the slaves playing together. There was an argument over which one would be "pappy." The argument seemed to have been between Uncle Pete [Peter L. Hickman] and John Robinson, and Cousin Polly [Mary H. Hickman] commented that a fine looking "pappy" either one of them would make, and the children — both black and white — scattered in every direction. When I was a child John Robinson would show up every fall to "help out" with the butchering. He seemed to be a very old man, but very gentle and was well thought of by the family.[21]

When Peter L. Hickman went to Ohio in 1895 to woo and wed Ollie G. Lockridge, John A. Robinson ran Peter's half of the farm for two to three years and wrote letters detailing harvests, sales, and local gossip.[22]

> Sun Rise Bath County Va.
> Dec the 27th 1895
>
> Dear friend
>
> I Received your kind letter a few days ago and was truly glad to here from you and your wife ...
> ...we gathered the corn you had 401 1/2 Barrels of corn I had the same this is the corn that was Raised on the New ground and on the

old Part you had 8 I had 4 I had the little field cleaned out now and fenced and the fence Below your house...
I will tell you and your wife about a big meeting at the Innkard church hel By Rev Mr. Clark...
...Excuese my Bad Spelling wright Soon and tell me all the news
your truly   John A. Robinson

John A. Robinson left Back Creek for a time, and when he returned he had a wife — a white woman twelve years his senior. Mixed marriages were unusual at that time, but John and Martha were one of several such couples in the county. John and Martha Robinson settled into a log house across Back Creek and later moved into what came to be known as "the John house" across the road from the old Hickman home.

Marian Rose Hoge MacKenzie (1920–) remembered, when she was a small child, seeing "Marthy" Robinson on her death bed in the house across from Marian's grandmother's home:

I had a yellow dress on and Mother later told me that they had taken me to see Marthy because she had given me a piece of yellow organdy to make me a dress and grandmother or mother had made it and they took me up to show it to her. Someone must have lifted me up because I remember looking down at her. She was covered to her chin and had a scarf of some sort around her head. I understand she died a few days later.[23]

Martha was in her late seventies when she died 5 March 1923. In a time when people were born at home in the bed of their mother, they usually died at home in their own bed with family and friends around them. My mother — then fifteen-years-old — and uncle remembered sitting up all night with Martha's body the night she died, and two neighbors kept the vigil with the young Hickmans.

Martha M. Robinson was buried in the "slave graveyard" on Back Creek. I could still locate seventeen sunken graves there in 1995, most marked only by field stones, but there were two readable headstones, including one saying

Martha M.
wife of
John A.
Robinson
Apr. 26, 1846
Mar. 5, 1923

Jesse Stuart Robinson (1861–192–?) in 1918.

Charles L. Robinson lived in the "old Hickman place" with the family of Lula Georgia Hickman Rose until he died. Jesse Stuart Robinson had a room in the home of Lizzie Hickman Ryder until her death in 1909 — the same year his mother, Patsy, died — when he moved into the small bedroom above the kitchen in the Peter L. Hickman home. My mother and aunt both had fond memories and stories of "Stuarty," who was about the age of their father. Among my aunt's treasured possessions from her childhood home on Back Creek was what she called her "slave bed," a narrow "spool" bed used by Stuart Robinson. A small photo taken in 1918 shows Stuart Robinson when he was fifty-seven.

After Martha's death, John and Stuart left Back Creek and went across the mountain to Marlinton, West Virginia, to live with relatives, although John would return to Back Creek on into the 1930s to help with hog butchering in the fall of the year.

John Robinson was not the only ex-slave to make periodic visits to the Hickman farm. The following description of a visit by another former Hickman slave, though not a member of Sophia's family, can add to our picture of racial relations on Back Creek sixty-some years after the Civil War:

> One rainy day in the summer of 1931 or 1932 grandmother got a call from John Lindsay, who lived across Back Creek Mountain, telling her that Uncle Sam was on his way to our house across the old buffalo

trail. It was only about five miles by trail but about thirty miles by road. Grandmother was frantic, so she called Ray Chestnut (also known as Ray Bird) to take a mule and go to meet him. I had no idea who Uncle Sam was. Several hours later Ray walked in leading the mule with the tallest, gauntest black man I had ever seen. He was also one of the oldest men I had ever seen. He spotted me as he climbed down from the mule and said, "Come shake hands with your Uncle Lanty's black boy." He stayed around for a week or so, then some of his relatives came from W. Va. and took him home. He died a few years later and there was a tribute to him printed in the *Pocahontas Times*.[24]

Sam Stewart's obituary gives some idea of the role of a "nurse" and describes how slaves were moved around as gifts and inheritances within some white families.

UNCLE SAM

To him that overcometh.

I wish to express my appreciation of Uncle Sam Stewart, recently deceased at a ripe old age. When I was a very small child, he was my nurse. Mother often told me many little things about Sam. When I was about seven months old I refused to let him rock me in the little old wooden cradle. Mother would rock me to sleep, as she thought, and Sam would crawl in on the floor to rock me without being seen. I soon caught on to this trick, and raised the yell.

My father often told us of sending Sam to the run to wash his feet before going to bed. The boy stayed so long, he went to look after him. He found him sitting on a big rock fast asleep with his feet in the water.

Such things recall happy childhood days — mother, home and heaven.

Roger Hickman, my grandfather, gave Sam to my father, Lanty Hickman, in 1860.

Father and mother, Mary Wiley, were married December 18, 1859. They went to housekeeping the spring following. I think Sam was about 12 years of age at that time. He was with us until the close of the war.

My grandmother was Martha Lockridge, daughter of Colonel Lanty Lockridge, of Pocahontas county. Sam came to her as a slave from her father.

Sam came to visit me in Durbin 28 years ago. He had kept up with me all those years, proving his loyalty to the family he had served.

A young Susie Green (c. 1890–1929) at the Hickman home.

I was delighted to have him. I gave him the best dinner I could have prepared, some presents and tried to make him happy. He said "Miss Mary, I am so glad you got such a fine man." I said, "I am too; are you surprised?" "No, bless your life; no ketch too good for you!"

I am glad to read the good words that have been said of Uncle Sam.

Mary Hickman Folk[25]

Durbin, W.Va.

Susie Green, the granddaughter of Patsy and great-granddaughter of Sophia, was the child of Lucy Jane and the Uncle Bill mentioned in Jennie Hickman's 1891 letter. In later years Susie, whose mother was born a slave in 1863, continued to live on the old Hickman home place, cooking for Lula Hickman Rose and looking after Lula's children and grandchildren — the fourth generation in Sophia's family to work in the house built by William Hickman prior to 1800.

Marian Rose Hoge MacKenzie, who was born in the old Hickman home in 1920, told of Susie in her memoir:

Perhaps now is the place to say a word or two about Susie [Green]. She was the grandchild of Uncle Ben and Aunt Patsy.... Susie was the child of a daughter of Aunt Patsy [possibly Lucy Jane], I think. She had been a child of ten or so when mother [Hallie Grey Rose, 1901–1976] was born, and she helped grandmother look after mother. When her mother moved away, Susie stayed behind. She was smart

Susie Green, a great-granddaughter of Sophia, in front of the Hickman home, about 1925. The children sitting on the mounting blocks are great-grandchildren of Roger Hickman: Marian Rose Hoge, George Robert Hoge, and Lula Grey Hoge. The blocks were at different heights to make mounting horses easier for people of different sizes.

as a whip and grandmother taught her to read and write, and one of the governesses taught her to play the organ. I remember her as the boss of the household, and she was really missed after her untimely death at the age of thirty-eight.[26]

Stricken with an ovarian cyst, Susie died in surgery at the only hospital in Bath County, the Community House in Hot Springs, just before Thanksgiving of 1929. Her body was laid out in the parlor of the old Hickman home and the funeral conducted in that house where Susie, her mother, grandmother, and great-grandmother had worked with five generations of Hickmans. The three Hiner brothers, white men who owned the general store five miles down the road at Mountain Grove, sang at the service. Susie's relatives came from Marlinton, West Virginia, for the funeral, and her body was taken across the mountain for burial there.[27] And thus ended over a hundred years of interdependence of the two families on the Hickman farm.

All are gone now, one generation vanishing after another. And nearly all traces of the former Hickman farms are gone, the buildings torn down in the 1970s to make way for the pumped-storage hydro-electric dam and reservoir on Back Creek. But our forefathers should be remembered, black and white, and the history of their time on earth.

Appendix: Sophia's Descendants

The following outline of four generations of Sophia's family on Back Creek in Bath County, Virginia, was compiled from various Hickman documents. Slaves were permitted no family names, and selected their surnames after emancipation.

1. Sophia (ca. 1802–1847) bought by William Hickman in 1822 [name of consort/husband not recorded]
    2. Benjamin (27 / X / 1821 – 21 / V / 1888) consort/husband of Patsy (?–? / I / 1909), remained on farm with Roger
        3. George Henry (14 / XI / 1852 – ?)
        3. Archey [—?—] (6 / VI / 1854 – 4 / V / 1856)
        3. Charles Lewis (11 / I / 1856 – ca. 193?) took Robinson surname after emancipation
        3. John Anson (4 / VI / 1858 – ca. 193?) took Robinson surname and married Martha M.(26 / IV / 1846 – 5 / III / 1923), a white woman
        3. Jesse Stuart (2 / I / 1861 – ca. 193?) took Robinson surname
        3. Lucy Jane (5 / IX / 1863 – ?) [name of husband not recorded, but probably Bill]
            4. Susie Green (ca. 1890 – ?/ XI / 1929)
    2. Samuel (14 / II / 1825 – ?)
    2. Jacob (17 / III / 1827 – ?)
    2. Peter (20 / II / 1830 – ?) given to Andrew J. Hickman ca. 1837, ran away from Andrew to freedom in Ohio
    2. Mary (26 / I / 1832 – ?) given to Martha Hickman Taylor in 1843
    2. Celia (30 / VIII / 1833 – ?) given to Nancy M. Bradshaw in 1843
    2. Martha (28 / VIII / 1835 – ?) remained on farm with Roger Hickman
    2. Jesse (23 / IX / 1837 – ?) given to William P. Hickman in 1843, married 17 / IX / 1859 to ? in Pulaski Co.

Appendix: Sophia's Descendants, continued

2. Sarah (17 / X / 1839 – ?) given to Martha Hickman Taylor in 1843 but then purchased by Roger Hickman
2. Huldah (19 / II / 1842 – 11 / II / 1862) sold to Roger Hickman in 1842
   3. Huldah's child (6/I/1860–11/II/1862)
2. George (10/IX/1844–?/IX/1845)

Endnotes

* H. William Gabriel grew up in Virginia, graduated from Virginia Tech, and received his Ph.D. at the University of Montana. Now retired, he serves as a Director and the Secretary of the National Museum of Forest Service History, Missoula, Montana. The letters reproduced here are among a large collection of Hickman family papers saved by Roger Hickman (1813–1889) and passed down to his son, Peter Lightner Hickman (1858–1937), then to his granddaughter Ruth Gertrude Hickman (1908–1997) and grandson Clare Brown Hickman (1905–1997), and finally to Roger's great-grandson, the author of this article.

1. A Willa Cather novel of black-white relations is set on another Back Creek in Frederick County, Virginia: *Sapphira and the Slave Girl* (New York: Knopf, 1940; Vintage, 1975).
2. William Hickman's wife was Mary Elliot (1771–1842), daughter of Capt. James Elliot of Rockbridge County. The two witnesses to the document were their eldest sons.
3. Slave parents did not necessarily belong to one owner, so Sophia's husband may have resided somewhere in Rockbridge County. The convention of the time in trans-mountain Virginia was to permit the man to make conjugal visits on weekends.
4. Described in *Works Progress Administration of Virginia Historical Inventory 73*, January 13, 1937. The house was torn down in the 1970s to make way for the VEPCO pumped-storage hydro-electic dam project on Back Creek.
5. Nancy Wallace Hickman (1813–?) was Andrew Johnson Hickman's second wife.
6. The witnesses were William Hickman's neighbors. Thomas Campbell (1800-1876) was the father of Margaret Brown Campbell (1824-1862), who would become Roger Hickman's second wife. When Highland County was created in 1847, he was named county surveyor and created the first map of the county. Peter Lightner (1816-1871) was the namesake of Roger Hickman's eleventh child.
7. Thomas Kirkpatrick was the husband of Martha Elliott Hickman's daughter, Eliza Jane Taylor (1825–?).
8. Compound interest was illegal at that time in Virginia, and those who charged it could forfeit the entire debt.
9. William Taylor, *Story of My Life*, John Clark Ridpath, ed. (New York:Hunt & Eaton, 1896), p. 91. Taylor also wrote two anti-slavery pamphlets published in England: *American Slavery, Its Development and Outcome*, and *The Cause and Probable Results*

of the Civil War in America. He refused to preach in, or even to visit, the slave states after 1849.

10. Roger Hickman's first wife was Martha Ann Lockridge (1816–1843), and his second wife was Margaret Brown Campbell (1824–1862).
11. William P. Hickman's wife was Margaret Reid Hoge (1821–1904), and their first child was Elizabeth "Eliza" Jane Hickman (1844–1872).
12. Ollinger Crenshaw, *General Lee's College: The Rise and Growth of Washington and Lee University* (New York:Random House, 1969), 36, 49, 58.
13. This increase in slave numbers can be attributed to the coming of the Virginia & Tennessee Railroad. Kenneth W. Noe, *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis* (Chicago: Univ. Illinois Press, 1994), 67–84.
14. We can only guess at the type of wedding ceremony Jesse and his bride might have had, because the conventional "till death do you part" wording of a Christian wedding could not apply to a slave couple. However, William's White Glade Presbyterian Church had begun accepting black members in 1850 and had eight "coloured" members by 1853 — probably all free blacks.
15. There may have been a wooden marker that rotted away over time.
16. Roger Hickman's third wife was Rebecca Ann Lowry (1835-1896).
17. For more about the last years of the Rev. William P. Hickman, see H. William Gabriel, "William P. Hickman in the New River Valley, 1852-1864," *The Smithfield Review*, 3(1999), 52-82. Hickman's death in the Civil War is mentioned in various histories of Southwest Virginia.
18. Marian Hoge MacKenzie and James Clinton Hickman, *The Hickman Family of Bath County Virginia* (Heaters, WV: James Clinton Hickman, 1978).
19. Lula Georgia Hickman's husband was George Washington Rose (1864–1962).
20. For a discussion of freed slaves picking surnames see Booker T. Washington, *Up From Slavery* (New York:Modern Library paperback, 1999), p. 17.
21. MacKenzie and Hickman, *The Hickman Family of Bath County Virginia.*
22. Peter Lightner Hickman (1858–1937) was, like his father, a Justice of the Bath County Court and an elder in the Presbyterian Church, but he had only seven children. His wife, Ollie Gertrude Lockridge (1870–1965), was the Sun Rise postmaster from 1902 until the little office was closed in 1936. Their son, Julian Kenneth Hickman (1911–1964), was the Commonwealth's Attorney for Bath County and later a federal judge.
23. MacKenzie and Hickman, *The Hickman Family of Bath County Virginia.*
24. MacKenzie and Hickman, *The Hickman Family of Bath County Virginia.*
25. Mary Elizabeth Hickman (1861–1948), first child of Lanty William Hickman (1838–1906), was married to James Frank Folk. Clipping from *Pocahontas Times*, no date.
26. MacKenzie and Hickman, *The Hickman Family of Bath County Virginia.*
27. Unpublished memoirs of Marian Rose Hoge MacKenzie, granddaughter of Lula Georgia Hickman Rose, as told to H. William Gabriel.

The Grinch That Stole Southern History:
Anthem for an Appalachian Perspective*

Peter Wallenstein

In one of Dr. Seuss's books, *How the Grinch Stole Christmas* (1957), the Grinch, of course, steals Christmas. Often, I argue, the Grinch also steals the history of the South. What is the Grinch that steals southern history? Can that history be retrieved?

Is there, in fact, any such entity as "the South"? What, and where, is it? Who are "southerners"? What is "southern history" all about? These questions are too seldom answered in ways that permit a rounded approach to the study of all residents of the region. This seems true regardless of whether "the South" is defined as the eleven states that seceded in 1860 and 1861 and formed the Confederacy, the fifteen states in which slavery was present at the beginning of the Civil War, or the seventeen states that maintained official policies of racial segregation in the first half of the twentieth century.

I define "the South" as a region of the fifteen slave states of the 1850s and the seventeen segregated states of the 1950s (the original fifteen plus West Virginia and Oklahoma). Unlike any other states, those seventeen entered the 1950s with laws requiring segregated schools and, as late as the mid-1960s, retained laws that banned interracial marriage. Regardless of the precise definition one adopts for the South for one time or another, a substantial section of the South east of the Mississippi River is now widely known as Appalachia, or Southern Appalachia, even if the area's exact geographical description remains a matter of some dispute. Coal country bridges the area between western Pennsylvania and northern Alabama; the Appalachian Regional Commission's definition of Appalachia somehow stretches from upstate New York to northern Mississippi and leaves West Virginia out of "Southern Appalachia." The Appalachian Trail, which extends from Maine to Georgia, offers a better guide, as I see the matter. The trail's southern portion finds its way from Harpers Ferry, West Virginia, south along the Blue Ridge. Then it

cuts west of Roanoke and Blacksburg to skirt the West Virginia border; drops south into North Carolina; follows (more or less) the Tennessee border; and moves on into northern Georgia.

The burden of this essay is to suggest that the term "the South" often turns out to refer to the plantation South, more particularly the non-Appalachian South. Yet, if southern history has sometimes turned on the presence of Appalachia, a clear understanding of southern history might depend on how we incorporate Appalachia into that history. The "Grinch" of this essay's title is the plantation approach to southern history.

One-Person, One-Vote History

One premise that I start from is my belief in what I call "one person, one vote" history. In the 1960s, the U.S. Supreme Court determined that representation in American state legislatures had to be apportioned on the basis of what became known as "one man, one vote" — what we might better call "one person, one vote." All social groups — each individual — had a right to be counted at the same value in elections of state representatives, who would be formulating policies that affected people in the present and the future.

I urge, similarly, that all social groups have a right to being counted at full value in historians' reconstructions of the past. Moreover, to the extent that we overvalue some groups—and thus undervalue others—we undermine our efforts to understand the past.

Ways to Think about the Several Souths

There is no single South, though there are multiple ways in which one might profitably distinguish the several Souths. Carl N. Degler took one approach in his book *The Other South: Southern Dissenters in the Nineteenth Century* (1974), in which he portrayed people who took positions and voiced opinions at odds with the region's leaders.

From some point in the colonial era — from almost the beginning of settlement by Europeans and Africans — one might say that there were three "Souths." A half-century ago, Carl Bridenbaugh observed that "the 'Old South'" of the pre-Civil war era "was preceded in time by the 'Old Souths.'" Focusing on the "first half of Southern history," the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, Bridenbaugh distinguished at least

three "Old Souths": the "Chesapeake society," the "Carolina society," and the "back settlements."[1]

An alternative way to distinguish the several Souths is in terms of social groups. For the years before and during the Civil War, we might say that the major social groups were members of families 1) who owned slaves, 2) who were slaves, or 3) who neither were slaves nor owned slaves.

In terms of "one person, one vote" history, it is essential to stress that the first of those three groups — those southerners in families that owned slaves — was much the smallest of the three Souths.[2] Only in Mississippi and South Carolina did it approximate the size of the in-between group who neither owned slaves nor were slaves. And yet it is the elite group — often the group that first comes to mind when the term "southerners" is used — in whose terms the history of the "South" has largely been written.

What of the other southerners — the other residents of the South? The people who were slaves comprised the largest group in pre-Civil War Mississippi and South Carolina, where slaves constituted a substantial majority of all residents, and in four other states — Georgia, Florida, Alabama, and Louisiana — where slaves comprised more than 40 percent of all residents in the 1850s. In most southern states — good examples are Virginia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and North Carolina — the largest group at that time was what we could term the "in-betweens" — those who neither owned slaves nor were slaves. They outnumbered the slaves and the slaveholders alike.

Across the South as a region, in terms of raw numbers, members of slave-owning families ranked a distant third out of the three groups. But regardless of ranking, all three groups must be included in any legitimate analysis of the region we call the South, however we choose to delineate its boundaries and whatever era we have in mind.

Three Souths —
By Region and Race within the South

The model on which this essay mostly relies distinguishes among whites in the black belt, whites in Appalachia, and blacks in the black belt. Let's call Appalachia the Second South, with some apologies to Simone de Beauvoir and her book, *The Second Sex* (1953), in which she attempts to turn her readers' attention to the female half of humanity. In

this model, the First South comprises white residents of the plantations areas (the Tidewater and Piedmont, among the South Atlantic states). The Second South comprises their upcountry cousins, those living in western Virginia, eastern Tennessee, and adjacent mountain areas. A Third South relates to black residents of the plantation regions of the South.

An exaggerated version of this model would have it that all whites in the black belt owned slaves, all blacks in the black belt were slaves, and all whites outside the black belt were non-slaveholders. No such characterization would be more than a first approximation, of course, since none of those statements is entirely true, though nine in ten black Virginians before the Civil War were slaves, and, depending a bit on how one chooses to define the region, relatively few slaves or slaveholders lived in Appalachia.

Like any model, this one leaves out some areas and people. For one thing, although Appalachian counties had populations upwards of 80 percent white — often in the middle to high nineties — exaggerations of the white presence in the mountain South have forced such rejoinders as William H. Turner and Edward J. Cabbell, eds., *Blacks in Appalachia* (1985), and John C. Inscoe, *Mountain Masters: Slavery and the Sectional Crisis in Western North Carolina* (1989). Nonetheless it is a good first approximation. A good model must accommodate much of the data to be explained, but every model has shortcomings.

The central thesis of this essay is that the history of the South can only be understood in terms of these three Souths. Virginia, for example, saw three great social and political conflicts erupt in the years 1829-32, as described in Alison Goodyear Freehling, *Drift toward Dissolution: The Virginia Slavery Debate of 1831–1832* (1982). In one, the constitutional convention of 1829-30, eastern whites — read: planters and their allies — obstructed an insurgent effort by western whites — read: non-slaveholders — to gain universal white manhood suffrage and a white basis of legislative apportionment. The new constitution divided representation in the House of Delegates into four large districts — Mountain, Valley, Piedmont, and Tidewater — and in the Senate by East and West, divided at the Blue Ridge; it gave the east a substantial majority in both houses and, while it provided for reapportionment every ten years, it specified that any changes in either house would be within each large district only. The west could never take control.

In 1831, in Southampton County, a slave named Nat Turner and his followers — read: eastern blacks (both slave and free) — went to war against eastern whites. As a consequence, in the very next session of the Virginia legislature, western whites and eastern whites held an extended debate over what to do about eastern blacks. Two groups of Virginians, those with political rights, struggled with each other over what should be done with regard to the other group of Virginians, one that had forced the question but was not itself represented in the debate. The First South argued with the Second South regarding the Third South.

The main question in the legislature that session became one of whether to enact a bill that would gradually do away with slavery — and, indeed, a black presence — in Virginia. According to the proposal, slaves born in Virginia after July 4, 1840, would, when they reached adulthood, become state property and be removed from Virginia, women at 18 (thus beginning in July 1858) and men at 21 (beginning in 1861). Montgomery County delegate William Ballard Preston, employing language like "the curse of slavery," insisted that the measure be adopted and that slavery be eventually removed from both eastern and western Virginia. "We attack that property," concluded Preston, " because it is dangerous — we attack it, because it is subversive of the well being of society — we attack it on principles of necessity and policy — we wish to remove the danger from the East, and to prevent its existence in the West."[3]

Given the system of apportionment incorporated in the constitution of 1830, the measure lost in the lower house of the legislature, and it never went to the upper house. But before it died, representatives from each side threatened the other with division of the state should the wrong decision be made. East and west did, of course, eventually break away from each other.

Two decades later, in 1850–51, Virginians held another constitutional convention. Again, white westerners challenged white easterners for control of the state. Again, one of the central questions was what, if the west won control, it might choose to do about black easterners. This time, the white west, even more numerous than before, gained universal suffrage for white men, and this time it gained control of the lower half of the state legislature, with the prospect of control of the upper house after another apportionment scheduled for 1865. In addition, the voters — the new electorate — would, under the new constitution, elect the

state governor and the judges of the state supreme court, positions previously filled by the eastern-controlled legislature.

