# *The Smithfield Review*

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

Volume IX, 2005



Published by the
Montgomery County Branch
Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
in cooperation with the
Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
and in conjunction with Pocahontas Press, Inc.
Blacksburg, Virginia

This publication has been made possible
through the generous contributions of

**First National Bank**
Christiansburg, Virginia

**The National Bank**
Blacksburg, Virginia

**The Smithfield Preston Foundation**

**Ann Gardner Gray**

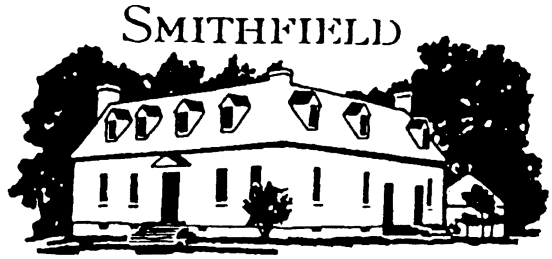
**Marcus L. Oliver**

Published in cooperation with the
**Department of History**
Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
through funding from the
**Johnston-Lucinian**
**Virginia History Research Endowment**

# *The Smithfield Review*

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

Volume IX, 2005




Published by the
Montgomery County Branch
Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities
in cooperation with the
Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
and in conjunction with Pocahontas Press, Inc.
Blacksburg, Virginia

*The Smithfield Review* is published annually, in the spring, by the Montgomery County Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Blacksburg, Virginia, in cooperation with the Department of History, Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, and in conjunction with Pocahontas Press, Inc., Blacksburg, Virginia.

Subscriptions are $10/year. Individual copies or the entire set of nine volumes are available from the Smithfield Museum Store, 1000 Smithfield Plantation Road, Blacksburg, VA 24060. Or call 1-540-231-3947 or 800-446-0467 or email to smithfield.plantation@vt.edu. Complete sets are available at a discount. Please include $3.00 shipping/handling/tax per copy.

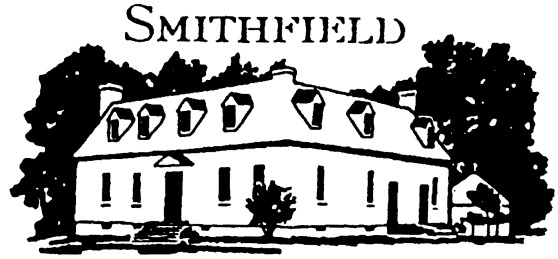
ISSN 1093-9652


Printed in the United States of America

**Pocahontas Press, Inc.**
Blacksburg, Virginia

In Memory
of
Lon Kelly Savage

1930 - 2004




Smithfield is an important 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. Preston named the 2,000-acre plantation "Smithfield" in honor of his wife, Susanna Smith. Today, the manor house 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

Our Editorial Board was diminished last summer with the passing of Lon Kelly Savage. We miss his wise counsel and acknowledge his tremendous contribution to *The Smithfield Review*. Lon was one of four persons who gathered at Smithfield about ten years ago to discuss the need for a journal of local history for Southwest Virginia and surrounding regions. Our mission then was to "seek articles about important personages and events; reports of archaeological discoveries; and analyses of the social, political, and architectural history." Moreover, we wanted, when appropriate, to "incorporate letters, speeches, and other primary documents that convey to the reader a direct sense of the past." We believe that this volume remains true to the mission that Lon helped to establish.

It is interesting to note that Smyth County, Virginia, is the focus of both our first and last articles this year. The first article, written by James I. (Bud) Robertson, Jr., Alumni Distinguished Professor of History at Virginia Tech, is entitled "John Preston Sheffey and the Civil War in Southwestern Virginia." The article is particularly appropriate for this journal because John Preston Sheffey was the great-grandson of Colonel William Preston and his wife Susanna, the founders of Smithfield. During the Civil War, Sheffey wrote a long sequence of revealing letters that were only recently discovered and published. The reader is referred to this new publication, *Soldier of Southwestern Virginia: The Civil War Letters of Captain John Preston Sheffey* (Louisiana State University Press, Baton Rouge, 2004), edited and annotated by Robertson.

In our second article, "'Thou art the Potter' — A History of Bodell Pottery," the author, Dorothy Bodell, describes the pottery business that was operated by her husband's ancestors in Blacksburg, Virginia, for more than half a century after the Civil War. In those days, pottery was essential in every household; consequently, the demand supported this cottage industry in many localities. In addition to explaining the business and tracing its locations, the essay includes fascinating pictures of some of the ceramic products manufactured by the Bodells. Dorothy H. Bodell, a native of Blacksburg, worked for almost 25 years in the Virginia Tech University Libraries.

"The Devil, The Weaver's Bonny, and Alfreda Peel: Exploring the Roots of an Ancient Virginia Folk Ballad," by John Long, examines an old ballad that provides a tangible link between Virginia's mountain culture and its English/Scottish roots. John is the director of the Salem Museum and Historical Society and a senior lecturer in the Department of History at Roanoke College.

The Town of Blacksburg originated in 1798 with a plan calling for five parallel streets, intersected by five perpendicular streets. This grid defined sixteen blocks that are often referred to as the "Old Sixteen Squares." These blocks and streets provide the only tangible evidence of the original town, and their image appears on the town logo. Robert McNeil, who grew up in Blacksburg, became interested in the old sixteen squares and, in "Old Deeds Tell a New Story," undertook a study of their pre-Civil War history. His research provides some unexpected discoveries and expands our knowledge of early Blacksburg history. Bob McNeil is a retired journalist who now lives in Alexandria, Virginia.

The last essay of this issue, entitled "Improper Archeology, 'Fabulous Saltville,' and the Ancient History of Southwest Virginia," tells the story of Southwest Virginia up to the arrival of the Europeans, with a focus on Saltville and Smyth County. In relating this story, Jim Glanville, Professor Emeritus of Chemistry at Virginia Tech, summarizes information from diverse sources. Some of these sources lead inevitably to a discussion of the controversial role of "improper archeologists" and their actions — including unauthorized excavations of old Native-American burial sites.

This issue also contains a review of the book *Slavery in the American Mountain South* by Wilma A. Dunaway. The reviewer is Ellen Eslinger of DePaul University.

The editors are grateful to Peter Wallenstein of the Virginia Tech Department of History and to Mary Holliman and Bruce Wallace of Pocahontas Press for their considerable editorial assistance. We also appreciate the assistance of Donna Dunay of the Virginia Tech College of Architecture and Urban Studies and several anonymous reviewers who offered many helpful suggestions.

— Hugh G. Campbell, Editor

# John Preston Sheffey and the Civil War in Southwestern Virginia

James I. Robertson, Jr.

Southwestern Virginia has always been the stepchild of the Old Dominion. Its population is a far cry from the crowded urban centers around the state. Its air is fresh, its water clean, its noise level low. These are major reasons why inhabitants love the region.

In the Civil War, however, southwestern Virginia was vital for both the safety and the success of Virginia and the Southern Confederacy. Lead and iron mines in the Wytheville area supplied the major ingredients for bullets and weapons; the ponds at Saltville provided the only known ingredient for preserving meat; coal mines throughout this part of the state fueled steam engines of all varieties. In addition, and perhaps most important of all, the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad snaked all the way through the geographical quadrant.

The longest single rail line in America at the time (it stretched 209 miles from Lynchburg to Bristol), the Virginia and Tennessee transported necessary raw materials from source to wartime use. The railroad was also the primary connecting link between the Confederate capital at Richmond and the Western military theater in Tennessee. Control of the Virginia and Tennessee line was as necessary to the Confederates as severing the railroad was to the Federals.

No extensive wartime writings by a resident of southwestern Virginia were known to exist until the recent discovery of the letters of Capt. John Preston Sheffey. His observations from the home front and the battle lines along the eastern West Virginia-western Virginia border are an historical breakthrough. Sheffey was a highly educated, deeply observant soldier who wrote on everything from army movements to Greek mythology.

The ninety-odd preserved letters are also a chronicle of 19th century romance. When civil war came, Sheffey of Marion was falling in love with Josephine Spiller of Wytheville. The progress of the romance continued through their letters to their marriage in 1863 and the coming of peace in 1865.

Fortunately for the region, and our knowledge of history, Sheffey's roots were deeply planted in southwestern Virginia soil.

Two brothers of Dutch descent came to America in the late 1700s and made their way to the western Virginia frontier. The oldest, Daniel Sheffey, settled in Wythe County, studied law under Alexander Smyth (for whom a county would be named), and eventually became a successful attorney and state legislator in Staunton. The other sibling, Henry Sheffey, established his home in Washington County, and made his mark as a large-scale farmer in the Cripple Creek vicinity. He married Margaret White, sister of Col. James White, a man of powerful ability and standing in the area.

From that union came a son, appropriately named James White Sheffey. He prepared for a law career under the tutelage of several attorneys in Abingdon. At the age of twenty-one, Sheffey was admitted to the bar. His uncle and namesake, James White, entrusted Sheffey with legal work pertaining to nearby salt ponds and lead works, in which Col. White had large interests. Sheffey's Abingdon law practice became lucrative.

In September 1835, Sheffey married Ellen Preston, a direct descendant of the William Preston who was a pioneer in the settlement of what is now southwestern Virginia. Not only was Ellen's mother a Preston, but Ellen had thirteen brothers and sisters. To say that Ellen Sheffey's links with the Preston clan were strong would be an understatement.

James and Ellen Sheffey moved shortly after their marriage to Marion. Their union produced eleven children, only seven of whom survived infancy. The second child — and only son to survive — was born December 12, 1837. He was christened John Preston Sheffey and known to his friends as "Pres."

The lad grew up in a well-to-do, intellectual environment. Basic education came from private tutors in Marion. Sheffey then enrolled at Emory & Henry College, where he graduated at the head of his class in 1857. Two years of law studies followed at the University of

Virginia. Once admitted to the bar, young Sheffey joined his father's law firm. By then the elder Sheffey was one of Smyth County's largest landowners as well as the region's leading attorney. The father-son legal practice flourished for eighteen months before dark clouds of civil war appeared on the horizon.

James White Sheffey was elected Smyth County's representative to the Virginia Convention. That body, formed in February 1861, had the singular task of recommending whether or not the Commonwealth of Virginia would leave the Union and become part of a new and independent Southern nation. Like most delegates from western Virginia, the elder Sheffey was a moderate in the secession crisis. Not until President Abraham Lincoln issued a call for soldiers to march across Virginia to suppress the Southern "rebellion" did Delegate Sheffey and his western Virginia colleagues vote for Virginia's exodus from the Union.

Meanwhile, back in Marion, "Pres" Sheffey had become one of the most outspoken advocates of secession. He addressed a number of local political rallies before helping to organize a local company of cavalrymen. The unit adopted the name "Smyth Dragoons." It was among the first contingents to volunteer for military service in the Confederate States of America.

As such, the company actually had a choice of 1) proceeding to the rendezvous camp at Lynchburg for attachment to the main army forming in Virginia; 2) becoming part of the guerrilla forces of Col. R. C. W. Radford; or 3) serving in the threatened western Virginia counties under newly commissioned Gen. John B. Floyd, a former governor and Secretary of War. Both Floyd and his wife were cousins of Sheffey's mother. Hence, young Sheffey pushed to have his unit serve with his kinsman. Thus the "Smyth Dragoons" soon became Company A of the 8th Virginia Cavalry Regiment and headed into the mountains rather than into the piedmont.

This decision of assignment was fateful. The 8th Virginia Cavalry was never in the legendary Army of Northern Virginia; it never fought in a major battle of the Civil War.[1] For the three years that Sheffey was in the field, the regiment's service was in eastern West Virginia, southwestern Virginia, eastern Tennessee, and the Shenandoah Valley. That alone makes his wartime letters so valuable. He presents full views of the struggle in an overlooked — if not forgotten — area. Few

writers have paid much attention to that military theater. Yet men of North and South fought there; they bled and died there, just as did comrades at Malvern Hill, Antietam, and Gettysburg. Further, what took place on the western perimeter of the Old Dominion was far more critical to the outcome of the war than most students of history realize.