But the new constitution of 1851 would prevent white westerners from using their new power to do much damage to the interests of white easterners. The constitution explicitly banned any legislative actions — of the sort debated two decades before — that might end slavery. Moreover, the tax on slaves was tied directly to poll taxes and the tax on land, so one could not be raised without increasing the others. Western legislators could not increase the taxes levied on eastern whites' slaves without increasing the rates on their own constituents and their land.

Secession and Civil War can be understood only in terms of "three Souths." In general, mountain whites opposed secession, while plantation whites demanded it. Here, too, Virginia serves well to illustrate the wider phenomenon. When Virginia voters sent delegates to a convention in early 1861, called to decide the question of secession, the west proved consistently — though not solidly — opposed. The east divided into two large groups over such questions as whether, under the conditions at hand, slavery would be more secure in the Union or out of the Union. One group of eastern delegates consistently supported secession; the other group voted against secession before the attack on Fort Sumter and President Lincoln's call for troops to put down the "rebellion," or up until the time that options simply ran out, but then it reversed itself and gave secession a majority.

When "Virginia" left the Union and joined the Confederacy, much of western Virginia left Virginia and remained in the Union (see the essay by George Gilliam in this volume of *The Smithfield Review*). Then again, portions of Virginia west of the Blue Ridge — including Montgomery County, represented once again, as it had been in 1832, by William Ballard Preston — shifted toward support for secession after Lincoln's call for troops to put it down. Montgomery County, like Floyd County to its south and Giles County to its west, stayed with Virginia, despite a continuing division over major issues, as Kenneth W. Noe has explained in *Southwest Virginia's Railroad: Modernization and the Sectional Crisis* (1994).

War came, and the outcome hinged as much on the unity of the South as on any other question. The South was not unified at the beginning, and it became less united as the war ground on. The slaves of the Third South were, in effect, black Confederates at the beginning. On the

home front, they grew the corn and wheat that fed the soldiers of the Confederacy, and they grew the cotton that clothed them. At the battle front, moreover, they played combat support roles that permitted white soldiers to concentrate on fighting rather than on looking after the cooking, the transport, and the construction.

But black Confederates became black Unionists. Tens of thousands of black men, those who had just yesterday been slaves, and might be again if they were recaptured, answered the call of Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation. Slaves proclaimed themselves emancipated, retired from their careers as black Confederates, and became black Unionists. They contributed mightily to breaking the military stalemate that characterized the first two years of the Civil War.

To put the matter another way, black Confederates enabled the Confederacy to persist into 1863, as the Union military and the forces of rebellion fought each other to a stalemate. A flow of black manpower from one side, the Confederacy, to the other side, the Union, followed on the Emancipation Proclamation, which had resulted from the military stalemate and which resulted in the resolution of that stalemate.

The Second South proved just as critical as the Third South did. Massive manpower from the mountain South undid the Confederacy, as Richard Current has suggested in *Lincoln's Loyalists: Union Soldiers from the Confederacy* (1992) — although Current's book actually overstates the importance of Appalachia, since he focuses on white Unionists from Appalachia and ignores black Unionists from the black belt.

Three states of Appalachia supplied huge numbers of Union soldiers. West Virginia — its mere existence — stands as a monument to disunity among white southerners. East Tennessee supplied even more Union manpower — perhaps 30,000 soldiers — than did West Virginia. In East Tennessee, the men of the poorest half of the white families were more likely to join the Union forces than to contribute to the Confederacy's manpower, and the eastern half of the state held more white residents than did a number of entire Confederate states.[4] Kentucky remained in the Union (does that make it a northern state, or is it nonetheless, as a slave state, still part of "the South"?), and, though Kentucky supplied many troops to the Confederacy, eastern Kentucky in particular supplied tens of thousands to the Union.

Each mountain southerner who wore the blue and fought against Confederate forces did two things to undermine Confederate strength.

He reduced the Confederate army by one, and he offset another one, one who had to fight him instead of fighting a northerner.

All three Souths fought in the war. Whites found themselves on both sides. So did blacks, whether they wielded weapons or acted in combat support roles. There was no single South. Had there been a single South, the Confederate forces could have won the war, had there still been a war. Appalachia — very much another "South" — could not escape the Civil War, but the Confederacy could not escape Appalachia. The South's Appalachian region helped destroy the Confederacy for distant states like Texas and Louisiana as well as for the eastern South.

The era of Reconstruction, too, and its long aftermath, can readily be understood only in terms of these same three groups, even if slavery (which appeared central to their prewar differences) was outlawed in 1865. Plantation Democrats battled black belt "freedmen" and mountain "scalawags" over who would control the postwar South, a battle that lasted for years, even decades.

To continue the story with Virginia materials, Reconstruction came to Virginia in the Readjuster era of the late 1870s and early 1880s. During that time, a biracial coalition — consisting of western whites (though far fewer in number after West Virginia's separation) and eastern blacks — wrested power for a time from eastern whites, and they made major changes in public policy. In turn, eastern whites took power back. And, at the turn of the century, the 1902 Virginia Constitution placed barriers to political participation that reduced the power of western whites and eastern blacks alike.

As late as the 1950s and 1960s, the differences — across much of the South — persisted in these terms. Black belt whites disfranchised most black belt blacks, and they disfranchised many mountain whites, too. Throughout the Age of Disfranchisement, and also the Age of Segregation, as a group the First South — the grandchildren and great-grandchildren of the planter elite of the Old South — disfranchised large numbers of potential voters from both the Second South and the Third South, as J. Morgan Kousser has shown in *The Shaping of Southern Politics: Suffrage Restriction and the Establishment of the One-Party South, 1880-1910* (1974).

When allocating funds for public education, black belt whites discriminated against both the other groups. State funds were apportioned to the counties on a per capita basis. And then whites in plantation dis-

tricts diverted the bulk of the funds for their counties to white schools, as Louis R. Harlan demonstrated in *Separate and Unequal: Public School Campaigns and Racism in the Southern Seaboard States, 1901-1915* (1958). Therefore white children in the First South obtained far more per capita state funds than did either white children of the Second South or black children of the Third South.

In the 1950s, when federal courts began to order school desegregation, the First South was inclined to close the public schools rather than permit any desegregation. According to this viewpoint, schools for the First South and the Third South must remain absolutely separated. Massive Resistance, truly massive, was undercut, however, by the Second South, which placed higher priority on having schools at all than on having them segregated. The votes of western Virginians were crucial to the outcome in Virginia; those from north Georgia were crucial to the outcome there.[5]

One South Cannot Speak for All

Images of the South, as in the Old South, that conjure up the world of *Gone with the Wind*, and which insist on white columns and mint juleps, cannot contain or convey the full history of the South, even for that moment in the history of the region when the image did manage to capture something of the truth for one of the three Souths.

Why do we confuse the South for only one of its parts? For one thing, it is rhetorically convenient to use a shorthand and refer to "the South." It is inelegant to clutter up a narrative with repetitions of "his or her" and the like, so we often settle for "his" (or "their"). But it is far more than that.

Early historians of the Old South studied the behavior — economic, political, cultural — of the planters in the Southern states. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips did a great deal of very useful research and writing, but he wrote histories of the plantation South, as in *Life and Labor in the Old South* (1929). As a rule, he focused on the whites (not the blacks) on the plantations, and he neglected whites not on plantations. Moreover, he relied on sources that planter families left behind — whether the ledgers that displayed profits and losses or the letters that reported noneconomic affairs and conveyed emotions.

A half-century ago, a young historian, just beginning a remarkable career, published an article critical of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips's "limita-

tions" and stating that there was "nothing inevitable about his point of view or his technique." Richard Hofstadter analyzed Phillips's sources and concluded that "insofar, then, as Phillips drew his picture of the Old South from plantations of more than 100 slaves, he was sampling about 10% of all the slaves and less than 1% of all the slaveholders." In fact, he asserted, Phillips was not studying only "the upper crust. For the most part, he was concentrating upon the upper crust of the upper crust." Someday, Hofstadter prophesied, scholars would "concentrate upon the neglected rural elements that formed the great majority of the Southern population."[6]

It can be anticipated, to be sure, that there will be resistance to any insistence on a "one person, one vote" approach. Some will say that the people of the First South, after all, dominated the region — its economics, its politics, indeed its history. They were the ones who spoke for "the South," whether at the time of Secession or, a century later, at the time of Massive Resistance. They shaped the history of the region, surely, when they took so many states out of the Union, in a bid to preserve slavery, and precipitated a war that ended the institution.

Yet much of the best work of the past generation of historians of the South has been dedicated to the proposition that the people of another South, the slaves of the Slave South, must have their history told. Richard Hofstadter suggested in his prescient critique of Phillips that a new generation of historians would have to "realize that any history of slavery must be written in large part from the standpoint of the slave." That is precisely where Hofstadter saw the history of "the South" moving. Indeed, another young student of history, Kenneth M. Stampp, soon embarked on what became *The Peculiar Institution: Slavery in the Ante-Bellum South* (1956), a close study of the several million southerners who were slaves.

In the four decades and more since publication of Stampp's work, any number of innovative studies have focused on slavery — and southern history — from the slaves' points of view. We now have titles such as John W. Blassingame's *The Slave Community: Plantation Life in the Antebellum South* (1972), Charles Joyner's *Down by the Riverside: A South Carolina Slave Community* (1988), and Ann Patton Malone's *Sweet Chariot: Slave Family and Household Structure in Nineteenth-Century Louisiana* (1992), rich books all.

And yet that approach to the study of southern history has imposed its own costs, has in its own way proved an obstacle to understanding the history of the region and its people. Residents of Appalachia remain the orphans of the historiography of the South, largely neglected in general interpretations of the field, despite some fine work done on the history of the Appalachian region and its people. They have been neglected, not out of malice or intent, but because their inclusion did not seem to fill the need for understanding the dynamics of plantation life — whether on individual holdings or across the entire South — for either whites or blacks, slaves or slaveowners.

The work on African American history during the past generation is enormously important, both for what it tells us about the black experience and because of what it suggests about the white South. And yet that new emphasis leaves intact the notion that all whites at least were unified, that one white history will do for the South, that all white southerners lived in the black belt and on plantations. But what about the non-plantation areas of every southern state? What, in particular, about Appalachia?

V. O. Key Jr. focused his study of *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (1949) on a distinction between "the whites of the black belts," who were "few in number," and all other southerners. He stressed black belt whites' compelling "concern about the maintenance of white supremacy."[7] Key's emphasis resonates to Ulrich Bonnell Phillips's essay, "The Central Theme of Southern History," with its declaration that the South was "a land with a unity despite its diversity," a land whose white residents were "a people with a common resolve indomitably maintained — that [the South] shall be and remain a white man's country"[8] — except that Key emphasizes fissures among white southerners that Phillips's formulation neglects.

All three Souths must have their histories integrated into the history of the region. Each, as in the Nat Turner Rebellion, forced the others to take it into consideration. Each was fundamentally affected by the presence of the others. This was true even for the schoolchildren in western Virginia, who received little or no state funds for schools before the Civil War, out of eastern whites' fear that legislative power in the wrong hands might endanger slavery, and whose educational experiences in each future era were also shaped by the rivalry among the several Souths. For example, after Congressional Reconstruction inaugurated a public school

system in Virginia, politicians of the First South in the 1870s diverted to another purpose much of the funding that had been earmarked for schools. In response, voters of Virginia's Second South and Third South combined forces to put into power a state government that, in the early 1880s, greatly increased the funding for schools for black children and white children alike.

Why, in view of all the evidence that forces other than the First South also shaped the course of southern history, should South Carolina's John C. Calhoun speak for "the South," when Appalachian Tennessee's Andrew Johnson, with his very different voice, has just as much claim on being heard as representative of the region? Why should the radicals — such as the secession movement's Edmund Ruffin from eastern Virginia — be taken as somehow representative?

What if — instead of one of Ulrich Bonnell Phillips's big planters — we take as our guide to southern history a man by the name of William Smith McCollum? McCollum exemplifies the Second South, not the plantation South. In the 1920s, looking back on a very long life, McCollum related that he was born in Greene County, in East Tennessee, in 1831. His grandfather, a Scotsman named Tom McCollum, had migrated from Pennsylvania to East Tennessee. There he had built the house in 1791 that his son James McCollum was born in and, in turn, James's son William Smith McCollum.

In the 1920s, McCollum still lived in that house — which he described as "a log house built double with two large stone chimneys" and "5 large rooms" — on a 100-acre farm ten miles north of Greeneville. He and his wife of seventy years had had thirteen children, the older ones born before McCollum fought in the Civil War, most of them born after. The McCollum family had always owned the farm they worked; they had owned no slaves. In May 1862, he recalled, he had been "conscriped" [*sic*] into the Confederate army but, after five months, he "left [the Confederate military] and scouted a while and then enlisted in the federal army," the Third Tennessee Mounted Infantry. After his discharge in 1864 in Knoxville, he walked the eighty miles back home to rejoin his family near Greeneville.[9]

The William Smith McCollums of the Second South have much to tell us about southern history. Remove him, and people like him, from the game, and many cards are missing. Without voices like his included,

the history of the U.S. South is missing crucial dimensions and remains fragmentary.

The Grinch That Stole Southern History

In the opening scene of Harriette Arnow's novel *The Dollmaker* (1954), Gertie Nevels is asked "What crops do they raise in this country?" Her reply, "A little uv everthing," does not satisfy: "But what is their main crop?" "Youngens," she answers. "Youngens fer th wars an them factories."[10]

Those "youngens fer th wars" helped the United States defeat the Axis powers in World War II — the context of Gertie Nevels's desperate encounter with the army officer on that Kentucky road. And they helped defeat the Confederacy in an earlier war: They helped make the Lost Cause lost — yet southern history is so often told in the losing side's terms. The impact of those "youngens" on the history of the nation, and of the South, has been great. Neither history can rightly be told unless the role of Appalachia is understood.

Developments in Appalachia, the Second South, must be integrated into the central interpretations of the region's history. Much has been done to reconstruct the history of Appalachia. Appalachian history has been a growth industry for a number of years. Yet most of that wonderful work has focused on developments within the mountain South, or when it has related Appalachia's history to a larger entity it has been to the nation's economic history rather than to the South's political history.[11] What is being called for here is an integration of Appalachian history into southern history.

Historians long conspired to help the Grinch steal Southern history. Can we identify the Grinch that stole southern history? We can. The Grinch has been the continuing preoccupation with the plantation South — as if that South were the only South that counted. Thus I resist the notion that little is at stake. What's wanted here is not only "nothing but the truth," but also "the whole truth."

Students of — and writers on — the South often insufficiently distinguish the historical identities and experiences of people from the plantation South and mountain South. In particular, antebellum (and Civil War) southern history is such a curious thing, written from the planters' perspective for so long, then corrected (beginning in the 1960s) to a

slave perspective, thus reinforcing the plantation bias and continuing to neglect arguably the largest group of southerners of all.

Standing at the mouth of any southern river — the Potomac, the James, the Savannah, the Mississippi — one sees all water flowing through the Tidewater region and to the coast. South Carolinians enjoy the conceit of saying about the Cooper and Ashley rivers that they join at Charleston to form the Atlantic Ocean. In Virginia, one might say much the same about the York and James rivers — or the Potomac and the Rappahannock. It is easy, when the Tidewater region of the South appears to be the center of the universe, to see all southern history from the perspective of that portion of the South.

Moreover, the rhetoric of southern history, the language of southern politicians and southern historians alike, has, as a rule, implied that white people in the lowcountry had a franchise on the appellation "southerners." Thus, in this view — to use the period of the middle years of the nineteenth century — southerners were states' rights in political persuasion, they owned slaves or at least were pro-slavery, they led the way to (or at least supported) secession, and they fought for the Confederacy. That view, that version of the past, fails to specify that it has reference primarily to white men living in the Piedmont or the Tidewater. It negates the concept of "black southerners," and it assumes all white southerners to have been on the same page.

Thus that version of southern history leaves out a great number of people, and it distorts what was going on. It provides sufficient evidence to indict the purveyors of such conceptions, and the users of such language, on charges of grand theft, larceny of a region's history. Collectively, they go on trial as the Grinch that stole southern history. Plantation whites had a right to a portion of that history, but they took it all.

Will the Grinch relent? Can "the South" get its history back? That history has been hijacked too long. The place to begin to retrieve it may be to stand far from the site of the Carolina conceit where two small rivers meet to form an ocean. To survey the southern landscape, stand instead at Mount Rogers, the highest point in Virginia; Clingmans Dome, the highest in Tennessee; or Mount Mitchell, the highest peak in North Carolina. Each is on or west of the Blue Ridge and on or near the Appalachian Trail; each is more than a mile above sea level. The view from each differs much from a Tidewater perspective.

We could, then, begin our view of the South, our understanding of its history, from a mountain perspective, from a perch somewhere west of the Blue Ridge. Let the plantation country recede in importance — reduce it to life size, down from bigger-than-life. A view from the mountains, such as the perspective that William Smith McCollum brought to southern history, may give us a very different version of many portions of the history of "the South."

Endnotes

* An earlier version of this paper was presented on 12 March 1994 at the Seventeenth Annual Appalachian Studies Conference, held in Blacksburg on the Virginia Tech campus. The author is grateful for the comments of John C. Inscoe of the University of Georgia on that occasion. More recently, the editors and reviewers for *The Smithfield Review* flagged various points for clarification.

1. Carl Bridenbaugh, *Myths and Realities: Societies of the Colonial South* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1952), pp. vii-ix, xiii.
2. Peter Wallenstein, "Cartograms and the Mapping of Virginia History, 1790-1990," *Virginia Social Science Journal* 28 (1993), p. 97.
3. Quoted in Peter Wallenstein, "William Ballard Preston and the Politics of Slavery, 1832-1862," *The Smithfield Review* 1 (1997), pp. 75-76.
4. Peter Wallenstein, "'Helping to Save the Union': The Social Origins, Wartime Experiences, and Military Impact of White Union Troops from East Tennessee," in Kenneth W. Noe and Shannon H. Wilson, eds., *The Civil War in Appalachia: Collected Essays* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1997), pp. 15-18.
5. Matthew D. Lassiter and Andrew B. Lewis, eds., *The Moderates' Dilemma: Massive Resistance to School Desegregation in Virginia* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998); Jeff Roche, *Restructured Resistance: The Sibley Commission and the Politics of Desegregation in Georgia* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1998).
6. Richard Hofstadter, "U. B. Phillips and the Plantation Legend," *Journal of Negro History* 29 (1944): 109-124.
7. V. O. Key Jr., *Southern Politics in State and Nation* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1949), pp. 5-6.
8. Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, "The Central Theme of Southern History," *American Historical Review* 34 (1928): 30-43.
9. Colleen Morse Elliott and Louise Armstrong Moxley, eds., *The Tennessee Civil War Veterans Questionnaires* (5 vols.; Easley, S.C.: Southern Historical Press, 1985), 1: 86-87.
10. Harriette Arnow, *The Dollmaker* (New York: Macmillan Company, 1954), p. 17.
11. An outstanding recent collection of essays by many of the more impressive contributors to Appalachian history — and thus a great place to begin reading in the field — is Mary Beth Pudup, Dwight B. Billings, and Altina L. Waller, eds., *Appalachia in the Making: The Mountain South in the Nineteenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995).

A portrait of Thomas Winton Fisher by Terry Lawrence, from a tintype ca. 1870.

Part II: Thomas Winton Fisher, Confederate Soldier and 19th Century Pilgrim

Darlene Brown Simpson

Editors' Note:

In the last issue of *The Smithfield Review*, we published the first half of a collection of letters by Thomas Winton Fisher, a farmer from Wythe County, Virginia, describing his experiences in the Civil War during the year following his 1862 enlistment in the Confederate Army. During this period, Fisher had not only to adjust to his unwanted new life as a soldier, but he also had to endure the death from diphtheria of his young wife and one child. The following letters, which conclude the series, continue his vivid reports on the intensifying hardship and horrors of the war in 1863–65 while expressing his deep concerns for his family back home. Fisher had a talent for providing insights into his innermost thoughts and graphic descriptions of the momentous events that surrounded him — including several battles in which he participated.

Following a short sojourn into Tennessee, Thomas and fellow soldiers rejoiced as they returned to their beloved Virginia in the final letter in Volume III (dated June 29, 1863).

V. Moving Toward the Heat of Battle

Early in July, 1863, orders were received to march with Wharton's Brigade to the Shenandoah Valley.

Staunton, Augusta, Co., Va.
July 13, 1863

Dear Father, Mother and Family:—

I address you all and hope this may find you all as it leaves me, in good health. I suppose you have received the letter I wrote to Sis which I finished last Friday morning just before we reached Glade Springs[40] and which I brought to the Wytheville Depot and gave to Eva. I kept it in my hand from Mt. Airy[41] to Wytheville thinking

perhaps Sis or Sallie might accidentally be over at the railroad and I would throw it off but I saw nothing of them. I will give you a sketch of our trip this far if I have time before I leave here again and I think I will for it is raining very hard this morning. We rolled out of Glade Springs Depot about 9 o'clock Friday morning having cooked 3 days rations, but nothing new or interesting occurred till we got to Wytheville. Here we saw many of our old friends and relatives. Eva, Sallie and Lizzie were at the depot, but goodbye must be said, as it were, in the same breath with howdy do and we were off again. At Dublin we found Col. Clark's Battalion which came on with us. And by the way you can tell Robert Fry's wife if you should see her that I saw him and he is well and hearty. We got to Central Depot about sundown where I saw Col. Whorton[42] kiss his fair lady and bid her farewell. Shortly after we left Central I went to sleep and knew nothing more till day light where I awoke at Forrest Depot 10 miles from Lynchburg.

After waiting for the trains (mail and freight) to come up from Lynchburg we came on to that place. I never was much more surprised than I was when I got to Lynchburg. I had formed an opinion of what sort of a place it was. I thought it was a beautiful place, nice County and a desirable place anyway. But the truth of the matter is, it is one of the roughest places I have ever seen (home not excepted.) The city is on a hill which is equally as high and rough as the one there at home. And nothing can be seen from where I was but rugged river bluffs covered with small shrubs mostly pine. Regardless of its roughness there are a great many fine buildings and extensive manufacturing establishments there. Here we exchanged cars and moved our baggage from the Va., and Tenn., cars to the Orange and Alexandria cars. We then traveled a Northeast course till we got to Charlottesville a distance of 60 miles. We got to see the canal boats running on the James river at this place. We left Lynchburg about eleven oclock Saturday morning and came through the two counties of Nelson and Amherst or rather Amherst and Nelson. They are the poorest counties I ever saw, the railroad is nothing but a cut and a fill all the way through these two counties. The timber is small and mostly pine thicket. But of all the dew berries I ever saw, the fields were black with them and when the train would stop to get water or wood we boys bounced off and eat berries and when the bell would ring to start, such scrambling to get on you never saw. Albemarle is a good county and crops looked well. We arrived at Charlottesville about 10 o'clock Sunday morning, it is the handsomest place I have seen yet.

The first thing that comes into view as you near the City is the dome of the University of Va. I was on top of the cars when I got there and I thought it the most sublime scenery I have ever witnessed. Here we changed cars again from the Orange and Alexandria Railroad to the Covington and Ohio Railroad. The country is very fine when you first leave Charlottesville coming this way, but its not long till you come in sight of the Blue Ridge. A vast tunnel through this nearly a mile long. It is a magnificent structure and the largest in Va. As soon as you get out of the mountains you come to a beautiful little village called Waynesboro. It is about as large as Marion, Va. The next station was Fishersville, but we did not stop here. We are on our way now to Winchester, 92 miles distance from here and we will take it afoot. From there we think we will go to Gen. Lee's Army in Md.