When Pres Sheffey left for war in the spring of 1861, he had two immediate goals in his life: to defend his beloved Virginia, and to marry Josephine Spiller.

The quest for Miss Spiller had begun three years prior to civil war. Josie Spiller, a native of Wytheville, was two and a half years younger than Sheffey. Her father, William H. Spiller, was a highly prominent merchant who owned stores and extensive real estate in both Wythe and Smyth counties. In 1855, a mentally unbalanced young man who had sought in vain to marry one of the Spiller daughters murdered the father. James White Sheffey was prosecuting attorney in the ensuing trial, in which the defendant was committed permanently to an asylum.

Apparently Pres Sheffey met Josie Spiller in 1858, when he was at Emory & Henry College and she was elected "Queen of Love and Beauty" at an annual summer pageant in Wytheville. Sheffey was immediately smitten; Miss Spiller was more reserved. In March 1861, Sheffey reopened correspondence with a long, practiced, highly intellectual letter. He wrote: "Like the ghosts of pleasant dreams, the memories of my boyhood and youth, of my college days and university days gather round me, but no reminiscences of the past do I better love to recall than the memory of that correspondence, short-lived and ill-fated though it proved to be." Sheffey signed the letter: "Ever your sincere friend."[2]

When Josie made a quick and positive response, Sheffey replied with an essay-length letter. The long-distance romance thus began. So did civil war a month later.

Sheffey wanted a wedding before the start of his active military service. Josie was understandably hesitant. She asked for time to consider the matter. In May 1861, Sheffey and his cavalry company left Marion for additional training in Wytheville. For two months, he and Josie became better acquainted. Yet a wedding date remained somewhere in the future.

Orders for field duty came in late July. Sheffey was then twenty-three years old and five feet, seven inches tall; he had hazel eyes, sandy hair, and a light complexion.[3] He was also by then hopelessly in love. In his next letter to Josie, he declared: "My thoughts revert as they have done constantly since my departure from Wytheville to you and the good old town which has so long been dearer to me than any other spot on earth because it was your home." He closed the letter with the statement: "I think I will be quite successful in making myself a soldier. With your love to urge me & sustain me, I could accomplish anything."[4]

That was not quite so, because Sheffey was now in the command of Gen. John B. Floyd. Only disaster could result.

Earlier that July, Union forces in northwestern Virginia had defeated the main Confederate force there at Corrick's Ford. The Union advance through extreme western Virginia continued, then faltered when the Federal commander, Gen. George B. McClellan, was summoned to Washington to take charge of the principal Union army in the East. Confederate authorities moved to take advantage of this lull by directing Floyd's command to march north to Lewisburg and there join Gen. Henry A. Wise's legion, retreating through the Kanawha Valley from Charleston.

No way could Wise and Floyd work together. Both men had been appointed to field command because of political prominence, not military experience. Both were ex-governors, autocratic, tempestuous, and jealous of competition. Floyd was the senior in rank and in overall command. Wise displayed a consistent reluctance to take orders from Floyd. They spent more time facing down one another than confronting the enemy. Wise once commented of Floyd: "I feel if we remain together, we will unite in more wars than one."[5]

Even Union Gen. Jacob D. Cox, who campaigned against the two Confederates that autumn, stated after the war: "If [Wise] had been half as troublesome to me as he was to Floyd, I should indeed have had a hot time of it."[6] As it was, Cox and his Union force had an easy outing with the two prima donnas.

Sheffey always sided with Floyd in the heated exchanges over command. After all, the general was a distant cousin.

The Marion lieutenant's first contacts with the enemy came on August 26 at Cross Lanes and on September 2 at Hawks Nest. Both

engagements were only skirmishes; to Sheffey, they were monumental encounters. That he survived his initial contact with the Federals gave Sheffey a momentary and macabre sense of humor. "One of the [wounded] Yankees," he wrote Josie, "lived more than a day with his brains shot out, conclusive evidence that they can get along almost as well without [brains] as with them."[7]

A week later, at Carnifex Ferry, Sheffey got his first full taste of battle. Four hours of fighting ensued, and the Smyth County officer emerged from it a real soldier.

With letters being the only possible contact with his fiancée, and with mail delivery sporadic at best, Sheffey spent much of the war's first autumn begging Josie to write more often. He repeatedly voiced frustration that the Floyd-Wise combine could not accomplish any military objective — even after Gen. Robert E. Lee came west from Richmond to offer assistance. Sheffey was witness to skirmishes at Sewell Mountain, Armstrong Creek, Loup Creek, and Guyandotte. Weather and terrain were consistent obstacles to success. At the same time, the sickness and diseases that would kill two men for every one fatality in Civil War battle had engulfed the southwestern Virginia soldiers. Encampments became as dangerous as engagements.

Little improvement came with the new year, 1862. Josie's letter-writing did not improve. At one point Sheffey moaned: "The days lengthen into weeks, the long weeks into months, and still you will not write.... I ... will surrender myself to the Yankees or incurable blues within a fortnight if you don't write." What made the loneliness so unbearable, Sheffey added, was that "we live here like Greenlanders, warming our frozen bodies with fats and oils, and shivering like Switzerlanders in the midst of glaciers and peaks covered with ice and snow."[8]

A long encampment followed at Princeton. The principal duty of Sheffey's company was to guard one of the major approaches for a possible Union stab at the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad. Sheffey was in the action at Giles Court House, Princeton, and — especially — the May 1862 battle of Lewisburg. Although he escaped injury, Sheffey was not a happy soldier. His regiment was part of the 1500-man "Army of New River" under Gen. Henry Heth, an officer for whom Sheffey had little respect (as he made clear in his letters). Conditions inside the 8th Virginia Cavalry were unpleasant. The unit was

at half-strength; even though Sheffey became captain of the "Smyth Dragoons" that spring, he did not enjoy cordial relations with either the regimental colonel or the lieutenant colonel.

In mid-May, his patience with Josie Spiller came momentarily to an end. He suggested that the two either wed or cease the interminable waiting. She responded by inviting him to visit her and discuss their relationship. Sheffey obtained a short furlough and hastened to Wytheville, but little seems to have been accomplished. The waiting period would continue.