Suffer no uneasiness about me. I will try to be prepared for any emergencies. I have no more news of importance. You can hear as much there as here. We are all well and in a fine country now, and in good spirits. We are expecting soon to be in a fight with the Yankees. Write to me as soon as you get this and direct as follows:

Thomas W. Fisher.
Care of Capt. Yonce, Co. C
51st Regt., Staunton, Va.[43]

Rockingham County Va.
Saturday evening July 18, 1863

Dear Father being encamped near (or I might say at) a post office I thought I would write you a few lines to let you know where I am and what we are doing. We are on the march for Staunton to Winchester. We left the former place last Thursday morning and came on the mcadimised[44] road we only marched 13 miles that day and passed a little village called Mt. Sidney a pretty place but small. Next day which was yesterday we marched 14 miles I seen a good deal it was a very exciting day with us we passed through a small town or village called Crawford in this Co. and shortly after passing through the town we met 500 yankees I tell you they were a set of rough looking coustomers. It is no use for people to talk to me about our men being ragged for those Yankees were as ragged as any of our men I ever saw and a great many of them barefooted. There was a string of them near a mile long they were apart of what Gen Lee captured at Gettysburg Pa. About 5 or 6 miles further we came to Harisonburg county seat of this county it is a very old but handsome town and some larger than Wytheville. The people seemed to fancy our Regt.

very much and especially the band which played as we passed through. I heard such remarks as these, "that's a splendid band." Thats the largest Regt. I ever saw." It marches beautifully." It's the first I ever saw march in two ranks" Wonder if they were ever in a fight." There is more Hospitality and kindness among these people here in the valley of Va. than any where I have been since I joined the army. Well we camped last night 3 or 4 miles this side of town and from there we came here this morning only marching 10 miles today. We are now 37 miles from Staunton 55 from Winchester. We are camped 4 miles from the line between this and Shenandoah Co. The names of these places caused me to think of Grandpa Fisher[45] is this Rockinham and Shenandoah Co the same as he used to talk of. There is a little town 8 miles from here called New Market he used to talk about. My sheet is most full. I must close. This leaves me well and ready to sit down to help devour a "big dew berry pie" which we made. Hope this will find you all well and hearty.

I remain as ever your devoted son.
Thos. W. Fisher.[46]

Camp Fishers Hill,
Shenandoah County, Va.
July 29th, 1863.

Dear Sister:

This leaves me well but I get lonesome some times. So you have been asking me to write about my early school days and as I have time now I will do so.

In the year 1846 or 47 a Mr. James B. Johnson of North Carolina came into the neighborhood and made up a school to be taught in an old house on Cripple Creek on the Ewing place. I was then 9 or 10 years old. Father subscribed for me to go to school. It was some 3 miles to the school house from where we lived and I was a sort of coward and did not like to go by myself so father made arrangements for cousin Judith Seagle to board at our house and go with me to school. Well by and by the day came on which the school was to commence and father went with us the first day to show us the way. He took a hatchet and marked some trees through the woods a nearer way. When we got to the school house father stayed with us awhile but I being young and foolish I took a crying spell when he left. Mr. Johnson petted me up and I soon became very much attached to

him. After I became acquainted with the boys and my teacher I got along fine and learned fast. I liked them all. Sidney Painter and Robert Gleaves were the largest boys that went to school. Cousin Juda went with me awhile. She then went home and cousin Henry came to go with me. I reckon while life lasts I will remember him. We were great chums. It was almost impossible to make him cry. We used to play (blackman) at school and I have seen the large boys run over him, throw him down but he would never cry a bit but up he would go again. I went that session with cousin Henry and went several other sessions to the same teacher afterwards but by myself. In the winter of 1848 while I was going to school to Mr. Johnson, two men by the name of Odell and Marrel came into the neighborhood and made a great spread about a geography singing school and how fast their pupils could learn — they could make them perfect in 20 days. So they succeeded in getting a school for 10 days and father sent me. I went every day and paid the strictest attention and learned fast "but alas", the thing was as easy forgotten as learned. I think the Christmas before the geography school commenced, anyhow Johnson was teaching and some of the boys took a notion they would turn him out and make him give us a Christmas treat, some of the boys and myself would not agree to go into it. So when he went to dinner those that were in favor of it penned themselves up in the school house and fastened the door and the rest of us sat down in the yard and when the teacher came from his dinner he asked us what was the matter. We told him the circumstance. He stepped to the door and tried to get in but could not. He then went to the window and inquired what they were acting in that way for. When Frank Gullion (who seemed to be their mouthpiece – the rest of us were scared) told him they wanted a treat of a bushel of apples and a week's holiday and they would let him in. He finally agreed. So that evening after the close of school he took us all up to his house and gave us all the apples we could eat. The year after he was married to the widow Ewing. The next winter he got the school again and I went but his wife got sick and it was finally the cause of suspending the school. She lingered awhile and died and the school was never recommenced. So we bid each other farewell as teacher and pupil. The memory of my beloved old teacher leaves my heart tender and my eyes damp with a tear. I hope to meet him above.

Thomas W. Fisher[47]

Camp Early,
Shenandoah Co., Va.
July 30, 1863.

My dear parents:—

I am now on picket and I thought I would write to you one time more and see if I could ever hear from home. I have written two letters since I came back and yet I have not had a scratch of a pen since I left Glade Springs Depot. I wrote once at Staunton and once on the road between that place and Winchester. In those two letters I gave you sort of a history of our march and as I commenced I will finish. Saturday 18th, we started out bright and early and marched 14 miles and camped near a little town formerly called Mt. Pleasant, but now Mt. Jackson. I forgot to say that we came through New Market. Monday we layed by and rested which we ought to have done on Sunday. On Tuesday we marched about 19 miles, passed through Woodstock, the county seat of this Co. It is hardly as large as Wytheville and not near as nice a place. On Wednesday we marched again and passed out of Shenandoah through the corner of Warren and into Frederick Co. Next day we went to Winchester which was a very beautiful town about three times as large as Wytheville and no mistake. Here at Winchester, I saw some of the Wythe Greys as they passed through. Lee's army was then coming back out of Maryland and Pennsylvania. There were about twenty Regiments passed through while we were here, which belonged to General Ewls[48] Corps, besides about 100 pieces of artillery and some ten or twelve thousand Cavalry. Winchester was a boisterous place while I was there. On Friday we fell back to this place which is 20 miles from Winchester and only 2 miles from Strasburg. Our force here is about 4,000 and I think we will give the enemy battle here when they come and I don't think it will be very many days, for we learned there was about 5,000 Yankees at Winchester now. We have 12 or 15 pieces of artillery here and a splendid position, that is why we fell back here, we will not be so easily flanked. I never have wished to be in a fight, but do wish I could have been in that fight at Wytheville. A great many people are very much discouraged and say we had just as well give up for we will be overrun and subjugated anyhow, and I acknowledge the prospects looks more gloomy than it has for some time passed. But if we would gain our independence we must persevere and endure some hardships. We need not expect to be victorious all the while. For my part, I think we had better wait awhile before we give up. We are a ruined people if we give it up now. And if we should hold on 12 months and

then are overrun we will just be the same. But I am not yet very uneasy and still able to fight. I am enjoying good health and doing pretty well on beef and bread. The rest of the boys are well with a few exceptions. I forgot whether I told you Wythe Fisher[49] was left in the hospital at Staunton sick. I have not heard from him since. I heard with sorrow yesterday of the death of uncle Pete Spangler. I hope this will find you all well. Give my respects to all my friends and neighbors. I have no idea when I will see you all, perhaps never, but let us keep this blessed promise in view that if we are faithful until death we will have a crown of life. I want you all to write sure.

Direct this way:
Thomas W. Fisher,
C-f of Capt Yonce,
Co. (C) 51st Va. Infantry
Staunton, Va.[50]

(Undated, but after mother's letter of August 4, 1863)

Camp on Rapidan River
Orange Co., Va.

My Dear Mother:—

It has not been but a few days since I wrote to you, but as I had not then had a letter from home since I left Glade Springs, I feel it my duty to write to you again and let you know that I have received two letters from you in the last few days, one dated July 18th and the other August 4th. I was truly glad to hear that you were all well. You spoke of sending me some apples by Jas. Harrel but he has not come yet. Levi Kincer brought the letter. We can get a few apples occasionally by paying 50 cents per dozen for them, a little larger than a hens egg. Onions are $2.00 per dozen eggs the same price. Potatoes at from $5.00 to $8.00 per bushel. Our mess bought a ½ bushel today for $2.50. I would like to eat a few pies or cakes from home, these down here taste too strong of money. But it is not worth while for me to indulge in such wishes for we are too far off, though the trip can be made in 36 hours. You can start from Wytheville in the morning and get here next evening. If it did not cost so much money, I would ask father to come but as it is, I will not unless I get sick or wounded which I hope will not be the case. We drew our money a few days ago and if I had a chance I would like to send a little home. I want you when ever you write me again to tell me whether you get my letters and of what date. I have written 4 letters since I left Glade Springs

besides the one at Staunton the 13th of July. This one you acknowledged having received and one other, so I do not know if it was the one I wrote from Rockingham Co. or the one at Camp Early dated the 30th or 31st. Well, you ask is it true that Gen. Lee has resigned and who will take his place. I answer it is not true, hence nobody will take his place. But you go on to ask what I think of the war and say it has gotten to be the opinion of nearly everybody that we are gone up the "spout". Well I acknowledge that our prospects do look more gloomy than they have for some time. But it will not do for us to give the thing up at what it is. We must put our trust in a power above that of man. We must trust in God to deliver our country from ruin. The Yankees must not be let come in there and destroy the railroads. And if they should get in and destroy it they must be repaired and go at it again. It takes perseverance to accomplish anything. But if it is contrary to the will of God let the worst come as soon as possible. I must now close. Write soon and often. Do not put any confidence in any flying rumors that you may hear. We have not been in any fight and are not expecting any shortly.

Respectfully your son,

Thomas W. Fisher[51]

Camp Near Liberty Mills,
Orange County, Va.
August 20, 1863

Dear Sister—[52]

In my last letter I spoke of my school days and in the wind up, bid farewell to my dear teacher (James B. Johnson). But before leaving him altogether I will remark that he still lives. The last I knew of him he was living in Hillsville, Carroll County. After that session I did not go any more except in the winter 2 or 3 months at a time, but from my earliest recollection I went to Sabbath school every summer which was taught at the (Gleaves meeting house.) At the commencement of the school, Major Gleaves offered a nice pocket bible as a reward to the scholar would commit to memory the greatest number of verses in the testament. I concluded I would join in the race. An account was kept for each scholar and at the end of the school, Miss Lydia E. Davis took the prize, having beat me a few verses. Father said I should not loose my reward, so he bought me a bible which I have with me today. In process of time, a school house was built near where father then lived and Sabbath schools were kept up after that at Slate Springs,

for that was the name given the new school house. In March (I think) 1850 or 1851, cousin Henry Seagle of whom I have spoken before paid me a visit. He came on Saturday and as usual we were glad to see each other and passed away the time very pleasantly together. As I said before we were great cronies. Thus, then, happy land and peaceful land of ours, may be deluged in blood, yea drenched with human gore, it may be overrun and pillaged by the enemy, every vintage of resemblance of my boyhood days may be swept away, but as long as my memory is left me unsurpassed, I will remember that cousin and playmate, and especially that last visit. As I said before he came on Saturday. On Sunday morning he went to Slate Springs[53] to meeting and perhaps while there he began to complain of a pain in his head, but said little about it and was as lively as usual. After meeting was over we went to Groseclose's to see a place where there was Black Lead as my cousin wanted to see the place. In the evening as we were returning home he complained a good deal, and until we had gotten home he was very dull and had but little to say. This was very uncommon, as he was very noisy and full of fun. He intended going home that evening but father and mother would not let him go until morning and he was still worse, so father made me get on a horse and go home with him. When he got home he went to bed. I left him and on Wednesday I was at Hines' Mills, as I came back by I stopped to see him but he was unconscious and did not know me. That was the last time I saw him alive. On Thursday morning his spirit took its flight to another world. I know nothing about his preparation to meet his God, but I hope in the great day of accounts to see him among that blood washed throng on the right hand of the Father. I went to his burial and saw his remains layed in the cold silent tomb, there to remain until Gabriel's awful trump shall sound, and wake the nations underground. I have often thought of him since this war began. He is free from all the troubles of camp and soldier life in this bloody contest. But he is gone, his soul has been in the spirit world several years.

Oblivion has almost swept away every incident connected with his life. Death is a solemn thought and its pangs last throughout the ceaseless ages of Eternity. Would to God we could all think of it more seriously.

Write me often.
Your brother till death,
Thomas W. Fisher[54]

Camp Near Liberty Mills Orange Co Va
August 23, 1863

Dear Parents.

Having just passed around the encampment I seat myself to write you a short letter. In walking around the camp I was verry much struck with the conduct of some of my fellow soldiers. To think that any, are so far lost to a sence of respect to both God & their fellow men, as to desecrate The Holy Sabbath by puting up their money, & playing cards for it, is truly a disagreeable thought! But such is the case.

Last Friday, was a day set apart by President Davis, for fasting & prayer. That our people might as far as possible dispence with their military duties of the camp &c; & humble themselves before God. Some had respect enough for the President to obey the call even though they were not Religious. But many (I noticed) paid no attention to it, & I heard them swairing, & saw them gambling as on other days.

But Jefferson Davis is only a man, a mortal man, as we are: Surely if the Lord would appoint a day to ceace from these things, & humble ourselves they would obey it. Well to-day is the Holy Sabbath. God has apointed it for this verry purpose. Do they obey his voice? No! Alas! It seems that they have no more respect for their God than for the President. O that they may see their condition before it is forever too late! Your Welcome letter of the 19th has been received. I was sorry the children had caught the Whooping Cough. But I hope it will be light.

I still enjoy good health. I know not how to express my gratitude to God for his blessing, continued upon me.

There is a good deal of sickness (mostly feaver,) in this Regt. now. We have three cases in our Company. The worst case is Morgan T. Newman,[55] he was taken to the Hospital this morning. The others though, not so bad, are bad enough. They are Wm. H. Neighbors, & Wm. D. Epperson.

There was a man (George Dehart,) of Co. (D) snakebitten last night, lying in his tent. The bite is on his right hand. This morning his hand and arm were swolen almost as much as the skin could contain. He was verry sick & I fear will die! The serpent escaped unseen in the darkness, but they think it was a Mockason. I believe I have no other news of importance to write. There is no indications of a fight here at present. I have seen the Iveys, Little John Wolf, and is fat & gaily, as I ever saw him. I heard from Guss Johnson yesterday.

He was well. The Health of most of the troops that have been down here all the time is good.

Gusses Regt. is camped about 15 miles from here.

They have commenced giving furloughs here. They give 15 days to Virginians at the rate of 2 for every one hundred men present for duty.

Two are gone home from our company now. Rufus A. Garnett, & Isacc M. Umbarger. Their furloughs are out the 3 of Sept. If I live I hope to get home sometime this fall myself.

Will there be Camp meeting at "Cripple Creek." this fall? If so when will it be?

----t my sheet admonishes me that I must close. Write soon & often. May God's richest blessing, ever rest upon you all.

Your Son
Thos. W. Fisher[56]

Warm Springs
Bath County Va.,
September 3, 1863

Dear Father and Mother.—

I presume you have gotten some what uneasy about me as I have not written for 10 or 12 days. The reason of this is, we have been on the march for upwards of a week. I have had no time to write and even now, I am writing a few hurried lines after arriving at (or rather taking up) camp. Last Tuesday morning today one week ago, we left camp at Liberty Mills in Orange County and started in the direction of Charlottesville. We arrived there Wednesday evening having marched (in the two days) 20 miles. There we remained till Friday morning. Then we took the train and came on as far as Hillboro in this county. That was about 80 miles There we drew four days rations of crackers and bacon put them in our haversacks and started after the Yankees. You have no doubt heard of them trying to make a raid through here. We arrived at this place Saturday evening and have been scouting about through the country ever since. The Yankees are all gone but not without destroying the greater portion of the crop of small grain through here. The Warm Springs are the greatest curiosity I have seen yet. The water boils up out of the earth, and if any difference, a little warmer than milk just from a cow. There are 3 bathing houses, one for the gentlemen, one for the ladies and one for the children. I went in the bath myself.

It is about 25 feet in diameter and about chin deep. When I first

went in I could scarcely bear the water. It felt like there certainly must have been fire about it. All the Springs together afford nearly as much water as "Stophles run." We will pass Hot Springs tomorrow, I expect. I am anxious to see them. We are now on our way to Lewisburg or some where in that portion of the country. We are now about 125 miles from where we were when I wrote you before and I think we will get back nearer home in a month or so. I hope we will winter at the Narrows again. When you write me again direct my letter to Dublin. I will stop now as it is getting nearly dark.

Greenbriar Co. Va.
Sept. 4th.

I will now write a few more lines and finish my letter. Yesterday we made a very hard march and I did not have time to finish my letter after we got to camp. We camped last night in Alleghany county. Tonight we are camping on the battle ground where part of General Jones[57] men fought the Yankee cavalry a few days ago. From the marks on the timber, fences and buildings it was a pretty hot little fight. Cannon balls and minnies[58] have riddled the timber pretty smartly. This battle ground is ½ mile from White Sulphur Springs. We marched 40 miles yesterday and today. We are ordered to the Red Sulphur Springs in Monroe Co. We have a three days march yet of 15 miles per day and then the Col. says we will get to rest awhile if nothing happens. I forgot to tell you we had a considerable frost in Bath Co. Saturday and Sunday nights. The corn blades were smartly bitten. Was there any frost in Wythe. I must now close I want you to write as soon as you get this and direct to Dublin, care of the Capt. Co., and Regiment as before. I am very anxious to hear from the children[59]. How have they gotten with whooping cough. This leaves me well and I hope it finds you all the same.

I remain as ever,
Your devoted son,
Thomas W. Fisher[60]

VI. Returning to Western Virginia

During this period Thomas found a way to return home for a visit (to which he refers in his next letter of October 6). In late September, 1863, Gen. Samuel Jones was assigned command of the Departments of East Tennessee and Western Virginia. In order to protect the salt works and have ready access to the railroad, Wharton's Brigade stayed near Abingdon. On Sept. 24, the 51st Virginia marched to Jonesboro, Ten-

nessee, to verify Burnside's withdrawal. At this point the men were plagued by intense fatigue and were exhausted by the four months of hot-weather marching, leaving but one-third of the infantry with wearable shoes; uniforms were in shreds. They had not seen significant battle activity for nearly a year.

On the 12th of October, 1863, the Regiment supported Gen. William E. Jones' cavalry at Zollicoffer. The entire Confederate force was ordered to return to Abingdon after three days of minor action. It was painfully clear to the officers that the 960 men of Wharton's Brigade, the 51st Virginia included, were not in condition for launching an offensive campaign.

Gen. George Ransom assumed command of the Departments of East Tennessee and Western Virginia late in the fall of 1863. Wharton's Brigade was ordered to support Gen. James Longstreet's army, then preparing the defense of Knoxville.

An important part of the soldier's life was the regular sermons delivered in camp. Brother Boring, the preacher referred to in several letters, is thought to be Capt. William Bourn, of Company I. A Captain Boring is reported in an August 1864 letter listing battle casualties.

After the siege of Knoxville, Longstreet was privy to a communication from Gen. Grant that revealed his plan to send men via the Cumberland Gap to strengthen Federal forces at Knoxville.

Longstreet moved his army and ordered Ransom to march his forces to the vicinity to reinforce the Confederates there. During December, Federal troops took an unexpected route, avoiding the expected conflict. The temperature was near zero degrees, and warm clothing and supplies were scarce. The Confederate Army was forced to separate and seek winter quarters. Those winter quarters were in Eastern Tennessee, near Blountville. In addition to very cold weather, the men were worn out, and the 51st joined Longstreet's forces to attempt an entrapment of Gen. Gordon Granger's Federals near Dandridge, Tennessee (thirty miles from Knoxville). This endeavor called forth all that the hungry, freezing, poorly clad Confederates could stand. Many of the men were marching over frozen ground without shoes, with feet bleeding onto the snow. Granger's forces were left uncontested.

In February the Regiment was dispatched to Bull's Gap to protect the Department of East Tennessee and Western Virginia headquarters. Here the men repaired roads or were assigned to picket duty. While at

the camp they resided in tents with chimneys attached. Boredom was widespread.[61]

Camp near Glade Springs,
Washington Co., Va.
Oct. 6th, 1863.

Dear Father and Mother:—

For some cause, I cannot tell what, I have not received a letter from any of you since I was at home, which has been very near a month ago. Though I have written to you twice in that time. I cannot command language to express my feelings this morning as I seat myself to try to write you a few lines in my simple way to let you know that I am yet alive and well. I have taken my seat in the warm sun beneath the boughs of an oak, out of site of the camp. And while I have been sitting here I have been retrospecting the past twelve months. This is the day if I mistake not on which brother James died. Three other sad anniversaries[62] follow in quick succession. And these are what render the season unhappy in one sence. Though viewed in another light, it brings joy to my heart. While I have been exposed to danger and death and I have suffered and endured many hardships and privations and had to contend with many sore trials and temptations for the past year and have many times strayed from the path of duty. These four dear ones (as I believe) have been basking in the sunshine of God's love and have been drinking of the pure river of the water of life, beyond the waves of the tempestuous sea of life and secure from the ravages of him who "goeth about like roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour." This with the hope of meeting them ere long and enjoying their company with God's presence throughout eternity is what brings that joy to my heart. The poet in the following lines very truthfully and solemly speaks of the swiftness of time. They are so to the point that I cannot help penning them down.

"The moments fly — a minutes gone!
The minutes fly — an hour is run!
The day is fled — the night is here!
Thus flees a week! a month! a year!
A year, alas! — how soon it's past!
Who knows but that this may be my last!
A few short years – How soon they've fled!
And we are numbered with the dead!
Yes, moments, minutes, days and years!

Pass quickly in this vale of tears,
But from that vale God's saints ascend
And live in joys that never end!
Yes! Days, months and years must have an end!
But Eternity has none!
Twill always have as long to spend
As when it first begun.

Well I will tell you a little about where we have been and then close. I suppose you got the letter I wrote from Carter Station, Tenn. From there we went down to Jonesboro[63] and lay in the brush all night. The night it rained so we had no tents. I tell you it was a rough time. We then came around by Blountville to Bristol and got aboard the train and came to this place. We are camped 2 miles down the R. R. from the depot near the tank. Perhaps father you would as soon come up and see us as not. And bring me a pair of socks and a piece of soap as we can't get any to wash our clothes. Also a little something to eat. Times have been pretty tight with us for rations for a few days. I don't insist, use your own pleasure about coming, for perhaps you may be too busy.

Yours as ever,
Thos. W. Fisher[64]

Abingdon, Va.,
Oct. 25, 1863

My Dear Mother:—

I received your letter of November the 20th this morning and was glad that you were all well. But how did you all down home get away over in November. It is only the 25th of October here. It will soon be Christmas with you all. I wanted to write you yesterday or day before but was not able. I have been very sick for 3 or 4 days and scarcely able to be up at all. I was fearful that I would have to go to the hospital but I feel so much better today that I think I will be all well in a few days. The boys are all well but several of them are about barefooted and in need of clothes, but we hear there is plenty of clothing here and we will draw some in a few days. My good news is that they are going to begin giving furloughs at the rate of 4 per cent, that is 4 for every hundred men present. This will allow 4 men to go from our company at a time. I am going to try to be one of the second four. I am glad you have some applebutter made. I wish I had a smather[65] as the boys say. I think it would go fine. It may be that I can get a pass

in a few days, if I can I will come home some morning before breakfast. I want to come bad enough and all I want is a good chance.

Father, If I don't come home and you feel like coming out you will only have 12 miles further to come than if we were at Glade Springs[66], that is not much on railroad. You did not say how much molasses you made, when you write again tell me whether you have dug the potatoes yet and how they turned out and all about matters and things at home. I believe I have nothing more worth your attention. I will close and write Sallie a few lines on the other side of the page.

Write again soon.
I remain as ever your son,
Thomas W. Fisher.[67]

Camp near Blountville,
Sullivan Co., Tenn.
Nov. 9th, 1863

Dear father and mother:—

I am seated for the purpose of writing in answer to yours of the first inst. which I received a few days ago. I cannot say I am exactly well at present but I am able to perform the duties of a soldier. I have a very bad cold. The rest of the boys are all well. I was sorry to hear Jason[68] was not healthy, you had better give him some medicine. Mother, I found some of your relatives out here. Raders, Calvin (Peter's son), he lives at the old homestead of his father. He is a man of a family, although his wife is dead. She died about five or six weeks ago. She was frightened to death by horse thieves who tried to call him out one night. They had been knocking men in the head and taking their horses or what ever else they wanted, and she being a very weakly woman took fright and died next day. Your aunt is still living and lives with Calvin. She is very old. I think she told me she was 81. I could tell you a great deal more, but this will suffice for the present. I had the pleasure yesterday of hearing Bro. Boring[69]. He was here and preached for our Regt. His text was a portion of the 30th verse of the 12th chapter of St. Matthew, "He that is not with me is against me." He arranged the two vast armies before the congregation, Satan and his followers on his left and the army of Christ on his right. There was no middle ground. First he noticed the leaders of the two armies. In the second place he noticed the banners or flags of the two armies. That upon the left, a dark banner without a bright spot or white thread about it to represent one ray of light or star of hope through

vast unending eternity. But upon the right how different. The banner there was of pure white. Never shall that glorious banner trail in the dust or fall at half mast in token of defeat. Next he noticed the soldiers of the two armies, lastly the pay of the soldiers. I tell you it was an interesting discourse, and I don't think there was a man but what was pleased and tears rolled down the cheeks of some of the hardest sinners. I cannot tell when we will get back to Virginia again, but I think the weather will get so rough that we will have to get back to some point on the R.R. When ever we do get back to the railroad I will get a pass to come home. This trip has knocked furloughing in the head. There has been none given yet. I wrote you a letter about a week ago and told you where we were and what we were doing. I presume you have received it by this time. I have to go to preparing some dinner as it is near 11 o'clock. So I must close for the present hoping this will find you all well. Write soon don't delay. I haven't time to look over this letter, if anything is left out supply its place. Correct all mistakes and excuse bad writing and spelling.

I remain as ever your affectionate son,
Thomas W. Fisher.[70]

Camp Near Bulls Gap, Greene Co., Tenn.
February 8th, 1864

Dear Parents:

I embrace the present opportunity of writing you a few lines to let you know that I am well and other things. I hope these lines will find you all enjoying good health. In the first place I will give you a history of your kin folks and my visits among them. I am speaking mostly to mother now. Well shortly after I wrote you before Cousin George Repass and I went to hunt up some of the Raders[71] our connection. We proceeded about a mile south of camp and met a boy.

"Good morning, little man."

"How are you gentlemen?"

"Well, little man, is there any one living out this way by the name of Rader," said I.

"Well yeth their."

"How far is it?"

"About three quarters of a mile. The first houth you gits too."

"Good bye, little man," and on we went. We came to a house and talked with an old lady that looked to be about 90 and said her

father's name was Peter and said she had heard him speak often of your brother Conrad Rader. But enough of this.

Well this month they have been giving furloughs. I think we are good to stay here with General Longstreet if we are not called to Virginia in a very short time. Gen. Sam Jones has been relieved of his command in Southwestern Virginia and Gen. Breckenridge is to take command of that department and if Breckenridge does not call us back to our old command then I think we are gone up for Longstreet's army. My opinion is that right here in this country will be the next fighting in the spring. I think the campaign will open early in the spring about Knoxville unless we can force the enemy to evacuate East Tennessee this winter. I hope and believe that with the end of 1864 will come the end of this unholy war.

I have written enough for the present. You need not write me any more till you hear from me again for if anything happens that I don't get to come home I will write and if I do come I will be there before your letter could reach me unless you get this very soon. Give all the neighbors my respects. I close hoping ever to have your prayers for my safety and success through life and after death to enjoy the blessedness of heaven.

Your Son,
Thos. W. Fisher.[72]

VII. Taking the Offensive

In April the Regiment returned to their former Abingdon camp, marching on railroad tracks (the very worst of marching conditions) from Greeneville, Tennessee to Abingdon, Virginia. Continual bad weather, including April blizzard conditions, made travel nearly impossible. The hardships were almost unbearable, diminishing the joy of returning to their beloved Virginia.

In late spring of 1864, Gen. Breckenridge moved his main force to face the Federals in the Shenandoah Valley, leaving a small cavalry detachment at Dublin. On May 6, the 51st Virginia marched to Jackson River Depot, departing on a short train ride to Staunton and marching down the Valley Pike in the direction of the enemy forces. Six days later, Breckenridge's brigades under Generals Wharton and Echols stopped their march to New Market two miles from town. A Confederate cavalry unit scattered the enemy scouts and forced the Federals to slow their advance. VMI cadets joined Breckenridge's forces nearby in torrents of

rain, that turned the roads into muddy passageways. At 9 a.m. on May 15, Breckenridge ordered the advance of his troops. Under the leadership of Lt. Col. John P. Wolfe, the 51st formed part of the first battle line, with Echol's Brigade behind and the VMI cadets serving as reserves. Losses to the Regiment were heavy; 103 men were wounded or killed.

While Thomas was with his company during the conflict at Coal Harbor on June 3 and 4, illness kept him separated from them during the sojourn into Maryland during early to mid-July.

Gen. Philip Sheridan was newly appointed Federal commander in August, 1864. Upon entering Winchester, Confederates were attacked, but Federals were forced to withdraw. The Regiment headed toward Harper's Ferry during the next three days. On August 25 the 51st joined cavalry in a skirmish at Leestown.

At the end of September, Col. Augustus Forsberg's Brigade (the 51st Virginia, 45th Regiment, and 30th Battalion), consisted of a mere 417 men. These men were distinguished by an excellent performance at Kernstown and for turning back Sheridan's cavalry (called Sheridan's "fast flying horsemen") at Winchester on September 25. Seventy-eight of the 51st were captured, greatly reducing the already small Brigade.

Winter quarters were established at Fishersville in the Shenandoah Valley. It was a winter of harsh winds and snow. Supplies were scarce, and morale in the South was at its lowest thus far.[73]

Camp Near New Market
Shenandoah Co.
May 16, 1864 Va.

Dear Parents and all at home,

Knowing that a thousand rumors are afloat in our country and that you are anxious to know about us I now take my pen in hand to give you a true statment of affairs. We have for a short season been cut off from each other by the Yankees and I have been very anxious to hear from home as I have not heard since I was at Abingdon. I was fearful that our communication would be cut off for some time but I am now informed that the way is now clear. Well I will now attempt to tell you of what I witnessed yesterday. Though I will nessarily fall short of giving you a minute picture of the scene.

We had a very hard fight yesterday Wharton's Brigade was in the hottest of the fight during the whole of the day. And most nobly did the General[74] sustain his reputation as a brave man. He has ever been

loved by his command but his conduct yesterday will win for him their most ardent affections. Lieut. Col. Wolf[75] commanding our Regt. also behaved himself most nobly also Major Yonce[76] and all our officers both field and company officers acted a noble part.

It would be doing a great injustice not to say that the men also acted their part as heroes and won for themselves and officers the praise of the commanding officer Gen. Breckenridge. I will now give you a list of the killed and wounded of our Co. However none of the Co. were killed dead Sergt. William H. Thompson mortally through the left breast, Corpl. Wm. A— Lindamood very severely in left leg above the knee. Nathan L. Brown leg shot below the knee, I suppose his leg will have to be amputated. David Lindamond supposed mortally in back Morgan T. Newman flesh wound in both legs. John N. Myers severely in groin. Wm. Everett Miller slight in right thigh, John K. Jackson slightly in head, Fleming Shelton in left knee, Chas. H. Gough slightly in side, Robt. M. McDonald slightly in hand, James W. Chapman very slightly in back, Dick Bowles slightly in leg, John W. Crigger very slightly in hand, F. M. Waddle very slightly in arm, E. A. Neff slightly in wrist Wiley Grubb slightly in breast. Some four or five others were touched but not hurt enough to mention. We had 94 killed and wounded in our Regt. Capt. Tate of Co. B was killed, Capt. Price of Co. H badly wounded. I will only mention one more Major Otey who was badly wounded in the arm. The fight commenced at New Market about ten o'clock and lasted till dark closed the work. At dark we had driven them about six miles. It rained the whole day and the mud was almost knee deep in some fields over which we charged and made it very disagreeable. Almost the whole fight was on open fields, you can form an idea of the ground if you think of the country about John King's, only the valley is wider and more level.

We took seven pieces of artillery and about two hundred prisoners.

The Yankees could not stand a charge as soon as our boys would raise a yell and start the Yanks would break.

The loss on their side was 160 killed and buried by our men. I do not know how many were wounded as they hauled them off when we did not push them too close. But a goodly number were left on some parts of the field. Their loss was very heavy.

I forgot to tell you a grape[77] passed through Lieut. Jake Fisher's[78] hat just grazing the skin. One inch lower would have killed him .

I am writing on the train now. We are going to Richmond or to Lee's Army. We are now below Gordonsville. We got on the train at Staunton at ten o'clock today.

I hope you will not be uneasy about me because I am down here. God has ever taken care of me through dangers, toil and troubles and I feel safe in his hands and willing to trust him in the future. I desire an interest in the prayers of all at home and hope you will ever be mindful of me at a rich throne of grace. I can from my heart use that phrase in the Lords prayer (Thy will be done). I have tried to feel willing to suffer what ever he sees fit in his wisdom to put upon me, I am resigned to his will. So if I should fall in battle you will not sorrow as those that have no hope.

Yours till death
Thos. W. Fisher
Capt. Umbarger Co.(C) 51st
Wharton's Brigade, Breckenridges Div.
Richmond Va.[79]

Staunton, Augusta County. Virginia
June 28th 1864.

SALLIE & SIS.
DEAR SISTER'S.

I have not written home for about a month. Neither have I heard from home by letter for a longer period of time. The reason why I have not written is, I have not had an oppertunity, and we were not where we could send out mail; on account of the rail road being torn up & etc & I suppose the same is the reason, I have not received news from home.

I have enjoyed first rate health since I wrote to Mother (I believe on the 5th) and have been on the march ever since. The next night after I wrote home we left the fortifycations below Richmond, and came to the city, about daylight. We remained there some three hours, which gave me an opportunity of looking about a while. If, I, had time I might entertain you a while with a narration of the curiosities, & seens of City life; but it would take too long & too much paper, & time, but I will tell you something of the Publick squair, and leave the rest for verbal conversation when I see you again, if I am so fortunate as to get home again & find you all living.

Well, to proceed: the Publick squair is situated near the Center of the city: it is traversed in every direction by nice roadway & deckorated with shrubery on either hand perfumed by flowers of various hews and the whole (except the walks) completed with the verdant carpet of nature. But the greatest curiosity of the place is the Washington Monument upon the summit of which is the Statue of

Washington mounted upon a large charger, and pointing with his right hand toward the south. All is as compleet as nature almost. Also the statues of Henry Clay, Patrick Henry, Thos Jefferson, & Mason are standing in the attitude of orators, so natural that you almost imagine that you hear the voice of the speaker poring forth in eloquence upon the political topics of the day. But while beholding with astonishment, & admiration, the skill of the architect, thoughts like these; involentarily came into my mind: Why is all this folly? (I cant call it anything but folly.) Why this great expenditure for nought? Did we not & are we not as a nation, seting up and worshipping images? These were great men and should be remembered with gratitude by every American heart, but why extol and worship (or almost so) an image?

Enough on this subject for the present. About 9 Oclock we got on the cars (Va C, R.R.) & set out for Staunton. The Yankees were then here. We arrived, and stoped at Waynesboro, in the mien time the Yankees moved on, by way of Lexington toward Lynchburg. Our command also marched in the direction of Lynchburg, and just got there one day before the yanks would have got there: They attacked us and found that they were going to get a good flogging so that night they skedaddled toward Salem, burning all the bridges on the Va & Tenn R.R. up to that place.

At Salem they took the road to Fincastle[80]. Our cavalry got in ahead of them & captured & destroyed 12 pieces of Art,y[81] about 50 Wagons, captured about 400 horses & 150 prisoners. We did not follow them further than Salem but turned off & came by way of Lexington to this place. The whole march from the time we got off the cars at Waynesboro till we arrived here yesterday evening is about 225 miles, and from what I can geather we will start in the morning on a long march again; one which I dont like, viz to make a raid on the yankees. I fear it will not pay. We are in a fair way of defeating Grant at Richmond, and now mark my prediction; if we attempt to go into Md. & Pa. the fat is turned into the fire. In the first place, our men, & stock are not fit for a raid, from the effects of long hard marching; and in the second place, it never has paid either party to raid, and if we attempt it I should not be surprised if half of us are captured. We have a pretty large force though, and will be hard to stop. We have about 25:000 men Viz Breckenridges Division & Ewels Corps. You have heard before this of the 45th being up to it. Jace[82] was captured (not hurt) so was Fred Atkins—Joe & Mell got out safe. I reckon Jace is siting up with his head leant to one side, chewing his tobacco

in Yankeedom. I got your letter sent by Jim Stephens a couple of weeks ago. It was old but quite interesting. can't send you that mucilaginous spit, for I have no bottle, but I reckon Guss'es & Steve's spit is sweet enough to stick a letter. You can use theirs as it is always handy. Tell Peg that Jim Stephens got the letter wet, and I reckon her respect must have leaked out. There was a little piece of paper folded up in the letter but there was nothing in it, but it tasted sweet like there had been something in it. Tell her I wish her a long life, and a happy one; a good man and a pretty one.

Well, gals, I tell you I have lived fine for the last two weeks. When on the march I would get off the road, and get cherries & something to eat. The people were verry cleaver, and I got cherries, milk, butter, bread & etc. and they would not have a cent of pay. I stoped at a place the other evening and got something to eat where there was a girl. (a right handsome one too,) I noticed she kept her eye on me all the time, every time she passed through the room she would take a sly glance at me and just about as I was leaving she handed me a nice bisquett though of course I was polite and thanked her pretty near half to death and left, but I hope I will get back there again.

Well I must begin to close write and direct to Staunton, care of Capt., Co, Brigade & Division as before — Give me all the news of the neighborhood news & etc. I have clothes plenty except socks. I have but one pair. I have a good pair of legs I wish was at home. You need not expect to hear from me again til we get back from our raid.

Remember my love to all the friends and neighbors and accept my most zealous love at home.

Your devoted Brother.
Thomas. W. Fisher[83]
[84]
I have no stamps

Camp Near Martinsburg, Berkley Co.Va
July the 28th 1864

Dear Father & Mother,

I am glad that I, (this morning) enjoy the privelige, and opportunity, to write you a few lines which will inform you that I am well and I sincerely hope that this epistle may go safely through, and find you enjoying God's richest blessings.

I will necessarily have to be brief this time, as it is verry uncertain how long I will have to write as the long roll may beat at any time. My letter will be lengthy enough too, but in comparison to the resources

X 3

Camp near Martinsburg, Berkley Co. Va.
July the 28th 1864

Dear Father & Mother,

I am glad that this morning I enjoy the privilege & opportunity to write you a few lines which will inform you that I am well and I sincerely hope that this epistle may go safely through and find you all enjoying God's richest blessings.

I will necessarily have to be brief this time as it is very uncertain how long I will have to write, the long roll may beat at any time. My letter will be lengthy enough too but in comparison to the [illegible] from which I [illegible] it [illegible] be short. I will [illegible] off preliminary remarks. I must in the first place tell you that I have not received a [illegible] [illegible] received [illegible] at Camp [illegible] when the army was in Maryland I was not with them and a letter came to the company for me but before I got to them it was lost. I do not know whether it was from home or not. I wrote home from Staunton a month ago yesterday the last time. I hope you will excuse me, for it is seldom we have an opportunity to write. The reason I was not with the [illegible] in Md. I was unwell and got behind the army, and when I got to Winchester 2 days after the army had passed through they would not let me pass, for fear of being bushwhacked. So I stayed there until they came out again.

I wish hereafter you would please write at least once a fortnight whether you get a letter from me or not. I will write as often as I can. —

Letter from camp near Martinsburg, Berkley County, Virginia, written by Thomas Winton Fisher to his parents on July 28, 1864.

from which to draw matter, it will be short. — Well to leave off preliminary remarks, I must, in the first place tell you that I have not received a letter from home of later date than the 7th of June which was received at "Coal Harbour" below Richmond.While the army was in Maryland I was not with them, and a letter came to the company for me but before I got to them it was lost. I do not know whether it was from home or not. I wrote home from Staunton a month ago yesterday the last time. I hope you will excuse me, for it is so seldom we have an opportunity to write. The reason I was not with the army in Md. I was unwell and got behind the army, and when I got to Winchester 2 days after the army had passed through they would not let me pass, for fear of being bushwhacked. So I stayed there until they came out again.

I wish hereafter you would please write at least once a fortnight whether you get a letter from me or not. I will write as often as I can.

Our army went into Md. and went within 3 miles of Washington City which is closer than the yanks have been to Richmond this year. — Our men brought out a fine lot of horses & cattle, destroyed many miles, of Rail Road, bursted up the Chesipeak, & Ohio Canal, besides capturing, and destroying vast quantities of army store & etc. This will ballance off with them for the Dublin & Lynchburg raids.

Breckenridges Division was in no fight until they got back within 12 miles of Winchester, to Snigersons ford. Here they turned on the Yanks that were following them and give them a gentell thrashing & drove them back, but we lost some men in the fight. In our company we lost George W. Chandler, killed. Corp Wm. H. Rose, dangerously wounded in thigh (broken) Wm. A Daugherty severely in foot. John Cassell supposed mortally in bowels. John L. Kincer slightly in breast. When the army got to New town I got with them. We then fell back to Strasburg in Shenandoah County, and took a position to fight the Yankees, but they would not come up, they came 7 miles above Winchester and there halted. Gen. Earley waited on them a few days, and finding they would not attack him He marched on, and attacked them on Sunday the 24th— The fight commenced about 10 oclock. I was in that fight, and as the country was verry level I saw more of that fight than any I ever was in; about 1 oclock Breckenridges old Division Comanded by Gen. Whorton, was moved to the right, and came up on the enimies left flank. When all things were ready, the Rebble yell was raised all around the lines and we charged upon them; Gordens Division, in their front and —ers on their left flank. I was in the front Rank, and had a fair view of the whole field. Nothing could

be more grand (of that kind) the Rebble ranks moved up steadily, without wavering accross fields over fences, & Ditches & c. The Yankees stood for a while but as our line moved up, I observed their ranks began to waver soon they began to scatter, and brake accross the fields. Their Officers tried to keep them togeather, and in the mean time a yankee Officer came galloping accross the field in front of, & toward our regt. and kept beckoning with his sword for us to halt — but narry halt — when he got within 75 yds we let off at him and killed his horse under him and wounded him. About a hundred yds further, and a regt of Averills[85] noted cavalry made a charge upon the head of our Regt. and the 45th. This looked somewhat scarry to see horsemen in full speed with drawn sabres comeing right at us. There was a little confusion in the 45th caused by some one hollering fall back. Some started and some stood, but soon all was rallied again as for my part I determined that I would not give back an inch for if we got confused and runn I knew the cavalry would capture us, and if captured, I was going to be captured right there.
— But so it was when they got within 20 yards of us we poured a heavy volley into them, and you just ought to have been there to see men & horses fall. They just fell in every Directon. They came with such force that 3 or 4 horses ran through our line. From this we got them in full retreat. We runn them through Winchester. They threw away guns blankets oilcloths knapsacks havresacks canteens hats and every thing that would impeed their progress — our boys just loaded themselves with the spoils.

We followed them to this place but they would not fight us any more.

The Baltimore & Ohio Rail Road passes here and we have been amusing ourselves taring it up for the yanks since we have been here. We have burned several bridges, and tore up 10 or 12 miles of rail road, and burned it since we came here. I reckon the yanks thinks by this time that they have not all the fun of raiding to themselves. In the fight Sunday we had 3 men wounded in our company. King Austin Kincer in leg not verry badly. Jeff Lindamoode through the palm of the hand, and Ephraim A Ganter, son of Matthias Ganter, in breast slightly. I was not touched except by a spent ball which hit my havresack, and dropped down by my side.

Cameron is well and sends his respects to you all. The rest of the boys are well except Capt Umbarger he has lost his speach and gone to the Hospital.

Joseph Hilten[86] got hurt a little in the fight. A spent ball hit him on the leg, and made a blue place. Joe says he-ll show them "whosh te mashter".

I have quit cooking for the officers, since Capt. Yonce[87] was promoted. I wont be a negro for men that are so hard to please — I tell you there are few such men as Major Yonce.

Before I went into that fight I committed myself to him who is able to take care of us in the hour of danger. I desire an interest in all your prayers. That I may be one of the happy ones that shall return home after this storm of war has blown over.

Write soon & Direct to Staunton, Care of Co Regt & Division as before—

Hastily Your Son
Thos. W. Fisher[88]

I have no stamps, and will have
To frank[89] my letter.

Near Bunkerhill, Frederick County Virginia
August the 28th 1864

Dear Parents & Friends,

I have not received an answer to the last letter I wrote to you, though I am looking for one every day — But knowing the reports that will ere long reach you from our Regt. I have concluded to write to you and give you a true statement of facts.

Last Thursday the 25th was an eventful day in the history of the 51st Regt. And will carry sorrow and grief to the hearts of many who have sons, brothers, and husbands in this Regt. Since the war began I have never been placed in so perilous a condition as I was that day.

We had marched some 9 or 10 miles that morning, and having reached the Shepherdstown road at Leestown moved ------- a short distance, on that road (in the direction of Shepherdstown) til we came to where some of our cavalry were skirmishing with the Enemy. They reported only a small force there, and our Brigade being in front that day, the 51st Regiment was deployed and sent out to skirmish with the Yankees and drive them from their picket post. But unfortunately they had a much larger force than was expected -- and as we had advanced at least a mile from the rest of our forces; and they having 5 or 6 to our one, they soon flanked us, both on the right and left. Thus having an enfilading fire on us from both flanks we were compelled to fall back, under a very heavy fire, and it was then that we lost some of our best officers, and men. The pusillanimous

Yankees will not fight us with equal numbers, and come up fairly and squarely; but just let them get the advantage of a small force, and the dastardly wretches how they will use it. They were a hundred yards past me on my left before I knew it. I did not like the Idea of us falling back (for I did not know that we were so badly flanked) and every time I came to a place where an officer was trying to rally the men I would stop, and wait til I found there was no chance to Ralley, thus I was among the last geting out. When I found out that we had to get out sure enough I thought I would go out along the edge of a field, the way I had went in, and I ran up to the fence, and was going to get over when to my astonishment there just inside of the field, were the Yankees, not more than 5 steps from me, but fortunately for me they did not see me, so I took to the right down through the woods, and ran about 150 yds and came to a fence where I had to take the open field for it, as soon as we jumped over the fence the Yankees saw us and the way they cut up the dirt around us was not slow I tell you. We had to runn about 400 yards in open ground exposed all the way to a severe fire. I think there were at least 20 balls that came within a foot of me and one struck the corner of my knapsack, another passed through the right sleeve of my roundabout. It went through the lining and through the shirt sleeve but did not break the skin. Thus you can form an Idea of the situation we were in. The men were falling all around me as I came out. And I render unto God all the thanks for my escape for I can attribute it to nothing else but his mercy that I came out unhurt. My heart was uplifted to him at the time and I cannot say that I was much more alarmed than I am at this moment. I believed I would get out safe, not withstanding the peril.

But I am sorry to inform you that our Lieut Col. John P. Woolf was killed, also Lieut. Akers of Co. (D) Lieut. Roberts of Co (E) & Lieut Burnett of Co (D) were killed. Captain Allison of Co (B) Capt Boring[90] of Co (I) Lieut Gilley of Co (A) Lieut Powers of Co (E) all badly wounded and Captain Henley of Co (G) captured. I cannot tell you all the men that were killed & wounded, and will only give you the casualties in our company, and such as I think, you may know in Co (B) Grayhouse old company.

In our company we had none killed — Asher Bailey was badly wounded in the thigh. John Crigger & James Crocket both in thigh severely Sandy Beville severely in foot. Wm. Umburger, slightly in thigh. Alfred Jonce slight in head. Benson Murray & James Cassell were verry slightly wounded. Henry Hurt and John Hollingsworth

son of George Hollingsworth of Co (B) were killed & Joe Keesling & several others wounded.

The affair however did not stop at this, for we drove the Yankees that day to Harpers Ferry. I must not forget to tell you that Gen Wharton had a hole shot through his clothes that day. — On the 17th we had a fight at Winchester in which we lost two of our company wounded, Dick Bowles (poor fellow) lost one of his legs, and James Brown was severely wounded, and in a slight skirmish on the 21st Daniel Umbarger was slightly wounded in the cheek. Cameron is out safe, and sends his respects to the family, and especially to his Aunt Juda & Uncl Abb.