Late that summer, just before the twin Confederate disasters at Antietam Creek (Maryland) and Perryville (Kentucky), Sheffey experienced the most exciting action of his Civil War career. Union troops were departing western Virginia in a steady stream to reinforce Gen. George McClellan's Army of the Potomac. Gen. Lee suggested that Confederate cavalry in far western Virginia take advantage of the lightly defended region by widespread raiding of Union posts and by regaining the vital Kanawha Valley.

Gen. Albert Jenkins took command of the movement. With 500 mounted troops (most of them from Sheffey's regiment), Jenkins undertook a 500-mile ride through all of the Union-held counties of western Virginia. "Jenkins' Raid" involved a circular sweep by Southern horsemen as far north as Weston, near the birthplace of Gen. "Stonewall" Jackson. Then the horsemen galloped west, crossed the Ohio River, and became the first Southern force to raise the Confederate flag on Ohio soil. Jenkins completed the circuit by riding through Charleston and up the Kanawha Valley.

The gains from the expedition were more psychological than material, and the victory was short-lived, but it was a dramatic success coming at a time when the South needed a boost in spirit. Pres Sheffey was part of the raid, and he wrote extensively about it.

Then it was back to dull and dreary patrol duty on the western Virginia frontier. Sheffey saw duty in Monroe, Mercer, and Greenbrier counties. Eventually came duty closer to home. Portions of the 8th Virginia Cavalry guarded the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad at Newbern and Central Depot (now Radford) before returning to the picket posts at Lewisburg. The captain also began making acquaintances with the leading Southern generals in that department: Samuel

Jones, John Echols, John McCausland, and Gabriel C. Wharton. Echols and Wharton became his good friends.

Sheffey achieved one major triumph in the first half of 1863: he finally secured a wife.

For two years he had personified the adage that "absence makes the heart grow fonder."[9] He was deeply in love, but he had to court his sweetheart solely by the medium of letters. A certain charm arises throughout the Sheffey letters as he pursued Miss Spiller's hand, for he used every possible approach.

In 1861 he urged that they marry quickly so that their lives would be one before he left for the unknowns of war. Then he was begging to marry on the premise that she could take pride in having the love of her life serving patriotically in the army. Miss Spiller was apparently unimpressed. In 1862 Sheffey employed simple arithmetic: the quicker they wed, the longer life they would have together. When that tactic failed, Sheffey turned to a desperate ploy: they should wed at once because he could meet death at any moment. That too fell on deaf ears.

His 1863 strategy apparently won the day. Letters to Josie began containing lengthy descriptions of beautiful and unattached women he was meeting in Lewisburg, Princeton, Beckley, and other encampments. That may well have jolted Miss Spiller into a Code Red situation. In any event, on June 9, 1863, Pres Sheffey and Josie Spiller were married in Wytheville.

Returning alone to duty in Greenbrier County, Sheffey wrote his bride of three weeks: "I have been congratulated to an enormous degree. I do not think that a young man forced away from a wife, who is dearer to him than every thing else on earth, is an object of congratulation."[10]

Sheffey sought long but in vain to have Josie join him in camp. Meanwhile, isolated from the major military theaters, he could only speculate on the big picture of the Civil War. Perhaps marriage and the assumption of new home responsibilities had a sobering effect, or possibly war weariness struck the bridegroom as it did most soldiers of that struggle. In any event, Sheffey began to express anxiety over the outcome of the conflict. He wrote more often of the fallacies of conscription, the overwhelming superiority of Union forces, and the pros-

pects of peace. Comments on skirmishes, friends, and compatriots became more serious.

Then, without warning, a Union threat on July 17-18, 1863, appeared in Sheffey's backyard. Some 1,300 Union cavalry, attempting to cut the Virginia and Tennessee Railroad, struck Wytheville. A sharp fight ensued, producing at least 100 Union casualties. Federal soldiers retaliated by burning several town buildings and looting a number of private homes. Sheffey spent days agonizing over the safety of his wife. To his relief, he learned that Josie had not been harmed.

Well into the autumn of 1863, Sheffey and his men were on patrol in Greenbrier and Tazewell counties. Confederates were continually moving to counter Union probes aimed at the railroad and the vital ponds at Saltville. Even Sheffey's father marched out with the home guard to meet enemy threats. Two preserved letters from siblings in Marion give a clear picture of patchwork affairs on the home front.

Dejection twice struck Sheffey in the war's third summer. First, he was unable to have his wife join him in camp. Then he contracted a facial infection that dangerously involved an eye. Although the disease persisted through the remainder of 1863, Sheffey regained high spirits and continued his highly observant reports of residents he met in various counties, movements his company was making, dull routines of field duty, and the constant flow of rumors passing through the camp.

In mid-October 1863, the 8th Virginia Cavalry was ordered to Abingdon to become part of a mounted brigade under Gen. William E. "Grumble" Jones. However, until the following spring, Sheffey's service consisted of being judge advocate on a departmental court-martial meeting far to the west in Lee and Scott counties. Boredom was the overriding emotion of those weeks. Yet, as Sheffey admitted, he was at least indoors and away from the elements of winter.

For five weeks in April and May 1864, Sheffey was posted near Wytheville and his wife. This long gap in his letters is regrettable, for it was the time when the new Union general-in-chief, U. S. Grant, unleashed a multi-front campaign that would eventually crush the Southern Confederacy. One such offensive led to the May 8 battle of Cloyds Mountain, the largest engagement ever waged in southwestern Virginia.

A second threat sent the 8th Virginia Cavalry and its sister units galloping northward into the Shenandoah Valley. Sheffey arrived too late to participate in the June 5 battle of Piedmont, where Southern cavalry were routed and Gen. "Grumble" Jones was killed. Yet Sheffey did see action at Lynchburg, Hanging Rock (near present-day Salem), Leetown (West Virginia), and Frederick (Maryland), during the first stage of Gen. Jubal Early's raid on Washington.