I have heard with profound sorrow of the death of Alfred Fisher[91]. Many have been the pleasant moments we have spent togeather — But he is now gone from the toils and sorrows of this troublesome world, and from the tone of his letters which I have received since he has been in the army, I am made to believe that he is gone to rest. A tear steels down my cheek as I think of fond associations. Dear Frances[92], Monroe[93], and Alfred, have passed in quick sucession to the spirit world! But thank God, I "sorrow not as those that have no hope" as I trust they are this day in a bliss where by the Grace of God I hope to meet them when I am called upon to leave this lower world.

May God bless the widows, and orphan Children of the deceased, having felt the dart of bereavement which has pierced their hearts, I know how to sympathise with them.

As the drum has sounded for worship I will close and go to meeting —- I hope you will ever remember us in your prayers, and if I live to get through this unholy war to God will I render all the prais and thanks for my preservation. & God being my helper I will serve him the remainder of my days.

As ever Your Affectionate Son T. W. Fisher[94]

Sept. 10th, 1864, Frederick Co. Va.
Six miles below Winchester

My dear parents.

I am seated to answer your letter of the 22nd August which came to hand a few days ago finding me well and glad to hear from home. I sent you a few lines by Sargent C. W. Umberger which I hope you received. Then I wrote another letter after we had the fight on the 25. I presume you have also received that so it is unnecessary for me to say anything more about that affair only to correct a mistake I made or rather an error. I told you (among other) that Lieut. Burnett

was killed this was incorrect he is unhurt. But Lieut. Hall of Co. (H) was captured. You remember that I told you that a ball hit my knapsack. I did not know it at the time that it had penetrated but thought it was spent ball. On opening my knapsack several days after the fight I found the ball in there and found that it had made some dozen or fifteen holes in a shirt that I had folded up in it. I have the ball in my pocket now it is a pistol ball.

You wanted to know how I am off for cloths I have a good pr. of pants two tolerable shirts with the exception of bullet holes in them. A good pr. of shoes and a tolerable jump jacket but as for socks I am entirely destitute of them. I hope if you got the few lines I sent by Sarg. Umberger I hope when he comes back I will get a pr. or two of socks. If you did not get that in time to send them by Wm. Peck or John Walters. They are going home on furlough in a few days as soon as Charley gets back. Peck lives in town at the old man Pattisons. About us going to Maryland we did cross the Potomac over into Maryland but we only stayed there one night and I did not hardly think it worth talking about. That's the reason I did not mention it. It was done to let McCosland[95] out of Pennsilvania.

I was sorry to hear of the death of Jacob Baumgardner and I also heard with deep sorrow of the death of Alfred Fisher[96] while I am on this subject I will tell you of a sad occurance which took place yesterday morning Mr. William Mallory of Co. (B) fell dead in camp. He was as lively and gay that morning as he ever was up to the time he fell. He had just been skuffling with one of his comrades and had got up and was laughing and talking when the summons came. Imagine our feeling as we stood gazing upon the lifeless form of him who but a few moments ago was gay and playful. The extreem uncertainty of human life was there most forcibly illustrated. It was another warning to the living to prepare for death.

The drum has sounded for preaching and I want to go I will finish my letter when I come back. I will now resume my writing. I have just listened to a good sermon delivered by Rev. Robertson chaplain of Clark battalion on divinity of Christ.

I am glad you have such nice sugar cane I hope to help you eat some of the molasses. Is there plenty of apples on the trees if so make a good kettle of apple butter. Did those little peach trees bear this year. You wanted to know what we get to eat. We get plenty of flour and beef and there is plenty of apples in the country and we make stewed apples fly. We also have had roasting ears plenty.

Lastly you wanted to know whether there is any talk of peace

and what I think of it. There is a great deal of talk of peace almost every body thinks that there will be a treaty of peace agreed upon this winter.

Father if you want me to come home you must try and get me a recruit and send him up to the Co. They give a thirty day furlough if he gets a recruit to this Co. I will give any one thirty dollars that will come to this Co. as a recruit for me. Everett Miller and Wm. H. Thomson have come up. They both tell me they saw you at Camp meeting and that you were all well. George Saunders is here with the 45th Regt. he expects to get a detail to return home in a few days to collect. Tell Mr. Hiltens folks that Joe is well he got a letter from Andy a day or two ago. We suffered in the flesh last night it just poured down rain. I would have done fine but the water run under me and routed me out. During the summer it has been very dry in the valley but for the past 10 or 12 days it has rained half the time.

There is nothing stirring of interest at present the sound of the cannon has been silent for the last two or three days. It has been so familiar that it is no more headed than if it were thundering so common it is that we almost forget we are soldiers or that the war is going on if we do not hear it every day.

I have written all that is necessary at this time so will close for the present. I commit myself into the hands of God for protection until I have another oppertunity to write. May he guard guide and protect us all and ere long bring about some means that we may see each others faces in health and vigor, and also bring about and restore to our land peace once more.

Cameron says he will put his fist upon a peace of paper and send it to you next time I write he has no paper now. Nor I have none to lend him.

Write soon to your devoted son.
Thomas W. Fisher[97]

Fishers Hill, Shenandoah County, Va.
Sept 22nd, 64

My Dear Father & Mother,

When Wm Peck started home Sunday night I wrote a few lines at the bottom of the letter I sent by him stating that the probabilities were verry good for a fight and that if I escaped I would write. I felt that night just as sencibly as I ever felt anything in my life; that we were going to have a fight and that a hard one; and I asked my God that has so often brought me out of Danger, to be with me and if

constant with his will to bring me through safe again. Thanks be his name he answered my prayer. We had the hardest fight that day (Monday) I ever saw. I have never before since we have been in the Valley seen all our forces engaged at once: every Division Brigade & Regiment were engaged and not to make a short story longer I will just say at once that we got pretty badly whipped & even routed somewhat.

Although I am out unhurt, there were two periods during the day that I had no Idea of geting out. I was almost sure that I would be captured. The Yankees were all around us it looked to me like. I might look which way I would, and I could see the Yankees & I had a great notion to sit down and surrender for I had had the Bowel complaint a day or two, and was so weak I could not even march. If ever I get into another such a place I intend to get into a gully or sink some place, and wait for the Yanks to get me. Gen. Early acted very foolish in fighting them there at Winchester I think. If he had fallen back at first we could have held this position, but now I fear it is doubtful for we did loose less than 3000 or 3500 prisoners besides killed, and wounded but the Yankee loss we killed & wounded must be double that of ours. Our division lost much heavier in prisoners than any other. I think rather more than half of it is taken. Out of our company Capt Umbarger[98] was severely wounded in the shoulder, Private Jack Heldrith[99] killed Lieut. Repass[100] George Walters, Fletcher Lloyd captured. Col. Forsberg is wounded in hand and Major Yonce[101] is Mortally wounded. Cameron and Jake Fisher & Joe are out unhurt but Mell is wounded, though not verry badly. Since I have commenced writing there has pretty heavy skirmishing commenced. If they attack us here they will have a lively time before they get us. We are pretty strongly fortified, but there are so many of us men that have no guns but if they wait til tomorrow (and it is now late in the day) we will all have guns. If I do not get to send this out to day I will put in a few more lines in the morning. Pray for me that my life may still be spaired to see you all that we may finally all get home to Heaven.

Your Devoted Son, T W Fisher   Write soon[102]

Camp Near New Market, Va.
Nov. 9, 1864

Dear Sis:

Before me lies a letter dated October 27, with the signature of E. R. Fisher[103] at the bottom. It is so seldom that I see that name of late

it is almost a stranger but I am going to answer this letter, hoping the signature will make its appearance again. The best news I have to write you is that we are all well and have had a good long rest. We have been camped here upwards of two weeks and have rested and recruited up considerably and you can tell mother that I drew a good blanket and a pair of shoes and pair of cotton socks the other day. Well Sis I don't know what to write hardly for there is no news here, all is as quiet as home. Some people begin to think the campaign is over and fighting will not be resumed until next spring. Well I will tell you what I have been doing since I have been at this camp. I was out of money when I came here and spent my last for a canteen of molasses at the rate of $20.00 per gallon — you and mother would fill it cheaper than that, wouldn't you? To make myself a little money I have been speculating in fruit and cleared a little. Well the first is your apology for not writing me sooner then in the second place you acknowledge the receipt of my letter containing one from A.R.H. Then you say you went to Hiltens you and cousin Peggie and you took a notion to go to Snavelys and you stayed so long mother had to send after you. That was funny. While I think of it I will tell you that cousin Mary Fisher (in Ashe Co.) is married to a man by the name of Dickson and from what I can learn he is in tolerable affluent circumstances. I have just heard that Jacob Jonas and Barbara Rosenbaum are married. One thing more and I am done for the present: Blad and myself want you to send us the ballad of "Gentle Fannie Ray". It was a tune brother Jimmie used to sing so much. I will now close hoping these few lines will find you all enjoying good health.
Cameron wishes to be kindly remembered by you and all the rest of the family.

Write soon to your brother.
Thomas W. Fisher[104]

Camp Fishersville. Augusta Co. Va.
Tuesday Jan. 24th. 1865

Dear Parents.

I seat myself this morning to drop you a few lines in answer to the one received in the box of provision. It found me and all the rest of the company well and still we enjoy the same blessing and hope these few lines will find you all enjoying the same blessing.

It would have done you good to see us smather Sausage and buck wheat cakes & butter and other things. This will give us a start in rations that will last us 2 or 3 weeks. I would like to know what you

meant by saying what you did about _______ Davis. I expect he has been writing something home about me. When he first came here to the company we took him into our mess. But he was so abominable selfish that we turned him out to shift for him self. And I expect he has written home about it. I'll tell you how he done. — When any of us got anything to eat we would devide with the mess And one evening he got some meat and he took it off to an other mess and cooked it. For fear if he cooked at our fire some of us would get some of it. That with many such tricks before that — made us a little po------uted and we excommunicated him from the mess.

My mess is – Puss & Blad, Rufus W. Beel & Robert G. Bell. 4 verry handsome and intelligent gentlemen.

I am going to send this letter by Mr. James A. Harrell he is going home in the morning. His time will be out the 14 of Feb. and he says he will bring any thing you wish to send me. If you don't hear of us leaving here before he comes back you may send me another small box if you want to and that will do me so long as I am going to stay in the army.

I am in better hopes of the war ending sooner than I have ever had.

We are whiped and our head men know it and I think they will wind it up. Before they will be driven into it by force.

It is possible that the war may last 8 or 9 months longer, but it is quite improbable.

I think I will get a furlough in about 5 or 6 weeks if it was not for that I would not stay here 10 days longer.

That soap you sent me just came in good time my clothes were all dirty and I had no soap. I often regreted that I had forgotten to write to you to send me a piece in that box. Well I must close.

Write soon and give me all the news. Yours with Regards,

Wint[105]

Thus concludes the known Thomas Winton Fisher letters. The 51st Virginia proceeded to move. On early March 2 , through snow and sleet, the Regiment pushed on to Waynesboro. While preparing to cross the Shenandoah River, they were met by Gen. George Custer's cavalry, striking hard on the left flank and causing confusion among the Rebels. The Federals closed in on them, and on March 10, the Valley of Virginia was lost to the enemy. Gen. Wharton, looking back on the disastrous defeat, recalled his small force of 800 facing 7,500 "splendidly equipped cav-

alry". The Confederates had no chance in the freezing March weather; the majority of the 51st Virginia surrendered, becoming prisoners of war. Thomas Winton Fisher was among the 393 taken captive. They were marched to Staunton in mud up to the knees. At Staunton, food for the prisoners was taken from the Western State Hospital (the asylum) stores, and sympathetic ladies in the town shared food with the captives.

On the way to Winchester, an attempt to free the prisoners occurred at Mt. Jackson when Gen. Rosser's cavalry attacked the Federal guard, the 1st New Hampshire Cavalry. Afterward, the prisoners were marched on to Harper's Ferry. From there Thomas was moved to Pea Patch Island at Ft. Delaware, Delaware, where he endured the three months before his release on June 20, 1865, after signing the Oath of Allegiance. A line to a song the prisoners reportedly sang was "the most unlucky devil is the prisoner of war."[106] Though Thomas left no written or oral history of this period of his life, it was assuredly a memory best repressed.

VIII. Home — At Last

The 51st Virginia fought the "forgotten war", far from Lee's famous army of Northern Virginia. After their release from northern prisons, they quietly plodded to their homes and waiting loved ones. Thomas anxiously returned to his two young sons and the home and hearth of his parents.

James S. Davis, in his Regimental history of Virginia's 51st Infantry, states in his epilogue:

> No cheering crowds or clanging bands greeted the survivors of the 51st Virginia as they returned home. Broken fences and weed-covered fields marked once-prosperous farms. Most men desired not to talk about the war, yet none would ever forget the bitter winters in the Kanawha Valley, or engagements at Fort Donelson, New Market, Cold Harbor, Winchester, Leetown, Cedar Creek and Waynesboro. Some remembered only the victories, just as others painfully recalled fleeing from the enemy on several occasions in the Shenandoah Valley."[107]

After a time of loneliness Thomas married Lenora Louisa Spraker, ten years younger, on January 1, 1866, with his father officiating. Born to

this union were five daughters and a son: Ellen Porter (b. Jan. 9, 1870), Laura Caroline (b. Mar. 30, 1872), Medora Kieffer (b. Sept 5, 1874), Frances Leticia Summers (b. Mar. 16, 1878), George E. Munsey (b. June 29, 1881), and Willie Sawyer (b. Jan 28, 1884).[108]

In daughter Ellen's memoirs, she recalls her father

> always held family prayer and took us to church and Sunday School. Often we attended two Sunday Schools....Father was Superintendent and a steward at Mt. Ephraim....When we children were too small to walk our dear old father got on an old grey horse we named Mollie and took two or three of us on her and we went to Sunday School and church. Then as we grew older we walked and it was about 2½ miles from our house and we went and was scarcely ever absent.[109].

Life continued on the farm and there was regular work as a carpenter and builder of homes, business establishments, and barns.[110] Most notable of the buildings he designed and helped build was the second church building of Mt. Ephraim Methodist Church (after the original burned), where he served many years as a deacon and trustee. The dedication took place September 24, 1876. About this time Thomas built himself a storehouse, and his children took chickens, eggs, and other products raised on the farm to the store for sale.

Thomas' father, Absalom, died June 3, 1877[111], and afterward his mother lived with her son and family until her own death 10 years later.[112] The 1880 census found Thomas W. Fisher in the Blacklick District of Wythe County, Va. His occupation was listed as farmer, living with wife, Louisa S, 32, Jason A, 19, Reuben P, 18, 4 daughters ages 2-10 and Judith O., 69, mother.

A few months before this census was taken, Thomas had some problems with his younger teen-aged son, Paul. He had left home, and his father had written a letter to this somewhat rebellious son, in a loving but firm tone. It is included here for it curiously sounds as if recently authored, rather than a hundred years ago, and it completes the character study of this man, who here exemplifies his parental concern for his son at age 17.

At home, Sunday evening Feb 1st 1880

Dear Son.

I wrote you a short note in Jaces[113] letter & promised to write more at length soon Which promise I now propose to comply with.

You have been informed in Lenore's[114] letter that we are all well. The weather is somewhat colder now than it has been and as tomorrow is ground hog day I reckon we will learn through his hogship what is to be the result of the winter yet to come.

Our meeting closed to night a week ago and resulted in bountiful conversions & 16 or 17 accessions to the church. There were some to orate penitents when the meeting closed.

In this letter I want to rectify an error that you seem to have fallen into respecting what I wrote to you in my first letter. You say in a few lines to "Granny[115]: "that from the way Pa writes he don't want me to come home &c." This is what I said. "If you can come home and behave and be an obedient son" come on home, but if not then stay away: So that from what you wrote to Mother I suppose you thought you could not comply with the requirement and therefore you will not come: and now I want to say further so that you may know on whom & on what to depend, and as there may be no misunderstanding here after. . and what I want to say is this. — As you have thought it propper and right and honorable to take three years of time which propperly and legally belong to your parents and have left home, to "handle your own way" I say if you segest this is justice I hope you will be satisfied with your own bargains and when I come to close up my affairs in this world. If I have any thing to leave behind I hope you will not think I acted unjustly if I give it to those who stay with me and take an interest in my wellfare and leave those out who care only for self and nothing for me.

I dont know exactly what you meant by going to the clerks office and examining my deed. Whether you would have taken it from me and turned us out doors I dont know. Or who was advising you in this matter I don't know. But I think I have an Idea. Now all these things are sore to my heart, and my mind will have to undergo a great change if you stay away and use your 3 years time, if I can help you any more. So that you can easily see from what I have written that if you waste your time running over the country from place to place, spending what you make at one place traveling to an other and at the time you come of age have no more than you have now which ten chances to one will be the case. It is you that have done it not me.

Do not expect to get help from me. Now if you are satisfied and intend to be satisfied with the time from now till you are of age, take it and make the best use of it you can, but If you now prefer to come home be as wise son shall be, I will do by you as by the ballance. Now I have set life and death before you. "Choose you this day whom you

will serve."[116] I will just add one more sentence and then dismiss this subject from my pen hereafter. That sentence is this. Read, Ponder and reflect and then act for your self.

I have but little Idea that you are doing as well as Jace think you are. I fear when you come to settle up board washing shop rent & lumber bills & other material there will be but little left for Paul. You need not be uneasy about me writing to any one that you runn off. If you are determined to be on your own I wish you may do well but I fear you will not find it half as easy to get along in this world as you have fancied it was and before you reach my age & experience you will say Pa told the truth.

I have written enough for the present, and will now close. Let us hear from you again.

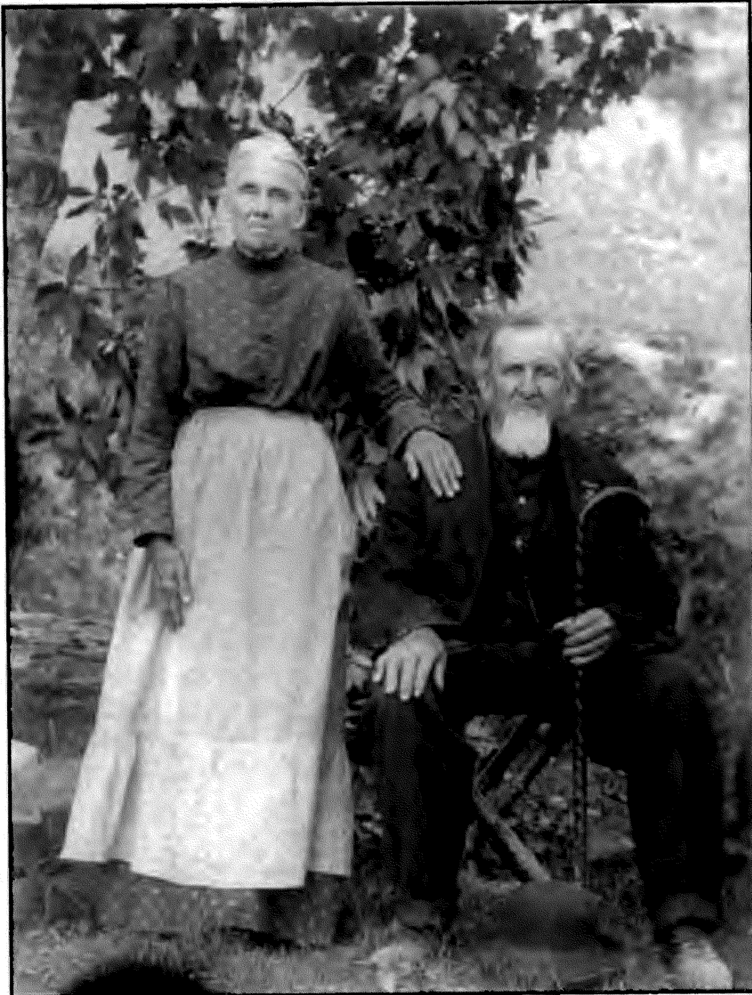
With a sincere prayer for your wellfare I am your

Affectionate Father Thos. W. Fisher[117]

It is of particular interest to note that Paul was at home according to the June, 1880, census.

In later years this same son followed in his father's footsteps and became an excellent carpenter and architect. And, when the third Mt. Ephraim Church was built, the designer was Reuben Paul Fisher. This church building was dedicated October 26, 1914. Paul was also a rural

Mt. Ephraim Methodist Church, Crockett, Va., designed by Reuben Paul Fisher. Dedicated October 26, 1914.



Thomas Winton Fisher and "Sis", Elizabeth Rachel Fisher Simmerman.

mail carrier in the Crockett area of Wythe County, making his deliveries in horse and carriage. For his own amusement Paul wrote articles for the Pulaski, Virginia, newspaper using the pseudonym Silas Frogg. Thomas' elder son, Jason Alfred, was a Methodist preacher in southwest Virginia.

In his later years, Thomas is remembered by his great granddaughter, Mildred Riggle Brown, as a man who spent most of his time sitting in his front yard or porch reading his Bible, with Lenora frequently by his side. When a young girl, Mildred and her parents lived for a while with this maternal grandfather. She fondly remembers sitting on his knee as

he read and sang to her, often pulling out a piece of hard candy from his shirt pocket — with a bit of lint attached!

Thomas Winton Fisher died November 2, 1921[118], one year after Lenora's passing. He ended his earthly sojourn at the age of eighty-four (84) years, rejoining his beloved family once again with rejoicing in heaven. His earthly remains are buried in the Mt. Ephraim Church Cemetery in Crockett, Va. His pilgrimage was ended.

Author's note: This paper is written in tribute to Thomas Winton Fisher, my great-great grandfather (descending through Reuben Paul, Nettye Fisher Riggle, and Mildred Riggle Brown). In all the letters uncovered and studied and other research completed, no disparaging word was found. In my eyes he was a great man, a man to be honored and respected for his war-time bravery and his unwavering faith in God, even when the days were darkest. He left behind a legacy of faith.

Every effort has been made to accurately transcribe the original letters with spelling left as it appeared. Some original letters are in poor condition, and a few words are undecipherable due to torn paper, burns, or scotch-tape repairs. Apparently, some spelling corrections and changes were made to those letters that appeared in the newspaper; if originals were not available for comparison, the reader may note some inconsistencies.

Special thanks to: Bobbie Irvin Jones, who organized her Grandmother's newspaper clippings of some of the TWF letters; Merle Neece Hash for typing those TWF letters and forwarding them to Professor Robertson's Civil War files; Dianne McGinley Gardener and Mildred Riggle Brown for providing photographs which help to make the words come alive; Dianne for her Fisher genealogy; Thomas W. Fisher's grandson, Garland C. Irvin, for providing helpful insights to the real person; James I. Robertson for making his files available; the Wytheville newspaper for publishing many of the TWF war letters in 1933; and author James A. Davis for his detailed history, *51st Virginia Infantry*.

In the interim since Part I was published, two additional letters have been discovered (August 23, 1863 and September 22, 1864) due to the efforts of another of Thomas' descendants, Naomi Kincer Suthers. To her, and to John M. Wolford, the author is grateful. The search continues. . . .

Endnotes, Part II

40. In Washington County, near Abingdon.
41. North Carolina.
42. Col. Gabriel Wharton.
43. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
44. Macadamized: "paved by laying and rolling layers of broken stone".
45. David Fisher, father of Absalom Fisher.
46. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
47. Ibid.
48. General Richard Stoddard Ewell.
49. George Wythe Fisher, a cousin, died at Staunton Hospital of typhoid fever July 27, 1863 (J.S. Davis).
50. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
51. Ibid.
52. Elizabeth Rachel Fisher
53. Methodist Church, Wythe Co. On March 13, 1855, David Fisher deeded to Absalom Fisher, his son, and Reuben Fisher, Frances' father, and other trustees of the Methodist Episcopal Church, 1 acre of land and the Slate Springs Church on Walkers Branch.
54. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
55. Died of typhoid fever in Charlottesville Hospital on September 20, 1863 (J.S. Davis).
56. Original: John M. Wolford, Bristol, Va.
57. General Samuel Jones.
58. Mini-balls.
59. Sons, Jason Alfred, age 3, and Reuben Paulett, age 1½ yrs.
60. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October 24, 1933.
61. James A. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry* (Lynchburg, Va.: H. E. Howard Co., 1984), pp. 191-21.
62. Sister Nancy, age 19, died Oct., 16, 1862; son John Cooper Fisher, age 3, died Nov. 9, 1862; and wife Frances Ann Fisher, age 22, died Nov. 10, 1862 — all of diphtheria.
63. Tennessee.
64. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
65. "A taste of".
66. Camp near Abingdon, Washington County.
67. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
68. Son, Jason Alfred Fisher, age 3 yrs.
69. Thought to be a misspelling of Captain William C. Bourn, Co. I., 51st Regt.
70. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
71. Rader is mother's maiden name.
72. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
73. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry*, pp. 21-23, 32-36.
74. General Gabriel Wharton.
75. Lieut. Colonel John P. Wolf.
76. Major William Yonce.