Sheffey expressed mixed feelings at his first sight of Maryland. "A more beautiful country never gladdened the eye of man," he told Josie. "The horn of plenty has been outpoured upon the fields. ... But the people, the villainous Dutch with their outlandish lingo! What a pity that they should hold so fair a land."[11]

Confederate cavalry were resting in camp near Moorefield, West Virginia, when, on August 7, Union horsemen swooped down in a surprise dawn attack. Among those wounded were Col. William E. Peters of the 21st Virginia Cavalry. He was Sheffey's brother-in-law and former mentor at Emory & Henry College. Among those captured was Capt. Sheffey.

For the next six months, Sheffey's address was Camp Chase Military Prison at Columbus, Ohio. A former training compound for Union recruits, Camp Chase in 1862 became an enclosed-barracks prison surrounded by high wooden fences and guard towers. Its peak population came in January 1865, when more than 9,000 Confederate prisoners of war were there.

Camp Chase was nowhere near the hell-holes that Andersonville, Elmira, and other Civil War prisons became. In fact, the officer section of Camp Chase seems to have been quite tolerable. Sheffey's chief complaint in his short letters home was loneliness. As he wrote his wife in November: "The weary time drags very slowly away at best, but when many days elapse without bringing me a letter from you, it becomes still more intolerable."[12] Other than a smallpox vaccination that became briefly infected, Sheffey underwent few physical discomforts at Camp Chase.

His confinement ended in February 1865, after North and South had resumed a policy of prisoner exchange. Sheffey was transferred to Point Lookout Prison, Maryland, and there exchanged for a captured Federal officer of equal rank. In all likelihood, Sheffey was back in southwestern Virginia prior to Lee's surrender at Appomattox in April.

Josie wanted to continue living in Wytheville, but Sheffey insisted that they settle in Marion, where his father had offered him a home. The former captain had little free capital, but he was able to furnish the home on Main Street. There he and his wife spent the remainder of their lives.

In the summer of 1865, Sheffey attempted to become a candidate for commonwealth attorney of Smyth County. Being a disenfranchised Confederate blocked his hope. He then resumed the practice of law and soon became Marion's leading attorney. He and Josie raised five daughters and two sons. Sheffey became a devoted member of the Presbyterian church and was a longtime elder. Josie spent many years as the church organist.

In 1895 Pres Sheffey became judge of the Seventh Judicial Circuit in Virginia; he continued as a judge until his February 1904 retirement. A local editor said of him: "He left the bench with the respect and affection of the lawyers who had practiced before him; and all men who knew him, whether as a private citizen, as a lawyer, or as a judge, will bear willing testimony to his spotless integrity and to the nobility of his character."[13]

Retirement from the bench was short-lived. On November 19, 1904, Josephine Sheffey died. The blow undoubtedly was severe for her husband, who lived only nine months thereafter. Sheffey's death occurred August 26, 1905, in Marion. He was sixty-seven.

The John Preston Sheffey Letters are now a key collection in the Virginia Center for Civil War Studies at Virginia Tech. They offer an unprecedented picture of the Civil War in the remote southwestern quadrant of the Old Dominion. Sheffey's observations of people and events in the border counties on each side of the Virginia-West Virginia line have no parallel in printed works. He even described actions so isolated that they are mentioned only in passing in the 128 thick volumes of the *Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies*.

Pres Sheffey literally pushed the door open a little farther to reveal what transpired in this region during three of the four years of civil war. That in itself makes his letters invaluable. He was in his mid-twenties when he donned a uniform. He left for war with the same feelings inherent in every American recruit of every war: to defend hearth and home, and to fight for the way of life that was his

country. At the same time, the Marion soldier gave to history through his letters a fascinating mixture of love and war.

Today Pres Sheffey and his family lie buried in Marion. They might have continued to abide in obscurity but for the discovery of his wartime letters. Not only do the letters tell us much about Pres himself; they are also amazingly revealing for the Sheffey family, Smyth County, the 8th Virginia Cavalry, and southwestern Virginia during the stormiest and most dangerous period of its existence.

The Sheffey war letters have recently been published[14] in a book that will long be a reference work for this section of the state. It is not too farfetched to declare that southwestern Virginia has at last acquired an articulate spokesman for the Civil War years.

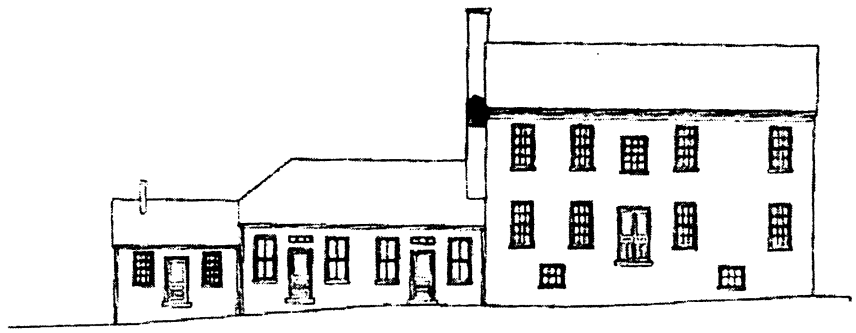
All royalties from the book will go into a John Preston Sheffey Graduate Scholarship in Civil War History at Virginia Tech. Such is a fitting memorial. More to the point, it is something that Pres Sheffey would have liked. Throughout a varied and quite extraordinary life, he maintained a love of country and a sense of history. He, as much as any man, surely fought the good fight and kept the faith. The epitaph barely visible on Sheffey's fading tombstone is a quotation from the fortieth chapter of Isaiah: "But they that wait upon the Lord shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings as eagles; they shall run, and not be weary; and they shall walk, and not faint."

Thanks to the publication of Sheffey's wartime letters, present and future generations can reply: "Sleep well, my friend. We shall not forget."

## Endnotes

1. The only printed history on this unit is Jack L. Dickinson, *8th Virginia Cavalry* (Lynchburg, Va., 1986).
2. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Spiller, March 14, 1861 (John Preston Sheffey Papers, Virginia Tech).
3. Oath of Allegiance for John P. Sheffey, February, 1865, *ibid.*
4. John Preston Sheffey to Josephine Spiller, July 28, 1861, *ibid.*
5. U. S. War Dept. (comp.), *War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies* (Washington, D.C., 1880–1902), Ser. I, 5:127.
6. Jacob D. Cox, *Military Reminiscences of the Civil War* (New York, 1900), 1:97.
7. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Spiller, August 28, 1861, Sheffey Papers.
8. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Spiller, February 24, 1862, *ibid.*

9. The author of this famous quotation was an anonymous Englishman.
10. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Sheffey, June 30, 1863, Sheffey Papers.
11. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Sheffey, July 18, 1864, *ibid.* A large segment of the population of western Pennsylvania and western Maryland were of German background. In the mid-19th century, they were derogatorily termed as "Dutch."
12. John P. Sheffey to Josephine Sheffey, November 9, 1864, *ibid.*
13. Unidentified newspaper clipping, *ibid.*
14. *Soldier of Southwestern Virginia: The Civil War Letters of Captain John Preston Sheffey*, ed. James I. Robertson, Jr. (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004).



*Main Street elevation of the Bodell house at the corner of Main and Roanoke streets, Blacksburg. The house was owned by David N. Bodell during part of the late 19th century.*
*(from Donna Dunay et al.,* Blacksburg — Understanding a Virginia Town: Town Architecture *[Penn Washington, 1986], p. 136).*

# "Thou art the Potter"*
# A History of Bodell Pottery

Dorothy H. Bodell

During the last part of the nineteenth century, a small family enterprise, the Bodell Pottery, was located in Blacksburg, Virginia. The stoneware pottery was molded, fired, and merchandised by David N. Bodell and his two sons, Worth and Ed.[1]

The history of this family and their potting enterprise began with David Neuss/Neutz Bodell (b. 1810), who traveled with his parents and siblings down the Great Wagon Road from Pennsylvania through Maryland to the Shenandoah Valley of Virginia. The family settled in New Market, Virginia, around 1820.[2]

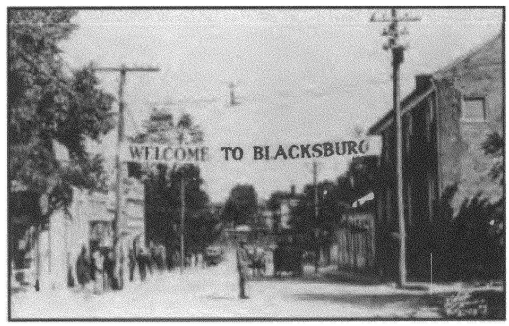
When David's older sister Elizabeth married Jacob Kipps[3] from the nearby town of Strasburg (aka Pot Town) and made plans to remove to Mercer County in far southwest Virginia (now West Virginia), David decided to go along. He was young and ready to see new places and things.

It is not known exactly where the Kippses and David lived after their move, but it was not far from the town of Pocahontas, where the family had their pictures made[4] and purchased needed supplies. While they were living in Mercer County, Jacob Kipps taught David the potting trade[5] that Jacob evidently had learned while living in Pot Town.

David married Sophronia Harris of Giles County in 1843; they had a large family of six girls and three boys.[6] The sons were George Worthington, called Worth (b. 1852); William Edgar David, called Ed (b. 1858); and the youngest child, James Knox (b. 1860), who left Blacksburg at an early age, never to return.

The family moved to Blacksburg in 1859, just before the start of the Civil War.[7] They lived in a large brick house on the corner of Main and Roanoke streets.[8] The house had been built by Ed Amiss, but was referred to as the Bodells' brick mansion[9] because it was so

* from the hymn "Have Thine Own Way, Lord!" by Adelaide A. Pollard.




*Blacksburg's Main Street, looking northwest. The Bodell house is in the right foreground. (from Donna Dunay et al., Blacksburg — Understanding a Virginia Town: Town Architecture [Penn Washington, 1986], p. 136).*

large and made of brick, an unusual material for a small town such as Blacksburg. David Bodell operated his first Blacksburg pottery in this building since it was their first home in Blacksburg.

Sometime later, the family moved a couple of blocks up the street into a house located at present-day 202 East Roanoke Street.[10] At a later time the Bodell family moved to a house on the corner of Jackson and Water (now Draper) streets. Their potting sheds were located behind the house[11] next to Stroubles Creek, which ran at the edge of the property. At the back of the property was an old mill where grain was milled. Today that property still exists but with a new facade. Several apartments are inside the building known as "Old Mill Apartments," and businesses are located at street level.

The kiln where the pottery was fired was located at the site occupied today by the Armory.[12] The kiln was fired by wood hauled by horse and wagon from outlying areas around Blacksburg.

In a newspaper interview in 1957[13], Ed Bodell (age 99) reported that the clay used to make their pottery "came from the land where the Virginian Tunnel was laid." The clay was hauled to town by horse and wagon. It was then sifted and water from the creek added to make a workable mixture. Next, the clay was put on a potter's wheel and formed into many shapes. "I made everything that could be made with clay — from milk vessels to vases. We made small jugs which were given to the Sunday School children to use as money banks. Everything was hand molded."

In the same interview, Ed said that each vessel was made by hand. "The left hand was put inside and the right hand was outside" to shape the vessel. Any shape could be made this way. Ed also said, "The wheel was turned by kicking a foot pedal. It took 300 kicks to make a crock. I know because I counted them."


*Photographs by Don Poole, Shawsville, Virginia.*

The Bodells made all kinds of vessels: crocks of different sizes, jugs (images 1 and 2, p. 21), bowls (image 13, p. 21; image 21, p. 23 ) pitchers, canning jars (images 15 and 17, p. 21), vases, water pipes (image 12) to use in spring houses, and, in 1893, drainpipes to carry water beneath the streets of Blacksburg. The drainpipe project was not very successful, and the contract was canceled by the town fathers during one of the two terms Ed Bodell served as mayor of Blacksburg.[14]

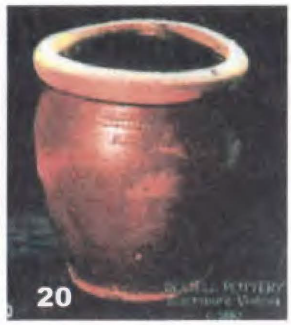
After the molded object was dried, it was fired in a kiln and glazed.[15] The long process of firing in the kiln took at least three days: to heat the kiln, keep it hot for several hours, and then cool it down to remove the pottery. Because this heating was so exacting, odd shapes and distortions sometimes resulted (images 18 and 20, p. 23). Many of the Bodell crocks are not perfectly shaped. This firing process was labor intensive and required constant attention day and night.[16]

The Bodells used at least two different glazes to waterproof their vessels and add decoration. One glaze used lead (image 4, p. 21)[17], which was not very stable and is now illegal to use. Another glaze was salt, which was much cheaper and easier to use. Handfuls of salt were thrown into the hot kiln where it vaporized and coated the vessel (images 1, 6, 9, 10, p. 21). The resulting colors could be gray, brown, white, or buff and were characterized by a slightly rough orange-peel texture.[18] Many of the extant pieces are of this type. Their glazes and markings were not fancy because the Bodells made them for everyday utilitarian use.