77. "Grape shot": gunpowder, wadding of cloth or paper, and scrap metal when put into cannon and fired upon infantry sprays out shrapnel.
78. 2 Lieut. Jacob Foster Fisher, Co. F, 51st Regt., a cousin and also wife's uncle.
79. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
80. Battle of Hanging Rock, near Salem.
81. Artillery.
82. Jason Lee Fisher, wife's brother.
83. Original: Ronald Harris, Waynesboro, Va.
84. Symbol used in period newspaper classified advertisements to draw attention.
85. General William W. Averell.
86. Joseph G. Hilten, Co. D, 45th Regt., friend.
87. Captain William Yonce.
88. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson, Blacksburg, Va.
89. To send by public conveyance free of expense.
90. Thought to be a misspelling of Captain William C. Bourn.
91. Alfred Bronson Fisher, wife's brother.
92. Deceased wife, died November 10,1862.
93. Greenville Monroe ("Mon") Fisher, wife's brother.
94. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson.
95. Brig. General John McCausland.
96. Alfred Bronson Fisher, wife's brother.
97. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
98. Jehid F. Umbarger
99. Andrew J. Hildreth, J.S. Davis reports death at Winchester.
100. Newton H. Repass, J.S. Davis reports captured at Winchester.
101. Major William A. Yonce , J. S. Davis reports death at Charlottesville Hospital on Sept. 27, 1864, "where and when wounded unknown".
102. Original: John M. Wolford, Bristol, Va.
103. Elizabeth Rachel Fisher, his only living sibling.
104. Printed in *Southwest Virginia Enterprise*, October, 1933.
105. Original: John M. Wolford.
106. J. S. Davis, *51st Virginia Infantry*, pp. 39-40.
107. Ibid, p. 44.
108. Thomas Winton Fisher Family Bible.
109. Ellen Fisher Wolford Memoirs, 1948. (Courtesy of Naomi Kincer Struthers, great-granddaughter).
110. Thomas W. Fisher Diary, 1874. (Courtesy of Bobbie Irvin Jones, great-granddaughter).
111. T. W. Fisher Family Bible.
112. Ibid.
113. Jason Alfred Fisher, Paul's brother.
114. Paul's stepmother.
115. Paul's grandmother, Judith O. Rader Fisher.
116. Biblical reference (Joshua 24:15).
117. Original: Darlene Brown Simpson.
118. T. W. Fisher Family Bible.

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Prehistoric Southwest Virginia
Aboriginal Occupation, Land Use, and Environmental Worldview

Will Sarvis

Native-American land and resource use in Southwest Virginia spans almost the entire scope of North-American prehistory, and includes evidence of early Paleo-Indian hunters all the way up to tribal peoples who met the impact of Euroamerican occupation. Southwest Virginia prehistory shares much in common with archaeological patterns in the Southern Appalachians and greater southeastern United States, but, like any subregion, remains ultimately unique. In fact, some archaeologists argue that the western Virginia highland presents a singular version of an intermontane prehistoric culture distinct even from its neighboring mountain aboriginal cultures. One important feature of prerecorded human occupation in Southwest Virginia entails less human-induced environmental change compared to surrounding lowland areas or even the proto-Cherokee highlands to the south.

Long before the Virginia mountains became a Euroamerican frontier on the edge of advancing agricultural settlement, the region had functioned as something of a "natural reserve" for cohesive native groups (later designated "tribes") situated in comparatively larger numbers around the area. While such groups traveled and temporarily camped in the mountains for hunting, fishing, resource gathering, or trading purposes, certain smaller groups of aboriginal peoples also lived in Southwest Virginia for prolonged periods. All left behind archaeological evidence. Following is a synopsis of this evidence, an assessment of land use and environmental impact, and finally an attempt to appreciate the prehistoric environmental worldview.

During the past 20,000 years, both natural and human-induced causes have rendered dramatic changes in the environment of Southwest Virginia. The end of the Wisconsin glaciation, 18,000-12,000 B.C., ended the Pleistocene period and introduced the Holocene with radi-

cally modifying effects. The end of the Wisconsin glaciation also raised sea levels, and submerged the land bridge between Siberia and Alaska, which archaeologists commonly believe was the route ancient Asian peoples used in populating North and South America. As the earliest hunters began traversing the new continents, a spruce forest gradually evolved into one dominated by hemlock, which in turn gave way to a deciduous forest. Oak species became prevalent between 3000-2500 B.C., and a warm and dry climate encouraged the development of subsequent deciduous combinations involving oak, chestnut, and hickory trees.[1]

While few archaeologists or anthropologists argue for exclusive environmental determinism, much evidence in the Southern Appalachians suggests that natural land forms had significant influences on prehistoric human behavior. In general, low-lying areas associated with rivers and flood plains became the most conducive for the most elaborate cultural development, while rougher topography proved the least.[2] Other natural land forms of Southwest Virginia appear to have had significant influences on prehistoric human behavior, with rivers, flood plains, mountains, and natural salt sources providing some of the most conspicuous evidence.

From the earliest days of the Paleo-Indian era, rivers became natural corridors for travel among the mountains. The New, Clinch, Tennessee, Holston, and Powell rivers all flowed toward the greater Mississippi drainage area, and provided natural travel routes into and through the western-most section of Virginia. The Roanoke and James flowed toward the Atlantic Ocean, and offered travel routes into the mountains from the east. As prehistoric Indian lifestyles became progressively more sedentary, the flood plains of these rivers became the most common sites of permanent and semi-permanent villages and horticultural activity. River valleys also became the routes through which various Indian groups interacted and exchanged culture. In this sense, local cultural traditions — expressed through ceramic variations and trade goods — arose in association with various waterways, and thus even the Dan, Shenandoah, and Potomac rivers influenced Southwest Virginia's easternmost prehistoric culture.[3]

Along with rivers, geological sources of salt figured very importantly in Southwest Virginia's prehistory. Ancient clays imbedded with salt in the present-day Roanoke area and a more concentrated salt formation in Rich Valley attracted mammals, which in turn lured hunters of mast-

odon, giant sloth, and later creatures such as white tail deer, eastern elk, and black bear. As America's first humans evolved from a highly nomadic lifestyle to a more stationary one, their culture grew more complex, characterized by the gradual rise of such activities as ceramic manufacture, plant cultivation, and eventually the crafting of ritual goods and burial items from materials such as mica and copper. Archaeologists have distinguished three broad stages to delineate these changes in culture. The Paleo-Indian, Archaic, and Woodland eras all distinguish themselves with unique cultural attributes in Southwest Virginia and other parts of North America. The Mississippian tradition arose as sort of a hybrid and ultra-sophisticated version of the Woodland. While centered along the Mississippi Valley itself, this tradition also coincided and overlapped with the Woodland tradition in the areas contingent to the Mississippi Valley. In this manner, the Mississippian made its mark even as far away as the upper Tennessee valley and Southwest Virginia.

Paleo-Indian Period (*ca* 9500 B.C. - *ca* 8000 B.C.)

During the past century, archaeologists have found numerous Paleo-Indian artifacts throughout eastern North America. The basin areas of the Mississippi, Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers have especially divulged rich finds in Paleo-Indian projectile points. In fact, despite the early fame of Folsom and Clovis finds in New Mexico and the American Southwest, present-day Kentucky and Tennessee and many parts of some of their bordering states have yielded the very richest sources of Paleo-Indian points (arrowheads or spearheads) in North America. The Southern Appalachians, including all of Southwest Virginia, were part of this early hunting period and, remarkably, the Paleo-Indian finds of eastern coastal areas of Virginia and other states have revealed notably fewer projectile points than have the highlands themselves.[4] But despite extensive evidence reflecting transient hunting practices, archaeologists studying Southwest Virginia and other parts of the Southern Appalachians in West Virginia, eastern Kentucky, and western North Carolina have yet to find evidence of larger Paleo-Indian settlements, such as the Flint Run or Thunderbird sites in eastern Virginia.[5] Thus, the evidence to date — though incomplete and partially destroyed through looting, past indiscriminate artifact gathering, and road and building construction — would suggest that nomadic hunters traversed all of Southwest Virginia. Particularly indicative are the numerous Paleo-Indian projec-

9500 B.C. | 8000 B.C. | 1000 B.C. | 500 B.C. | 1000 A.D. | 1500 A.D.

Paleo-Indian Period

Archaic Period

Woodland
early
middle
late

Adena

Hopewell

Missis-sipian

Southern Cult →

Paleo-Indian, 9500 B.C.—8000 B.C.
Archaic, 8000 B.C.—1000 B.C.
Woodland, 1000 B.C.—European contact (1607 for eastern Virginia)
early, 1000 B.C.—500 B.C.
middle, 500 B.C.—900 A.D.
late, 900 A.D.—1607 A.D.
Adena, 500 B.C.—700 A.D.
Hopewell, 900 A.D.—1150 A.D.
Mississipian, 700 A.D.—European contact
Appalachian variations: Dallas, Pisgah, Fort Ancient, 1000 A.D.—European contact
Southern Cult phenomenon, 1100s—European contact

tile points found in Rich Valley, where animals roamed in high numbers seeking the natural salines.[6] About 10,000 years ago all these animals became extinct. Why they died remains mysterious and controversial, and archaeologists and paleontologists have pondered a number of possible causes, including climate change, disease, natural evolution, human predation — or a combination of some or all of these factors, or from additional causes not yet known.[7] In any case, their demise, and the effect of their demise on early humans, brought the Paleo-Indian era to a close.

Archaic Period (*ca* 8000 B.C. - *ca* 1000 B.C.)

Archaeologists distinguish the Archaic Period from the Paleo-Indian Period by both natural changes and modifications in human behavior. The final stages of the climatic transition from the Pleistocene arrived, creating remarkable environmental changes, and thus interrelated human behavioral changes. During the early Archaic, a pine and oak forest began to replace natural grasslands, the mastodon became extinct, and bison numbers decreased.[8] The climate followed a general warming trend. Somewhere around 5000 B.C., the basic flora and fauna of the modern era's eastern United States established itself and provided Indians with vast new food sources, such as shellfish, acorns, chestnuts, and wild turkeys. Again, the broad riverine area associated with the Mississippi, including the Ohio, Cumberland, and Tennessee rivers, became a concentration of Archaic culture.[9] Early people altered their behavior from primary reliance on hunting to a more diverse, less itinerant way of life that involved a heavier use of plant foods, both wild and cultivated. Indians in west central Illinois apparently began domesticating gourds and squash as early as 5000 B.C., and such horticultural practice seems to have reached the Tennessee and Kentucky area by 2500 B.C.[10] Such plant cultivation apparently spread into Southwest Virginia as well, and by the end of the Archaic Period, aborigines in this area seem to have used a wide range of the area's natural food resources.[11]

Prehistoric sites and artifacts from the Archaic Period in Southwest Virginia mostly reflect tool-making, tool maintenance, and the hunting and food-processing practices associated with them.[12] Indians developed new tools to fulfill new functions, such as the stone milling equipment used for greater utilization of plant foods. Archaic people in Southwest Virginia used manos, a hand-held globular rock, to grind food substances

against flat rocks called metates. Indians also began to make more refined types of stone tools resembling axes and adzes. Additionally, they manufactured stone weights fitted for a new weapon called an atlatl, which utilized leverage through a simple yet highly effective hinged device for throwing spears. Finally, they sometimes developed specific tools in particular areas which reflected local uses, such as nut-harvesting, fish weir production, seed-processing, and forest clearing.[13]

Around 3000 B.C., Archaic people in various parts of the eastern United States began practicing a new subsistence pattern involving annual migrations between summer and winter camps, thereby utilizing seasonal resources.[14] The Grayson County area of Southwest Virginia reflected a regional variation of this new development in which flood plains and uplands grew interrelated. Here, Indians established their more substantial hunting camps in low-lying areas, from which they traveled into the mountains to smaller, more transient camps.[15]

The oldest known aboriginal occupation in Southwest Virginia occurred between 8240-7440 B.C. at the Daughtery Cave in Russell County. Indians living at this rock shelter appear to have been transient hunters.[16] As mentioned, shellfish represented a new food source during the Archaic Period, and the Daughtery Cave site has revealed the earliest known evidence of shellfish consumption in Southwest Virginia. A growing reliance on shellfish may have contributed to the progressively stationary behavior that characterized the Archaic Period, and prehistory in general.[17] Certainly a heightened degree of more settled activity and accompanying cultural development occurred around 1000 B.C., distinguishing an entirely new cultural tradition, commonly called the Woodland.

Woodland Period
(1000 B.C. - *ca* 1607: i.e., European Contact)

As the Archaic Period evolved into the Woodland Period, Indians developed North America's most sophisticated prehistoric culture. This culture reached its climax in certain locations with the Mississippian tradition, which began around 700 or 800 A.D. and continued until European Contact. The Mississippian cultural tradition itself became complex enough to generate local variations, and several of these traditions — including the Pisgah, Dallas, and Fort Ancient — directly or indirectly influenced prehistoric culture in Southwest Virginia. Where Mis-

sissippian influences were *not* felt in eastern North America, the relatively less elaborate Woodland tradition persisted. Thus, depending upon the location, the first Europeans encountered either a Woodland or a Mississippian people, with numerous unique local cultural idiosyncrasies.

After about 1000 B.C., the eastern woodlands saw the rise of numerous politically autonomous and economically self-sufficient groups which increased in population, engaged in more intensive horticulture, and began to exchange tools, pottery, ornamental items, and other trade goods with neighboring groups. Eastern Native Americans, particularly around the Mississippi and Ohio River valleys, settled along flood plains where they began an unprecedentedly intense cultivation of food, especially the much-noted triad of maize, beans, and squash. Horticulture and its associated sedentary behavior inspired profound cultural changes, both locally and in regard to exchange with other Indian groups. Indians made more use of pottery, traded "wealth items" (copper-ware, shell, and mica jewelry and ornaments), developed new tools, used tools more extensively, performed fairly elaborate burials, and developed (in some cases) relatively complex political systems, commonly called chiefdoms.[18]

Archaeologists have found sites reflecting Woodland Indians' hunting, gathering, and plant-cultivating Woodland culture throughout Southwest Virginia.[19] As in other places in the eastern United States, palisaded villages, circular dwelling places, flexed burials, triangular projectile points, various distinctive ceramic styles, and horticultural evidence characterize Woodland Period occupations in Southwest Virginia.[20] Woodland sites range in size and complexity from single family units to larger, more diverse sites that reflect a high degree of cultural interaction with neighboring peoples.[21] A crucial development of this era in the eastern United States lay in a much more sophisticated pottery manufacture involving the first fired ceramics, which were capable of withstanding high temperatures and drastic temperature changes. Such a capability allowed Indians to engage in more sophisticated cooking activities, particularly the cooking of starchy seeds and the leaching of acorns. In eastern Kentucky, such new food-processing technology revolutionized Indian use of the forest cover, from about fifteen percent in 2000 B.C. to more than eighty percent a thousand years later.[22]

The first fired ceramics appeared in most of Virginia by about 1200 B.C. This new technology likely arrived in eastern Virginia from the In-

dian peoples of coastal South Carolina and Georgia. Evidence of this newer pottery, however, does not appear in Southwest Virginia until 300 years later, when Swannanoa ware (a sand- or grit-tempered pottery) arises, apparently through exchange with southern peoples.[23] Archaeologists categorize and attempt to trace subsequent ceramic types through their differing surface designs and their tempering medium. Indians of the Southern Appalachians used devices such as fabric, cords, and carved wooden paddles to decorate pottery, and used a variety of materials, including shells (mostly periwinkle and mussel), sand or grit, and limestone to temper their ware.[24]

Ceramic types help archaeologists determine different time periods, cultural groups, and possible exchanges between groups. As Sebert Sisson wrote in regard to the Pot Rock Cliff Shelter in Carroll County, Virginia, "the relatively great amounts of pottery, with the evidence of type changes through time, prove that the shelter was extensively used during Woodland times."[25] Pot sherds found in Southwest Virginia help reveal much about the complex story of cultural interchange, particularly with regard to localized peoples and influences from neighboring groups, or the lack of such cultural interchange. For instance, certain sites in Lee County have revealed pottery types distinctly associated with the Dallas and Pisgah cultures (local, distinct Mississippian cultural variations) to the west and south. On the other hand, the nearby Crab Orchard Site in Tazewell County divulged almost only indigenous-type pottery remains, reflecting little or no interaction with Dallas or Pisgah peoples.[26] The Brown Johnson Site in Bland County produced similar conclusions; the ceramic evidence was relatively meager, but nevertheless clearly reflected native pottery as opposed to outside influences.[27] On the other hand, the Flannery Site in Washington County contained a varied collection of ceramic artifacts that indicated early, indigenous Indian occupation, followed by later outside influences.[28] Obviously, pot sherds are among the most important artifacts that archaeologists find.

During the Middle Woodland Period (ca. 500 B.C.– ca. 900 A.D.), the use of Indian corn or maize spread throughout the eastern United States, bows and arrows replaced spears, and the first socially stratified cultures arose among aborigines, particularly in two cultural areas. Beginning around 500 B.C., the Adena culture developed primarily in southern Ohio, but extended into all adjacent states until around 700 A.D. Indians of the Adena culture built the famous burial mounds of the Ohio

Valley region and beyond, which remain in evidence across the landscape today. Around 900 A.D. the Hopewell cultural tradition also arose in southern Ohio, overlapping to some extent with the Adena, but extending over a much broader area of eastern North America in what is sometimes called the Hopewellian Influence (or Interaction) Sphere. Within only a couple of hundred years the Hopewellian Interaction Sphere reached as far north as Montana and Michigan, as far south as the Gulf Coast, and as far east as the Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina and Virginia. Increased production of maize and other cultigens introduced from Mesoamerica as well as indigenous domesticates provided an economic basis from which Indians all over eastern North America began interchanging ideas, raw and manufactured goods, and various cultural practices.[29]

The Middle Woodland Period in Virginia reveals characteristics typical of a broader eastern North America trend as well as unique local traits. In general, Indians of the eastern forests experienced an increasingly settled lifestyle accompanied by population growth and a greater degree of social stratification. Various groups became more territorial and, by extension, began to develop regional cultural characteristics.[30] Indians in Southwest Virginia manufactured a distinct style of ceramics that apparently reflects some degree of cultural interaction with other southern mountain aboriginals. Around the Blue Ridge area, however, ceramic traits seem to resemble those found to the east. Social characteristics probably ranged from non-stratified societies typical of earlier eras to the more sociopolitically complex relationships that were developing among other eastern Indian groups of the period. Additionally, Southwest Virginia's Middle Woodland sites reveal explicit differences in artifacts depending upon elevation. Thus, the distinction between valley settlements and highland hunting camps continued.[31]

Horticultural practices intensified during the Late Woodland Period in Virginia (900-1607), when Indians began employing slash and burn techniques, including the girdling of trees. As with fired ceramics, horticulture arrived somewhat later in Southwest Virginia compared to the eastern piedmont and coastal areas. Archaeological evidence reflects a late, rather than early, Woodland horticultural configuration in the Virginia mountains. But during this late Woodland Period, flood plains and associated plant cultivation became the sites of major, semi-permanent occupations.[32] This situation is reflected quite prominently in the

Crab Orchard Site in Tazewell County near the headwaters of the Clinch River. Indians built the 400-feet long, palisaded Crab Orchard village around the year 1500. Inside the palisade, archaeologists discovered circular homes arranged in rows, about 180 burials, and various storage pits. Researches have surmised the population of the village at about 400 people. Outside the palisade, the Indians had a large, semi-subterranean "council house," and beyond this complex, along the Clinch River, they cultivated food.[33]

To date, the Crab Orchard Site remains unique in Southwest Virginia, for no other site displays its particular arrangement of circular dwellings, palisade, council house, and mixture of two distinct ceramic types (shell-tempered, plain-surface, and Radford Series). The Crab Orchard Site becomes especially significant when we consider, as is true for much of Southwest Virginia, the absence of indigenous inhabitants during the subsequent Contact Period (that is, after 1607). With such a dearth of documentary evidence, the Crab Orchard Site is so far the sole and most important resource for understanding late prehistoric life ways in the Tazewell County area.[34] The Crab Orchard complex also, to some extent, reflects part of a broader prehistoric highland culture in Virginia.

During the late Woodland Period, "distinct natural areas" developed in Virginia based on the various zones of geography, such as the coastal plain, piedmont, Blue Ridge, and Appalachian plateau regions. Distinct natural areas arose when the particular traits of an area's natural features began to distinguish markedly the local Indian population, now increasingly based in specific locales. In addition to this growing indigenous Indian population, Southwest Virginia became an area traversed by neighboring groups (also growing in cultural distinction), particularly along river ways. Indians from eastern Virginia used the James, Dan, and Roanoke rivers to reach Southwest Virginia, often for hunting purposes and concurrent weapon manufacture. Indians from various Mississippian cultural areas to the north, west, and south traveled into Southwest Virginia along the Kanawha, New, Tennessee, and Holston rivers.[35] It was up from the Tennessee River that Virginia received its most significant Mississippian influences.

Beginning around 700 A.D., Mississippian culture began to replace or evolve out of the Woodland culture in the valley areas associated with the Mississippi, Illinois, Tennessee, and Ohio rivers. An enhanced strain of corn, the addition of beans, and an overall increase in horticultural

production contributed to an increase of population among Mississippian peoples. Mississippian culture and its horticultural food dependence initiated the earliest known effects on Indian social hierarchy by creating stratified social and political patterns, and may well have fostered a class-ranked society in areas as distant as Southwest Virginia.[36] As the core of Mississippian culture developed in the lowland areas, populations on the fringes of these areas moved into higher, more remote river valleys, such as the Powell in far Southwest Virginia. Since the more remote valleys were smaller, had less arable land, a shorter growing season, and generally offered fewer natural resources, Indians living there tended to develop communities of somewhat less elaborate social and political structure compared to the core Mississippian locales.[37] Furthest Southwest Virginia, around Lee, Scott, and Wise counties, experienced just such a "later developing" influence — but, in any case, Virginia's *only* resident Mississippian culture.

Southwest Virginia's Mississippian traits, as seen in items such as ceramics, reflected distinct elements of localized Mississippian traditions that had developed immediately to the south, west, and north. Around 1000 A.D., the Pisgah variation of the Mississippian culture arose in western North Carolina, as did the Dallas cultural tradition in eastern Tennessee and the Fort Ancient tradition in southern West Virginia and eastern Kentucky. The Fort Ancient influence possibly entered Southwest Virginia through the Kanawha and New River Valley route, and the Dallas and Pisgah definitely did via the Tennessee River.[38]

The Mississippian mound builders represented some of the most advanced of late prehistoric peoples, and, without question, Lee County's truncated pyramids represent Virginia's most outstanding Mississippian sites. Lucien Carr, of the Peabody Museum, excavated the Ely Mound in Lee County during the early 1870s, and was among the first archaeologists to identify Southwest Virginia's burial mounds within the greater Mississippian cultural complex.[39] Carr discovered various burials, projectile points, Indian corn, pottery, horn implements, "small disks of stone, pottery and hematite [and] shells of *Melania*, converted into beads." Two remarkable Ely Mound artifacts included a chunkey stone, associated with an Indian game, and a weeping eye ornamental shell pendant. The Ely Mound burials generally corresponded with similar customs of the later Cherokee and Chickasaw tribes.[40]

Where the Dallas variation of Mississippian culture spread of its own accord to the area around the Ely Mound, other Indians of Southwest Virginia borrowed various aspects of the Pisgah variation. Therefore, where Lee County reflects "true" Mississippian cultural, biological, and ethnic traits, Washington and Smyth counties, further to the east, reflect an indigenous non-Mississippian population adopting Mississippian traits. A number of rock shelters found in far Southwest Virginia also indicate contact with Pisgah peoples through trade items such as artifacts containing marine shell and mica fragments.[41] Since these Indians voluntarily borrowed and interacted with the Pisgah culture and people, the interchange did not entail an invasion from an outside group, and thus represented gradual and elective cultural development.[42] Exchange among Indians participating in the Mississippian culture also involved the Southern Cult phenomenon.