Two examples of unsuccessful cobalt-blue decorations remain in the author's collection (images 16 and 24). The cobalt paint cost more money, took more time to use, and depended on the potter's artistic talents, none of which the Bodells seemed to have had.

Only one known whimsy piece has survived (shown in two views: images 22 and 23F); it is redware decorated with a slip (a liquid glaze) and Sgraffito. The piece is signed David Bodell and contains the date "188–" and "Blacksburg, Va." The tree of life and a heart are also scratched into the glaze.

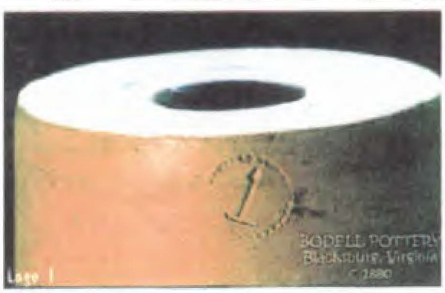
Not many of the Bodell pottery pieces were ever marked, except for the crocks, which were marked with a broken circle (Logos 1, 2, 3, p. 23) around the quantity mark. Some pieces have survived with the name "Bodell" and "Blacksburg, Va." stamped under the crock mark.



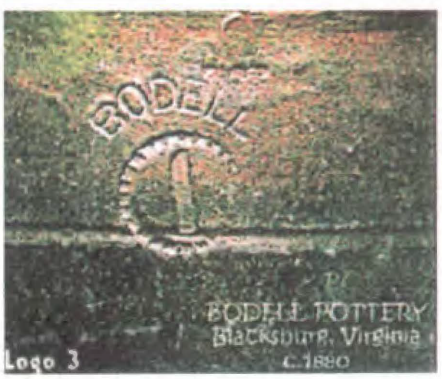



*Photographs by Don Poole, Shawsville, Va.*




*Logo 1*

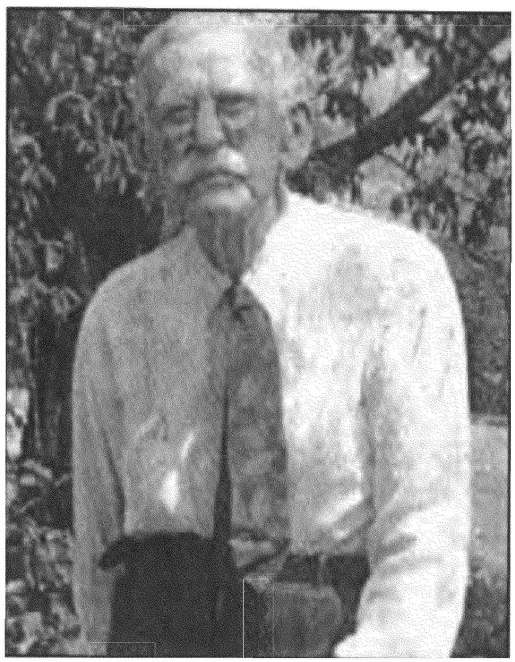

*Logo 2*




*Logo 3*

*Logo 4*

*Samples of the logos used by the Bodell potters. Photographs by Don Poole, Shawsville, Virginia*



*Ed Bodell, circa 1956.*

After David's death, some pots were marked with "G.W. Bodell and Bro., Blacksburg, Va." (Logo 4, p. 23).

In the 1957 interview, Ed stated, "Some of the pottery was sold locally and some was hauled to Floyd, to West Virginia, and elsewhere."[19]

David Bodell also had a general merchandise store on Main Street, where he and his sons worked. Later, when machine-made stoneware caused the prices to drop, Mr. [Ed] Bodell worked in a store owned by his father. The store — which sold canned goods, candies, etc. and boasted a soda fountain — was located where Louise's Dress Shop was in 1957.[20] (Now, in 2005, it is the site of the "Underground Pub.") Very little pottery was made during this time, but they did not stop potting entirely.

David Bodell died in 1890. In his will, he left the pottery and all his property to his son Worth, who was charged to "take care of the family."[21] By that time the family consisted of Worth's brother Ed and several unmarried sisters. Worth was not an astute businessman, and the business did not prosper under his ownership. One of the spe

cialty items in Worth's store was machine-made stoneware[22]; several existing pieces are of very high quality.

Small amounts of pottery were still being made by Worth and Ed until about the 1920s, when Ed left the store to become a painter. He painted many of the homes in Blacksburg and also painted buildings for Dr. Julian A. Burruss, president of Virginia Agricultural and Mechanical College and Polytechnic Institute.[23]

Worth is also remembered for making brooms and selling them to local customers. When he died in 1938,[24] the Bodell property was sold, and the potting sheds behind his house on Jackson Street were razed during construction of the Armory. His house was razed in the late 1940s.

Ed Bodell died on March 1, 1959, at the age of 101.[25] With his death, a small family enterprise ended. It remains as a memory preserved in the few pieces owned by family and serious collectors of this long-ago Blacksburg craft.