Archaeologists and anthropologists have identified the Southern Cult by an array of religious, ornamental, and other types of artifacts that many southeastern United States Indian groups traded among themselves. The climax of this cultural exchange phenomenon seems to have occurred sometime during or shortly after the 1100s. Native Americans in Southwest Virginia definitely participated in the Southern Cult, and artifacts recovered in the Rich Valley area appear to reflect interchange or influence from both the ancestors of the Cherokee to the south and the antecedents of the Siouan Indians to the east.[43] The proto-Cherokee immediately south of Rich Valley would have been part of the Pisgah version of Mississippian culture, while the late prehistoric eastern Siouan Indians would have practiced a Woodland culture. And for all the magnificence and prominence of the Mississippian cultures in the southern highlands and to the west, the peoples of the Atlantic coastal and piedmont areas certainly developed significantly during the final stage of prehistory. Their influences also figure into Southwest Virginia's aboriginal story.

The eastern-most area of Southwest Virginia involved a notably different prehistoric cultural complex focusing on the Roanoke and James rivers. Here too, rock shelters constitute some of the most significant prehistoric finds. Geological formations fundamentally dictated local stone tool manufacture, and where western Virginia rock shelters reflect the surrounding sedimentary geology and yield almost only chert artifacts, eastern rock shelters' proximity to the igneous Blue Ridge render mostly

quartz and quartzite, and some jasper artifacts.[44] It was precisely stone that the noted Powhatan Indians of extreme eastern Virginia lacked in any sufficient local amount, and thus they had to rely upon western rock sources — either directly or through trade — for most of the stone tools they wished to make or use. The Blue Ridge area abutting the foothills and piedmont also served as a hunting and fishing area for Indians living to its east, likely the Siouan peoples of the Monacan alliance who periodically rivaled the Algonquian Powhatans for control of piedmont and foothill territory. Within the cultural exchange, eastern sources provided Southwest Virginia with Southern Cult artifacts, while exotic ornamental items such as mountain lion claws ended up among eastern Indians and probably ultimately derived from the highlands.[45]

Obviously the exchange of goods occurred in many directions among many groups of Indians through a number of direct and indirect channels that superseded local political antagonisms. Southwest Virginia's prehistory reflects numerous attributes during various periods of the distant past. Aborigines traversing and living in Southwest Virginia selected and developed particular cultural traits and created a unique hybrid culture.[46] Singular cultural traits aside, Indians living in the western Virginia mountains impacted their natural environment, as all humans must. This impact generally strikes a contemporary observer as minimal. A relatively sparse population combined with a worldview not oriented toward concerted natural resource exploitation largely explains this minimal impact.

Environmental Prehistory

Prehistoric southeastern U.S. Native Americans may have contributed to the extinction of various animal species through their hunting practices over very long periods of time, a time period that also experienced greater climatic changes that naturally altered ecosystems. But that their lifeway strikes contemporary observers as relatively harmonious with biological or other natural forces remains generally accurate. Given this situation in the greater southeastern environment, Southwest Virginia in particular probably remained one of the areas least affected by prehistoric human activity. As a fringe area of mostly seasonal hunting and fishing throughout most of prehistory, and apparently supporting only a few permanent or semi-permanent camps fairly late in the prehistoric record, it stood to experience some of the most dramatic trans-

formations upon and following Euroamerican occupation. Considering this radical alteration, the prehistoric Indian worldview as it focused most especially on the land becomes all the more intriguing, for it entails both a particular landscape and a regard for it, both lost long ago.

Since the 1970s, certain writers have created an image, in their own environmentally-correct likeness, of prehistoric Native Americans as the first "ecologists."[47] This most recent version of the Noble Savage myth has unfortunately obscured what little may be concluded about prehistoric Indian attitudes toward, and practices affecting, the environment. This obfuscation is doubly unfortunate when we consider the actual contrast between Indian and European attitudes toward their natural surroundings during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, not to mention the environmental conceptual difference between early European migrants and successive American generations.[48]

Native American interaction with the natural surroundings in the southeastern United States comprised a mixture of pragmatic manipulation and carefully ritualized reverence, respect, and awe.[49] As with all earthly creatures, the Indians' survival depended upon exploiting their environment, though this exploitation sometimes highly impacted the land in proportion to aboriginal population sizes. Hunting, fishing, and cultivating food sometimes involved setting deliberate fires, girdling trees, and utilizing natural poisons. Certainly prehistoric and especially historic-era Indians contributed to the decimation if not outright extinction of certain animal species through overhunting.[50]

Long before Native Americans in the southeastern United States began cultivating food, their hunting and fishing practices had impacted the environment. As previously mentioned, the Archaic Period began with a dramatic change in fauna, perhaps partially attributable to human hunting practices. In the later prehistoric and early historic eras, of course, Indian subsistence hunting continued. A sense of survival combined with a religious respect for the natural world stemming from animism and totemism generally dictated conservative fishing and hunting practices, though Indians ingeniously employed a number of sophisticated methods for obtaining wild food.

In addition to spearing, hooking, netting, and other common methods of catching fish, Native Americans used organic poisons derived from various indigenous plants to stun the creatures for easy capture. Buckeye nuts used elsewhere in the southeast for poisoning fish were certainly

available in the Virginia mountains, and Indians may well have used them there for this purpose.[51] Southeastern Indians also commonly used fire to flush game into a killing ground.[52] Around the Southern Appalachian region, aboriginal fire — both as a hunting device and as part of slash-and-burn horticulture — had the most drastic effect on the environment. Indians also girdled trees to create more enduring cleared areas that attracted game. The slash and burn practices associated with Woodland Period horticultural activity intensified aboriginal use of fire, and a general increase of Indian population throughout the prehistoric era also intensified human impact upon the environment.[53]

Even though fire obviously dramatically altered an area's ecology, it did not do so in a completely destructive manner. Fires caused by lightning long preceded human-induced fire, and various flora evolved survival mechanisms that actually came to *depend* upon fire for survival. So, as scientists working during the past half century have increasingly appreciated, fire serves important ecological functions and facilitates the growth of certain plant (and by extension consumer-animal) species, even at the detriment of others. Indians readily employed fire as a practical tool.

The overall low aboriginal population and their relatively conservative hunting and fishing practices put their use of fire closer to the natural lightning-induced-fire side of a spectrum, the other extreme of which came to be defined by nineteenth and twentieth century Euroamerican practices of deliberate burning in association with intense agricultural activities. Smaller population numbers would probably mitigate the environmental impact of almost any human group. So the more interesting aspect of a particular group involves specific cultural orientations that include conscious decisions regarding the surrounding world and its resources.

Prehistoric Environmental Worldview

Beyond the available details involving aboriginal environmental interaction, the much trickier question arises concerning Indian *conceptions* of their environment: their "environmental philosophy," if the term may be used. The fact is, exactly how the Indians of the Southern Appalachians felt about the land will never be known. The closest approximation of their perspective may only be approached through several filters, where time (in itself a culturally-loaded concept), evolved tradition, and

various unavoidable subjective interpretations modify ancient perspectives.[54] Through contemporary Euroamerican observations, modern anthropology, James Mooney's late nineteenth-early twentieth century anthropology, and latter day Indian mythology (gathered from old people in a language other than their native tongue and through a medium — the written word — novel even among the Cherokee with their Sequoyan syllabary), plenty of speculation, imagination, guesswork, fantasy, and romanticism may be generated. In the case of Southwest Virginia, an additional geographic barrier arises in that no prominent cultural tradition comparable to the Cherokee actually permanently occupied the territory in question, at least into the historic era. But given the proximity of the Cherokee, whose ancestors probably traversed and lived in Southwest Virginia at various times during their prehistory, some extrapolation of their environmental worldview seems worthwhile. Similarly, the Shawnee and Tutelo, who also had some involvement with Southwest Virginia, may offer important variations of an overall approximation of the aboriginal perspective. Finally, despite all the historic era's modifications that affected later versions of Indian traditions, it seems reasonable to expect a certain amount of continuity stemming from a fundamentally distinct regard for the environment ultimately rooted in prehistory.[55]

Amidst all their activity, Indians were intimately aware of their natural surroundings, as could only be expected from a people who lived in such daily close proximity to it, and whose daily subsistence depended directly upon it. Like other non-literate peoples whose intellectual faculties are used to other ends (such as memorizing literally hours of detailed oral tradition), the southeastern Indians were experts on the details of their landscape. They drew excellent maps and could recount intricate details such as individual trees next to specific bends in a particular river, sometimes hundreds of miles from their home base.[56]

The aborigines' environmental intimacy contributed to a view of their world steeped in natural forces and phenomena, such as weather features and animals. In many ways, their perspective was typically animistic, and similar to other animistic cultures such as the Shinto of the Japanese. Animism entails the regard of all objects — plants, animals, rocks, water — as possessing spiritual qualities.[57] But contrary to recent romantic stereotypes, the spectrum of the southeastern U.S. Native American worldview ran the gamut from deep veneration to fierce hatred. Among snakes, for instance, the Cherokee greatly revered rattle-

snakes, but absolutely despised spreading adders and copperheads. They would not eat birds of prey, or any carnivores (omnivorous black bears excepted), based on concepts of cleanliness and the idea that animals that ate meat were unclean.[58]

The Cherokee outlook was also generally anthropomorphic in that Indians assigned human qualities to non-human entities, such as arranging animal groups in totems resembling human family or clan groupings.[59] Thus Little Deer became a deity of sorts and acted as chief of the deer tribe. They believed that other animals, such as bear, were really human underneath a guise of animalness. What might be called the Indian conservation ethic was obviously interwoven with their animistic outlook.[60] To a certain extent, it was out of religious respect for a deity such as Little Deer that the Cherokee would avoid wanton killing of the deer species. John Lawson encountered a similar ethos in 1700 among the mountain Indians northwest of High Point, North Carolina. He wrote:

> All the Indians hereabouts carefully preserve the Bones of the Flesh they eat, and burn them, as being of Opinion, that if they omitted that Custom, the Game would leave their Country, and they should not be able to maintain themselves by their Hunting.[61]

The particular caution that the Cherokee associated with the killing of wolves mixed their need to eliminate a competing predator with their special respect for the wolf, and thus required a specialist properly ordained for such an act. On the other hand, their general aversion for killing snakes fell more purely into the religious realm, and represented an interestingly obverse taboo compared with the Judaic-Christian fear of serpents.[62]

Such an animistic outlook, of course, certainly extended far beyond animals, and encompassed seemingly every aspect of the world around them. Rivers figured centrally in this worldview. Beyond their obvious facility as transportation corridors and sources of fish and shellfish, Southwest Virginia's rivers might be considered from an Indian's spiritual perspective. The Cherokee assigned anthropomorphic qualities to rivers, thinking of them as giant men whose heads lay high in the mountains and whose feet stretched down into the lowlands. Daily purification in such waters became profoundly important. James Adair, a trader and resident among the Cherokee from 1736–1743, wrote that they were

"strongly attached to rivers, — all retaining the opinion of the ancients, that rivers are necessary to constitute a paradise."[63]

In some ways the Cherokee regard for rivers captured the entire range of their environmental perspective, with all its multifaceted aspects of utilitarianism, animism, and religious purification. Beyond this, something might be said for the "energy" surrounding bodies of water that has always captivated all peoples in one form or another. This energy, of course, supersedes aquatic biology, the distinct aromas that arise from such ecosystems, or even the physical details of such environments. This phenomenon, perhaps more conveyed to human instinct or emotion rather than to human intellect, has long been the domain of mystics and artists, and really remains impossible to pin down logically. But this limitation does not or should not detract from its importance. Perhaps the most that can be said is that what many contemporary people might now sense in admiring rivers, the Indians sensed at least in equal measure and, with all romanticism or idealization aside, probably to a significantly greater degree.

Prehistoric southeastern Indians, finally, did not share the uniquely post-seventeenth century Western attitude of "progress" in regard to their environment or anything else. Despite such dramatic innovations as the gradual adoption of plant cultivation over a strictly hunting, fishing, and foraging lifestyle — or the invention and utilization of such weapons as the atlatl spear thrower or bow and arrow — Indians nevertheless continued to live a highly diverse and thus ultimately less disruptive existence.[64] Their behavioral modifications, therefore, did not resemble linear change as much as it did lateral change. In this sense, the Native Americans shared a generally non-linear outlook commonly found among many non-European peoples.[65] Thus, in terms of worldview, the American Indians probably could not have encountered a people more diametrically opposed to them than the Europeans. These contrasting peoples' differing actions toward the natural environment and the ultimate results of these behaviors reflected, in part, this greater cultural clash.

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The first people of Southwest Virginia left behind a prehistoric record that archaeologists and other scholars, particularly those working during the last half century, have only begun to divulge and understand. Clearly the area represents a specific subregion, and details have begun to distin-

guish the western Virginia highlands within wider contexts of the Appalachian region and the greater southeastern United States. Some surrounding lands experienced more intense human occupation, but many of these peoples depended upon Southwest Virginia for crucial natural resources. In utilizing those resources, Indians obviously impacted the environment; how they impacted it has become more clear than how they felt about it. But, certainly, over thousands of years of prehistoric occupation and traveling across Southwest Virginia, they left an area still rich in natural flora and fauna, with little and perhaps no devastating human-induced environmental change. All of this behavior and its consequences, of course, stand in marked contrast to subsequent Euroamerican occupation. And while the fact of comparatively smaller Indian populations partially explains this contrast, the more profound basis for Indian behavior and attitude toward the environment lay in their view of the world and their concept of their own place within it.

Endnotes

1. James B. Griffin, "Eastern North American Archaeology," *Science* 156, no. 3772 (April 14, 1967): 176; J. Sanderson Stevens, "A Story of Plants, Fire, and People: The Paleoecology and Subsistence of the Late Archaic and Early Woodland in Virginia," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Late Archaic and Early Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1991), pp. 188–89.
2. See Edward V. McMichael, "Environment and Culture in West Virginia," *Proceedings of West Virginia Academy of Science* 33 (1961): 146–50; Burton L. Purrington, "Ancient Mountaineers: An Overview of the Prehistoric Archaeology of North Carolina's Western Mountain Region," in Marck A. Mathis and Jeffrey J. Crow, eds., *The Prehistory of North Carolina* (Raleigh: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1983), pp. 132–35.
3. Keith T. Egloff, "The Late Woodland Period in Southwestern Virginia," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992), p. 215; Helen C. Rountree, "Powhatans and Other Woodland Indians as Travelers," in Helen C. Rountree, ed., *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500–1772* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1993), pp. 30, 33; Helen Horbeck Tanner, "The Land and Water Communication Systems of the Southeastern Indians," in Peter H. Wood, ed., *Powhatan's Mantle: Indians in the Colonial Southeast* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Pr., 1989), pp. 10, 16.
4. Ronald J. Mason, "The Paleo-Indian Tradition in Eastern North America," *Current Anthropology*, 3, no. 3 (June 1962): 239, 253. Also see J. Mark Wittkofski and Theodore R. Reinhart, eds., *Paleoindian Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, 2nd ed. (Courtland, Va.: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1994).

5. Don W. Dragoo, "Some Aspects of Eastern North American Prehistory: A Review 1975," *American Antiquity* 41, no. 1 (Jan. 1976), map, p. 6; R.C. Dunnell, "Prehistory of Fishtrap, Kentucky," *Yale University Publications in Anthropology* no. 75 (New Haven: Yale University, 1972), p. 73; R.Barry Lewis, ed., *Kentucky Archaeology* (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), pp. 22, 35; Purrington, "Ancient Mountaineers," pp. 107–8.
6. By 1988, archaeologists had documented an interesting distribution of fluted Paleo-Indian points in and around Rich Valley in what is now Washington, Smyth, and Tazewell counties. See E. Randolph Turner, "PaleoIndian Settlement Patterns and Population Distribution in Virginia," in J. Mark Wittkofski and Theodore R. Reinhart, eds., *PaleoIndian Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, Special Publication #19 of the Archeological Society of Virginia (Richmond: ASV, 1989), p. 80.
7. Robert J. Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory: Humankind's First Three Million Years*, 3rd ed. (New York: Oxford University Pr., 1990), pp. 218–19. Also see P.S. Martin and H.E. Wright, Jr., eds., *Pleistocene Extinctions: The Search for a Cause* (New Haven: Yale University Pr., 1967).
8. The presence or absence of bison in Southwest Virginia has been a matter of some dispute, and involves several disciplines. The most sophisticated and recent paleontological analysis of bison in Southwest Virginia may be found in Jerry N. McDonald, *North American Bison: Their Classification and Evolution* (Berkeley: University of California Pr., 1981), pp. 104, 251–56. A summary and sometimes dismissal of historic sources claiming eye witness accounts of bison or buffalo in Southwest Virginia may be found in Frank G. Roe, *The North American Buffalo: A Critical Study of the Species in its Wild State*, 2nd ed. (Toronto: University of Toronto Pr., 1970), pp. 228, 245–47. Also see Samuel Cole Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians* (New York: Argonaut Pr., 1966; originally published in London, 1755), p. 27; Joel A. Allen, *The American Bisons: Living and Extinct* (New York: Arno Pr., 1974; reprint of Cambridge University Pr. ed., 1876), pp. 85–87, 92, 225; Rountree, "The Powhatans and Other Woodland Indians as Travelers," p. 45. For examples of primary reports of buffalo in Southwest Virginia, see Robert G. Albion, ed., *Philip Vickers Fithian: Journal, 1775–1776: Written on the Virginia-Pennsylvania Frontier and in the Army Around New York* (Princeton: Princeton University Pr., 1934), p. 147; Adelaide L. Fries, ed., *Records of the Moravians in North Carolina*, vol. 1 (Raleigh: State Department of Archives and History, 1968), pp. 50–51; Louis B. Wright, ed., *The Prose Works of William Byrd of Westover: Narratives of a Colonial Virginian* (Cambridge: Harvard University Pr., 1966), pp. 402–4.
9. Dragoo, "Some Aspects of Eastern North American Prehistory," pp. 11–12; Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, p. 219.
10. Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, p. 561. Many archaeologists distinguish Native American plant cultivation as "horticulture" rather than "agriculture" since Indians did not plow the soil nor broadcast seed. See, for example, Carl O. Sauer, *Sixteenth Century North America: The Land and the People as Seen by the Europeans* (Berkeley: University of California Pr., 1971), pp. 286–87.
11. Michael B. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge: A Brief Introduction" (revised version, 1989; unpublished manuscript on file with Jefferson National Forest Cultural Resources Division, Roanoke, Va.), p. 25; Dunnell, "The

Prehistory of Fishtrap," p. 73; Keith Egloff and Deborah Woodward, *First People: The Early Indians of Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Historic Resources, 1992), pp. 12, 22.

12. Jay F. Custer and Dennis C. Curry, "Prehistoric Settlement-Subsistence Systems in Grayson County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 41, no. 3 (Sept. 1986): 126. In his study of the Gilbert Site in Tazewell County, Emory Jones wrote, "the high percentage of broken Archaic Period projectile points demonstrates that the site was a convenient, perhaps sought out, stopping place for early hunter-gatherers to rest and to refurbish or replace any damaged or worn-out hunting equipment." (Emory Eugene Jones, Jr., "The Gilbert Site, Tazewell County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 44, no. 4 (Dec. 1989): 222. Also see Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "The Dalton Site, Pulaski County, Virginia. A Report on Phase III (Date Recovery) Excavations," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 39, no. 4 (Dec. 1984): 216; Howard A. MacCord, "The Flannery Site, Scott County,Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 34, no. 1 (Sept. 1979): 29–30.
13. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," p. 15; Michael B. Barber, personal communication, February 24, 1993.
14. Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, p. 46; Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, p. 561.
15. Custer and Curry, "Prehistoric Settlement-Subsistence Systems in Grayson County, Virginia," p. 127.
16. U.S. Forest Service Archaeologist Michael B. Barber stresses that the Daughtery's Cave site is the only extensive occupational Archaic site in Southwest Virginia that archaeologists have scientifically examined, and that examination of other sites could significantly modify the current picture of the Archaic Period in Southwest Virginia. Michael Barber, personal communication, February 24, 1993. Also see Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," p. 17; Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, p. 13.
17. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," pp. 20, 22; Joseph R. Caldwell, "Eastern North America," in Stuart Struever, ed., *Prehistoric Agriculture* (Garden City, N.Y.: American Museum of Natural History, 1971), p. 367.
18. For general discussions of Woodland cultural development, see Dragoo, "Some Aspects of Eastern North American Prehistory," pp. 18–19; Griffin, "Eastern North American Archaeology," p. 175; and especially Charles Hudson, *The Southeastern Indians* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Pr., 1976), pp. 55-66, 77–80, 95, 327.
19. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," p. 18; Egloff, "The Late Woodland Period in Southwestern Virginia," p. 187; Clarence R. Geier, "Development and Diversification: Cultural Directions During the Late Woodland/Mississippian Period in Eastern North America," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992), pp. 279, 291. For similar developments in neighboring western North Carolina, see Purrington, "Ancient Mountaineers," p. 136; for eastern Kentucky, see Dunnell, "Prehistory of Fishtrap," pp. 74–75.
20. Joseph L. Benthall, "The Litten Site: A Late Woodland Village Complex, Washington County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 26, no. 1 (Sept. 1971): 34; Jones, "The Gilbert Site," pp. 222–23; Howard A.

MacCord, Sr., "The Brown Johnson Site - Bland County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia,* 25, no. 4 (June 1971): 268; Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "The Sullins Site, Washington County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia,* 36, nos. 3&4 (Dec. 1981): 120.

21. William T. Buchanan, Jr., "The Hall Site, Montgomery County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia,* 35, no. 2 (Dec. 1980): 97–99. Buchanan surmises that the Hall Site probably reflects a single family unit. The Litten Site in Washington County divulged various types of pottery and projectile point styles resembling traits from other groups, such as the Saponi and Occaneechee of Central Virginia, and peoples of the eastern Tennessee Mississippian (Dallas) culture. See Benthall, "The Litten Site," p. 33. The Crab Orchard site in Tazewell County also reflected trade with southern and distant northern peoples with copper and marine shell bead artifacts. See Keith Egloff and Celia Reed, "Crab Orchard Site: A Late Woodland Palisaded Village," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia,* 34, no. 3 (March 1980): 147.
22. Dunnell, "Prehistory of Fishtrap," pp. 74–75. Wenke recognizes this kind of ceramic development as part of a cultural phenomenon occurring at various times with various peoples throughout the world. See Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, p. 563.
23. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," p. 18; Egloff and Woodward, *First Peoples*, p. 23; Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, p. 81; Douglas C. McLearan, "Late Archaic and Early Woodland Material Culture in Virginia," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen Hodges, eds., *Later Archaic and Early Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1991), pp. 114, 125.
24. Caldwell, "Eastern North America," p. 368; Keith T. Egloff, *Ceramic Study of Woodland Occupation Along the Clinch and Powell Rivers in Southwest Virginia*, Research Report Series #3 (Richmond: Department of Conservation and Historic Resources, Division of Historic Landmarks, 1987).
25. Sebert L. Sisson, "Pot Rock Cliff Shelter, Carroll County, Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia,* 34, no. 1 (Sept. 1979): 56. Bott observed that shell-tempered ceramics predominated at the Hansonville Site in Russell County, and noted "the importance of the temporal and regional relationships between shell and limestone tempered ceramics." [See Keith Edward Bott, *44RU7: Archaeological Test Excavations at a Late Woodland Village in the Lower Uplands of Southwest Virginia* (Richmond: Virginia Division of Historic Landmarks, 1981), p. 12]. For analysis of ceramics and their possible indications for a New River site, see William T. Buchanan, *The Trigg Site, City of Radford, Virginia* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1984).
26. Egloff, *Ceramic Study*, pp. 6–8, 48, 49.
27. MacCord, "Brown Johnson Site," p. 264.
28. MacCord, "The Flannery Site," p. 27.
29. Dragoo, "Some Aspects of Eastern North American Prehistory," p. 18; Douglas C. McLearen, "Virginia's Middle Woodland Period: A Regional Perspective," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992),

p. 56; Purrington, "Ancient Mountaineers," p. 139; Wenke, *Patterns in Prehistory*, pp. 565–67, 569.

30. Dennis Blanton, "Middle Woodland Settlement Systems in Virginia," in Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1992), pp. 68, 69.
31. Blanton, "Middle Woodland Settlement Systems in Virginia," pp. 75, 77, 81, 82; McLearen, "Virginia's Middle Woodland Period," pp. 53–55.
32. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," pp. 19, 20; Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, p. 117. Also see Caldwell, "Eastern North America," p. 368.
33. Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, pp. 29–30. Also see Egloff and Reed, "Crab Orchard," pp. 146–47. The Crab Orchard village complex epitomizes prehistoric horticulture in Southwest Virginia, and the Indians there were possibly influenced by the nearby Saltville Valley, an important Indian hunting ground, and where Indians possibly made salt to exchange with other groups (Michael B. Barber, personal communication, February 24, 1993).
34. Egloff and Reed, "Crab Orchard Site," pp. 146–47.
35. Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, pp. 25, 27. Similar Mississippian evidence appears in adjacent areas of Kentucky during this period. See Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, p. 86.
36. Caldwell, "Eastern North America," p. 361; Egloff, "Late Woodland Period in Southwestern Virginia," p. 213.
37. Dragoo, "Some Aspects of Eastern North American Prehistory," pp. 20–21; Geier, "Development and Diversification," pp. 279, 281.
38. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," pp. 22–23; Joseph L. Benthall, *Archeological Investigation of the Shannon Site* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1969), pp. 145–48; Roy S. Dickens, Jr., *Cherokee Prehistory: The Pisgah Phase in the Appalachian Summit Region* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Pr., 1976), pp. 14, 172–88, 191–92, 201, 206, 210–14; Dunnell, "Prehistory of Fishtrap," p. 76; Egloff, *Ceramic Study*, p. 3; Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, pp. 150, 177; MacCord, "Flannery Site," p. 30; Jacquelyn G. Piper, "An Interpretation of Mount Rogers National Recreation Area" (M.S. thesis: University of South Florida, 1977), p. 147; Purrington, "Ancient Mountaineers," pp. 144–45; Ralph S. Solecki, "An Archeological Survey of Two River Basins in West Virginia," *West Virginia History*, 10, no. 4 (July 1949): 319–432.
39. Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, p. 32. For the actual report, see Lucien Carr, "Report on the Exploration of a Mound in Lee County, Virginia," in the *Tenth Annual Report of the Peabody Museum* (Cambridge: Salem Pr., 1877), pp. 75–94.
40. Carr, "Report on the Exploration of a Mound," pp. 79-83; Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, p. 32.
41. The rockshelter occupations themselves reflect "short-term exploitative camps" used during hunting and gathering activities. Many of these rockshelters are located on the Jefferson National Forest's Clinch Ranger District, and easily comprise, to date, the Forest's most significant archaeological sites. During 1981, Anne Frazer Rogers and her field crew from Western Carolina University studied eight of these rock shelters in Wise County. See Anne Frazer Rogers, ed., "The Jaybird Branch

Project: Report of Investigations" (Cullowhee: Western Carolina University, 1982), pp. 5, 6, 39. Neighboring Kentucky rock shelters may have been occupied in similar, sporadic fashion or year-round, the latter possibly coinciding with abandonment of area bottom lands and rise of hillside horticulture. See Lewis, *Kentucky Archaeology*, pp. 86, 110.

42. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," 22–23; Michael B. Barber, personal communication, February 24, 1993; Jeffrey L. Hantman, "Between Powhatan and Quirank: Reconstructing Monacan Culture and History in the Context of Jamestown," *American Anthropologist* 92, no. 3 (Sept. 1990): 684; Rountree, "Summary and Implications," in Helen C. Rountree, ed., *Powhatan Foreign Relations*, pp. 216–17.

43. Jon Muller, "The Southern Cult," in Patricia Galloway, ed., *The Southeastern Ceremonial Complex: Artifacts and Analysis* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Pr., 1989), pp. 11-26.

44. JNF archeologist Mary Louise Arend, personal communication, June 10, 1992. And, as Douglas Mclearan noted, where quartzite dominated Savannah River points in general, Indians living in Southwest Virginia also used locally-available rhyolite and limestone or chert in addition to quartzite. See Mclearan, "Virginia's Middle Woodland Period," pp. 95, 97, 98.

45. Blanton, "Middle Woodland Settlement Systems in Virginia," pp. 75, 77; Helen C. Rountree, *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Pr., 1989), pp. 32, 71, 120.

46. Barber, "Human Prehistory Beyond the Blue Ridge," pp. 26–27; Michael B. Barber Interview, June 3, 1992 (tape on file with Jefferson National Forest Cultural Resources Division, Roanoke, Va.); Michael Barber, "Continued Archaeological Reconnaissance of the Coeburn Exchange, Wise County, Virginia," (Roanoke, Va.: Jefferson National Forest, 1985), pp. 7, 8, 50, 57.; Bott, *44RU7: Archaeological Test Excavations*, p. 37. Also see Geier, "Development and Diversification," pp. 290–91.

47. One of the more prominent examples lies in J. Donald Hughes, *American Indian Ecology* (El Paso: Texas Western Pr., 1983). Also see Robert F. Berkhofer, Jr.'s false dichotomy in "Cultural Pluralism Versus Ethnocentrism in the New Indian History," in Calvin Martin, ed., *The American Indian and the Problem of History* (Oxford University Pr., 1987), pp. 35-45; Peter Heinegg, "Lessons from the Indians: Ecological Piety," *North American Review* 163 (Spring 1978): 66-69; Calvin Martin, "Fire and Forest Structure in the Aboriginal Eastern Forest," *Indian Historian* 6, no. 4 (Fall 1973): 38-42, 54; and Chris Vecsey and Robert W. Venables, *American Indian Environments: Ecological Issues in Native American History* (Syracuse: Syracuse University Pr., 1980), though the latter focuses more on the post-contact era.

48. Probably the most discerning assessment of the topic, as well as a very useful historiographic analysis, lies in J. Baird Callicott, "American Indian Land Wisdom? Sorting out the Issues," *Journal of Forest History* 33, no. 1 (Jan. 1989): 35–42. Other interesting observations dealing with varied environmental attitudes may be found in Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Thoughts on Early Canadian Contact," and Frederick Turner, "On the Revision of Monuments," both in Calvin Martin, ed., *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, pp. 55–56, 116.

49. Indications of this abound; following are a few printed primary sources pertaining to the southern highlands: Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, p. 27; Anon., "The Indians of Virginia . . . . 1689," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 16, no. 2 (April 1959): 230–43; Louis B. Wright, ed., *The History and Present State of Virginia by Robert Beverley* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Pr., 1947), pp. 202, 210; Stanley Pargellis, "An Acct of the Indians of Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3rd ser., 16, no. 2 (April 1959): 228–29.
50. Robert Heizer addresses this general topic with much wisdom and within a world-wide context. See Robert F. Heizer, "Primitive Man as an Ecological Factor," *Kroeber Anthropological Society Papers* 13 (Fall 1955): 1–31. Also see Michael P. Hoffman, "Prehistoric Ecological Crises," in Lester J. Bilsky, ed., *Historical Ecology: Essays on Environment and Social Change* (Port Washington, N.Y.: Kennikat Pr., 1980), pp. 33–42; Cornelius J. Jaenen, "Thoughts on Early Canadian Contact," in Martin, *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, pp. 55–66.
51. The most extensive study on this topic lies in Erhard Rostlund, *Freshwater Fish and Fishing in Native North America* (Berkeley: University of California Pr., 1952). For other primary and secondary accounts focusing specifically on Southeastern Indians, see Frank G. Speck, "The Ethnic Position of the Southeastern Algonkian," *American Anthropologist*, n.s. 26 (1924): 191; and Frank G. Speck, *Ethnology of the Yuchi Indians* (University of Pennsylvania Museum of Anthropological Publications, no. 1; Philadelphia: University Museum, 1909-1911), pp. 23–24.
52. Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, p. 248; Pargellis, "An Acct of the Indians of Virginia," p. 243; Stephen J. Pyne, *Fire in America: A Cultural History of Wildland and Rural Fire* (Princeton: Princeton University Pr., 1982), p. 74; Sauer, *Sixteenth Century North America*, p. 285; Stevens, "A Story of Plants, Fire, and People," p. 209; William L. Thomas, Jr., *Man's Role in Changing the Face of the Earth* (Chicago: University of Chicago Pr., 1956), pp. 115–33.
53. Clarence W. Alvord and Lee Bidgood. *The First Explorations of the Trans-Allegheny Region by the Virginians, 1650–1674* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1912), p. 73; C.G. Holland, "The Ramifications of the Fire Hunt," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 33, no. 4 (June 1979): 134–40; Hugh T. Lefler, ed., *New Voyage to Carolina by John Lawson* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Pr., 1967), pp. 215–16; Pargellis, "An Acct of the Indians of Virginia," p. 243; Speck, "The Ethnic Position of the Southeastern Algonkian," p. 191; Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, p. 248.
54. For a fascinating essay on Indian concepts of time, space, and metaphysics, see Benjamin Lee Whorf, "An American Indian Model of the Universe," in Dennis Tedlock and Barbara Tedlock, eds., *Teachings from the American Earth: Indian Religion and Philosophy* (New York: Liverwright, 1975), pp. 121–29. Another excellent essay offering indications of an Indian world view is N. Scott Momaday, "Native American Attitudes to the Environment," in Walter H. Capps, ed., *Seeing with a Native Eye* (New York: Harper and Row, 1976), pp. 79–85. Also see Sam D. Gill, *Beyond "The Primitive": The Religions of Nonliterate Peoples* (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1982), pp. 6, 16, 18–19, 81.

55. As late as 1929 Robert Mason claimed a persistence of tradition among the Cherokee. See Robert L. Mason, "The Myths of the Cherokees," *American Forests and Forest Life* 35 (1929): 259–62, 300.
56. For a contemporary early eighteenth-century observation of this phenomenon, see Lefler, *A New Voyage to Carolina by John Lawson*, p. 214. For a comprehensive secondary study, see Gregory A. Waselkov, "Indian Maps of the Colonial Southeast," in Wood, *Powhatan's Mantle*, pp. 292–343.
57. James Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee* (New York: Johnson Reprint Corp., 1970), p. 445; Sokyo Ono, *Shinto: The Kami Way* (Rutland, Vt.: Charles Tuttle Co., 1962), pp. 7–8; Floyd H. Ross, *Shinto: the Way of Japan* (Boston: Beacon Pr., 1965), p. 49; Noel W. Schutz, Jr., "The Study of Shawnee Myth in an Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Perspective" (Ph.D. diss., Indiana University, 1975), p. 101.
58. Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, pp. 137–43; Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, pp. 295–97. An interesting exception to generally restrained hunting practices, which included avoidance of killing young animals, John Lawson encountered Indians in the North Carolina highlands who enjoyed eating fawns as a distinct delicacy. See Lefler, *New Voyage to Carolina by John Lawson*, pp. 58, 182.
59. Calvin Martin admirably criticizes much "Indian-white"-biased history of the past, rightfully distinguishes between Euroamerican and Indian worldviews, and accurately emphasizes the mystic component of the native perspective. Martin, however, ends up substituting a "biological perspective" for earlier Eurocentric approaches to aboriginal thinking and thus perpetuates the problem of translation between two culturally distinct worldviews. (See Martin, *American Indian and the Problem of History*, pp. 6–34; especially pages 8, 9, 15, 24, 27, 28, 29, 30). In the final analysis all intellectual disciplines possess irrevocable limitations, and probably none of them will ever really approximate the Native-American prehistorical perspective.
60. J. Baird Callicott, "Traditional American Indian and Western European Attitudes Toward Nature: An Overview," *Environmental Ethics* 4, no. 4 (Winter 1982): 305; Heizer, "Primitive Man as an Ecological Factor," pp. 4–7; Charles Hudson, "Cherokee Concept of Natural Balance," *Indian Historian* 3, no. 4 (1970): 54; William C. McCleod, "Conservation Among Primitive Hunting Peoples," *Scientific Monthly* 43 (Dec. 1936): 562–66; Pargellis, "An Acct of the Indians of Virginia," p. 240; Ruth E. Suddeth, "The Myths of the Cherokees," *Georgia Review* 10, no. 1 (Spring 1956): 85. The Shawnee apparently extended such anthropomorphism even further in relation to their "Female Deity." See C.F. Voegelin, "The Shawnee Female Deity," *Yale University Publications in Anthropology* #10 (New Haven: Yale University, 1970).
61. Lefler, *A New Voyage to Carolina by John Lawson*, p. 58.
62. Mooney, *Myths of the Cherokee*, pp. 263–65, 294. The Shawnee apparently held a similar regard for snakes. See Schutz, "Study of Shawnee Myth," pp. 196–97, 201.
63. James Mooney, "The Cherokee River Cult," *Journal of American Folklore* 13, no. 48 (Jan.-Mar. 1900): 1–10; Williams, *Adair's History of the American Indians*, p. 239.
64. Neal Salisbury, "American Indians and American History," in Calvin Martin, ed., *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, p. 50.
65. Some insightful observations of this may be found in Neal Salisbury, "American Indians and American History," in Martin, *The American Indian and the Problem of History*, pp. 46–54, and Clarence J. Glacken, *Traces on the Rhodian Shore: Nature and*

Culture in Western Thought from Ancient Times to the End of the Eighteenth Century (Berkeley: University of California Pr., 1967), p. 494. For an interesting example of co-existing African tribal and "state-oriented" societies, see Paul Bohannon, *Africa and Africans* (Garden City, N.Y.: Natural History Pr., 1964), pp. 188-205. An introduction to the traditional Chinese cyclical view of human events can be found in Colin A. Ronan, *The Shorter Science and Civilisation in China: An Abridgement of Joseph Needham's Original Text*, vol.1 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Pr., 1978), or see the original multi-volume project begun by Joseph Needham, *Science and Civilisation in China.*

Book Review

Edited by Tom Costa

Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America*. Cambridge, Mass., Harvard University Press, 1998. Pp. x, 497. $29.95, ISBN 0-674-81092-9.

With *Many Thousands Gone*, Ira Berlin, an established scholar of slavery, has given us a sweeping synthesis of the origins and development of slave societies in North America. Berlin has long been an advocate of understanding slavery in terms of its evolution over time and, in this latest work, he pulls together material that has informed his writings for a number of years.

Central to Berlin's analysis is the distinction between what he terms "societies with slaves" and "slave societies." The former, in which slavery was just one among a number of different forms of labor, were characteristic of most regions of North America in the earliest years of settlement. With a few notable exceptions, these "societies with slaves" then moved along the temporal path toward "slave societies," in which slavery becomes the mainstay of the economic system, and the master-slave relationship becomes the model for social and political relationships.

According to Berlin, works that do not recognize this evolution of slavery offer a misleading picture of a static slave system, a slavery "frozen in time," in which the master's hegemony forms the beginning and end of any analysis. Such a picture tends to impose too rigid a view of the slaves themselves, denying their agency by reducing them to mere chattel totally in bondage to the master's will.

Berlin, on the other hand, wishes to acknowledge that slavery, even at its most oppressive, was a constant negotiation between master and slave, in which the slave, though operating from a much less advantaged position to be sure, still retained a limited sphere of action. In Berlin's words, "Knowing that a person was a slave does not tell everything about him or her. Put another way, slaveholders severely circumscribed the lives of enslaved people, but they never fully defined them." (p. 2)

Probably the most contentious part of the book is Berlin's examination of the "charter generations" of slaves: the first persons of African origin to come to North America. Dubbed "Atlantic Creoles," these early trans-Atlantic migrants took their places in the nascent Euro-American societies developing on the North American mainland. Most came involuntarily, but did not face the same kinds of rigid discrimination and categorization as did later masses of African immigrants. Indeed, a few were able to gain their freedom: African Anthony Johnson, who settled on Virginia's Eastern Shore, even owned slaves himself. Because of the weakness of early colonial legal, political and social institutions, a significant number of Berlin's Atlantic Creoles were able to manipulate the system to achieve a measure of independence and even financial security.

By the turn of the eighteenth century, however, this first generation of African-Americans in North America found itself increasingly besieged by new restrictions as the various regions of the American colonies evolved into slave societies. This evolutionary scheme establishes the organization of the book. From "the charter generations" of Atlantic Creoles (societies with slaves), North Americans moved through "the plantation generations" (slave societies), and finally "the revolutionary generations," as slavery underwent momentous changes in the wake of the American Revolution.

Added to his temporal scheme is Berlin's emphasis on geography. Thus to his evolutionary outline he includes sections on four regions: the Chesapeake, northeast North America, the low country of South Carolina and Georgia, and the lower Mississippi Valley. Each underwent an evolution of slavery unique to the region.

In the Chesapeake, a "tobacco revolution" saw the development of larger farms worked by increasing numbers of African and African-American slaves. The nascent generation of Atlantic Creoles gave way to a slave society, in which a system of racially based slavery cemented the near-complete rule of the white planter. Likewise in South Carolina and Georgia, the exigencies of rice cultivation created a similar pattern, different only in the greater extent of planter domination.

In the northeast, on the other hand, the same development proceeded less dramatically and less evenly. The Northern and Middle colonies were not driven by the requirements of a staple agriculture; rather, their economies developed more variety, in which a mixed agricultural

economy grew along with the commercial and allied sectors of shipbuilding and insurance. Thus slavery north of the Chesapeake never achieved the status of the slave societies of the South. The incorporation of the northeast into the developing Atlantic economy of the eighteenth century did, however, mean that some of the rigidity and race-based labor and social systems did develop in the large cities, especially in New York.

By contrast, the lower Mississippi Valley developed very differently. Limited by closer control from the mother country, the French settlers of the region only began importing slaves in the second quarter of the eighteenth century, bringing them direct from Africa. Instead of the initial piecemeal influx of Africans that marked the other regions of North America, the French colony intended the creation of a slave society from the very start, but were unable to do so. Because of the relatively few white emigrants, the presence of hostile native Americans forced the French settlers to make reluctant concessions to their bondsmen. Thus, at the same time that the initial societies with slaves were coalescing into slave societies in the seaboard colonies of the South and to a lesser degree in the northeast, the lower Mississippi was moving from a slave society to a society with slaves.

The American and French Revolutions changed dramatically the lives of slaves and their masters in North America. In the northeast, where slavery was least woven into the fabric of society, the libertarian challenge to bondage thrown up by the revolutionary ideology eventually resulted in the end of slavery. But class distinctions soon emerged between a growing respectable black middle class leadership that was mainly urban, and the legions of newly freed African-Americans who aspired to a better life. In the Chesapeake, on the other hand, while numerous slaves achieved their freedom, the underlying slave society formed in the colonial period did not break. Instead, free and enslaved blacks developed a common identity that tended to mute the class differences between poor and better off, slave and free. By contrast, in the lower South planters moved to strengthen their control over their slaves, and expanded the lower South's slave society westward, as upland cotton cultivation became the leading sector of the economy.

As his work ends only a little after the American Revolution, Berlin has chosen to say little about the development of slavery west of the Appalachians. Citing important articles by Ellen Eslinger and Gail Terry[1], among others, on the westward movement of slaves, the author finds

that numerous Chesapeake slaves moved west with their masters in the period after the Revolution. Berlin also mentions the large natural increase among Chesapeake slaves that led Virginia slaveowners to take advantage of the growing demand for slaves in the deep South, but he says little about the dynamics of slaves being separated from their families as they moved west and south.

This should not, however, deter scholars interested in trans-Appalachian migration and the establishment of societies in the backcountry from reading the book. For anyone interested in the crucial formation of what can be termed Euro-African-American society, Berlin's book offers an excellent model for the understanding of how geography, economics, and immigration patterns help to determine the historical development of labor and social systems so important in our early history.

Tom Costa, University of Virginia's College at Wise

Endnote

[1] Ellen Eslinger, "The Shape of Slavery on the Kentucky Frontier, 1775-1800," *Register of the Kentucky Historical Society*, 92 (1994), 1-23; Gail Terry, "Sustaining the Bonds of Kinship in a Trans-Appalachian Migration, 1790-1811: The Cabell-Breckenridge Slaves Move West," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 102 (1994), 455-80.

A Letter to the Editor —

May 18, 1999

...Volume III, 1999, of *The Smithfield Review* arrived last week. It did so just as Shirley and I were about to take a Charlottesville couple on a two-day tour of the inner bluegrass. We also had taken the tour in April with some friends from the Washington, D.C. area. During the latter tour we employed a guide, and at our request, she gave an abbreviated history of Transylvania University. Upon returning home, I sent her a letter in which the following paragraph appears.

> I did not know until recently that one of Chief Justice John Marshall's sons, Louis Marshall, born October 7, 1773, was a president of Transylvania. This fact is noted in a book titled *The Marshall Family* by W.W. Paxton of Platte City, Missouri. It was printed by Robert Clarke & Co. of Cincinnati in 1882. Louis Marshall had a sterling education for the time, including the study of medicine and philosophy. On page 70 the book states as follows; "In 1838, Dr. Marshall was President of Washington College, Lexington, Va.; and in 1855, he was President of Transylvania University. He died at the age of 93, with a mind little impaired by time."

What does this have to do with the *Review*? Well, on page 33 there is a reference to "Doctr. Marshall." The reference is to the gentleman discussed in the preceding paragraph.... Since the letter [published] in the *Review* is dated 1831, I am of the judgment, Marshall became president of Washington College prior to 1831.[1] The Marshall book also contains the following.

> But he inherited the family talent and propensity for teaching, and at his country home, gathered the most promising young men in Kentucky... He was a fine linguist, and well read in science, history, philosophy, and bells-letters [*sic*]. His scholars admired and feared

1. Louis Marshall was president of Washington College from 1830–1834. James Francis Preston was a student there in 1831 (*The Smithfield Review*, vol. 3, 1999).

> him. He was a strict disciplinarian — severe and dogmatic in his style. He treated his scholars often with rudeness, encouraged a combative style of argumentation, and instilled self-reliance. (Page 69).

If these attributes carried over to his tenure at Washington College, it is not difficult to understand why James Francis Preston had difficulty....

J. Paxton Marshall
Prospect, Kentucky

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"On April 4, 1861, one month after the inauguration of Abraham Lincoln…, delegates to the Virginia State Convention …defeated an ordinance of secession by an 88–45 margin. Thirteen days later…the delegates took a second vote. This time they voted to secede by…88–55…. " (page 5) "… The day after Lincoln admitted West Virginia, a state which barred free blacks from its territory, he used another Presidential pen to sign the Emancipation Proclamation that freed the slaves — but only in areas under the control of the Confederate government." (Gilliam, from page 31)

"All are gone now, one generation vanishing after another. And nearly all traces of the former Hickman farms are gone, the buildings torn down in the 1970s … But our forefathers should be remembered, black and white, and the history of their time on earth." (Gabriel, from page 63)

"All three Souths fought in the war. Whites found themselves on both sides. So did blacks, whether they wielded weapons or acted in combat support roles. There was no single South…."(Wallenstein, from page 74)

"My dear parents…You remember that I told you that a ball hit my knapsack. I did not know it at the time that it had penetrated but thought it was a spent ball. On opening my knapsack several days after the fight I found the ball in there and found that it had made some dozen or fifteen holes in a shirt that I had folded up in it. I have the ball in my pocket now it is a pistol ball." (from a letter by Thomas Fisher, page 112)

"Long before the Virginia mountains became a Euroamerican frontier …, the region had functioned as something of a "natural reserve" for cohesive native groups (later designated "tribes")…(page 125) … The Cherokee assigned anthropomorphic qualities to rivers, thinking of them as giant men whose heads lay high in the mountains and whose feet stretched down into the lowlands…."(Sarvis, from page 141)

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