## Endnotes

1. *Montgomery News Messenger*, May 30, 1957, section D, p. 4.
2. Census records, 1820, 1830, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Tax Records, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Census shows George Bodell, the father of David Bodell.
3. Marriage records, Shenandoah County, Virginia.
4. Family pictures in possession of Dale Bodell Waters of Mechanicsburg, Virginia.
5. Harvey L. Price, "Outlines of Montgomery County Families" (n.p., 1940); in Special Collections, Virginia Tech Libraries. The Kipps family may be found in volume one of the four volumes.
6. Census records, 1860, Montgomery County, Virginia. Obituary, *Montgomery News Messenger*, March 5, 1959, section B, p. 5.
7. Census records, 1860, Montgomery County, Virginia.
8. Donna Dunay et al., *Blacksburg — Understanding a Virginia Town: Town Architecture* (Penn Washington, 1986), p. 136; also see "Old Blacksburg Building is Being Razed," *Radford News Journal*, August 7, 1941; *Roanoke Times*, August 10, 1941.
9. Rosanna Croy Dawson, "The Year of 1893 in the Life of Rosanna Croy Dawson of Blacksburg, Virginia," compiled by D.P. Pack in April 1980 (unpublished booklet), p. 29: "Mond Oct 2 — Edd Cook moved in Bodells brick mansion."
10. In 1939 Mrs. S. A. Wingard wrote a brief unpublished history of Blacksburg that can be found in Special Collections, Virginia Tech Libraries: "History of Blacksburg," p. 7.

11. "The kitchen of this house was located in the basement. A natural spring had been enclosed in a concrete basin and the house had running water." Memories of Donald Bodell.
12. *Mongomery News Messenger*, May 30, 1957, section D, p. 4.
13. *Ibid.*
14. Council Minutes 1877–1895, pages 182, 186, 187, 204. The minutes are located in the office of the clerk of Blacksburg, Virginia. Ed Bodell served two one-year terms as Mayor of Blacksburg, beginning on July 1, 1893, and July 1, 1895.
15. *Montgomery News Messenger*, May 30, 1957, section D, p. 4.
16. Jeannette Lasansky, *Central Pennsylvania Redware Pottery, 1780–1904*, published by Union County Oral Traditions Project, Courthouse, Lewisburg, Pennsylvania,1979 (distributed by Pennsylvania State University Press, 215 Wagner Building, University Park, Penna.).
17. The 1870 Virginia Industry 9th Census (Virginia Tech Microfilm HA682U5, roll 15) shows that David Bodell purchased a large amount of lead for use in his pottery business.
18. Lasansky, *Redware Pottery*.
19. *Montgomery News Messenger*, May 30, 1957, section D, p. 4.
20. *Ibid.*
21. Will of David Bodell, Montgomery County Courthouse records.
22. Letterhead showing that stoneware was a specialty item in the Bodell store, in the possession of Dale Bodell Waters, Mechanicsburg, Virginia.
23. Ledger of Ed Bodell, showing that he had painted certain persons' houses, and several pages showing places painted for Dr. Burruss at the college.
24. Gravestone in Westview Cemetery, Blacksburg, Virginia.
25. Obituary, *Montgomery News Messenger*, March 5, 1959, section B, p. 5.

# The Devil, The Weaver's Bonny, and Alfreda Peel: Exploring the Roots of an Ancient Virginia Folk Ballad

John Long

Boy meets girl. Boy asks girl a series of riddles. Girl cleverly answers them all. Boy turns out to be Satan. It's an old story.

In fact, in the obscure world of English folk ballads, it's one of the oldest known stories, the plot of "Riddles Wisely Expounded," a folk ballad dating to at least 1445. Although it has inspired many variations and even a popular novel, few people today know of the ballad. And even fewer know that it was in the mountains of southwest Virginia that the first American example was discovered and recorded, under the title "The Devil's Nine Questions." Despite this obscurity, "Riddles Wisely Expounded" provides a tangible link between Virginia's archaic mountain culture and its English/Scottish roots.

## Alfreda Peel: Ballad Hunter

Not only is "The Devil's Nine Questions" itself of interest, but it comes with a charming account of its discovery. Alfreda Marion Peel, of Salem, Virginia, was one of the most prolific collectors of folktales and songs in Virginia history. Peel was born in Charleston, West Virginia, in 1890, but moved to Salem as a small child. In adulthood, she became a teacher, serving most of her career at Virginia Heights elementary school in Roanoke City. She was also a noted author, most conspicuously of *Witch in the Mill* (1947), a book based on some of the backwoods folktales she collected, and of a play, "Three Mile Field", set in the mountain communities.[1] Peel is credited with collecting

hundreds of ballads and folksongs, plus stories, customs, and superstitions of rural Virginia.

Here is Peel's account of the discovery of "The Devil's Nine Questions" (which preserves a flavor of the regional dialect she encountered). The year is 1922; the scene is the rural mountains of Giles County, where Peel was traveling in search of folksongs along with another ballad collector, Caroline Melbard. The "saw-mill cook" who sings the song is identified elsewhere as Mrs. Rill Martin.

> "Hit's eight miles to the lumber camp, an' you better be mighty keerful o' rattlesnakes," said the saw-mill hand, looking in astonishment at the strange town women who, mounted on two rough farm horses, had lost their way on the wilderness road...and eight miles back. Heavens! And on these horses!
>
> The day was hot — midsummer. It was a blessing that the road wound through dense woods where rhododendron and laurel overhung the path and the spruce pine grew darkly over the rocky brown streams. Where the trees parted a little we could see the green mountain spurs over which hung thunder heads, seeming motionless in the heat, and from which issued a low growl of warning.
>
> Again we plunged into a rocky stream, and our horses struggled up a steep road scraped by logging teams to the little shanties that clung to the edge of a rocky gorge. An old woman with a pet owl on her shoulder stood in the doorway of one of the shanties. She was the saw-mill cook whom we knew for a "singing woman."
>
> "May we wait here till the storm is over?" we asked, as the thunder rolled over our heads ominously.
>
> "Come right in. Me an' Bill'll git yer saddles off."
>
> Inside the shanty were long oil-cloth covered tables piled with soiled dishes. We told her of our quest and asked her to sing for us.
>
> "I declare, I ain't got no time, fer I got to git my dishes washed."
>
> My friend volunteered to wash them, so after many excuses the old woman finally consented.

*Alfreda Peel (from* Traditional Ballads of Virginia*).*

"We better set in the porch. I killed a right big rattler in the room yestiddy. It was lyin' in the bunk, so it makes me kinder nervous to set in thar."

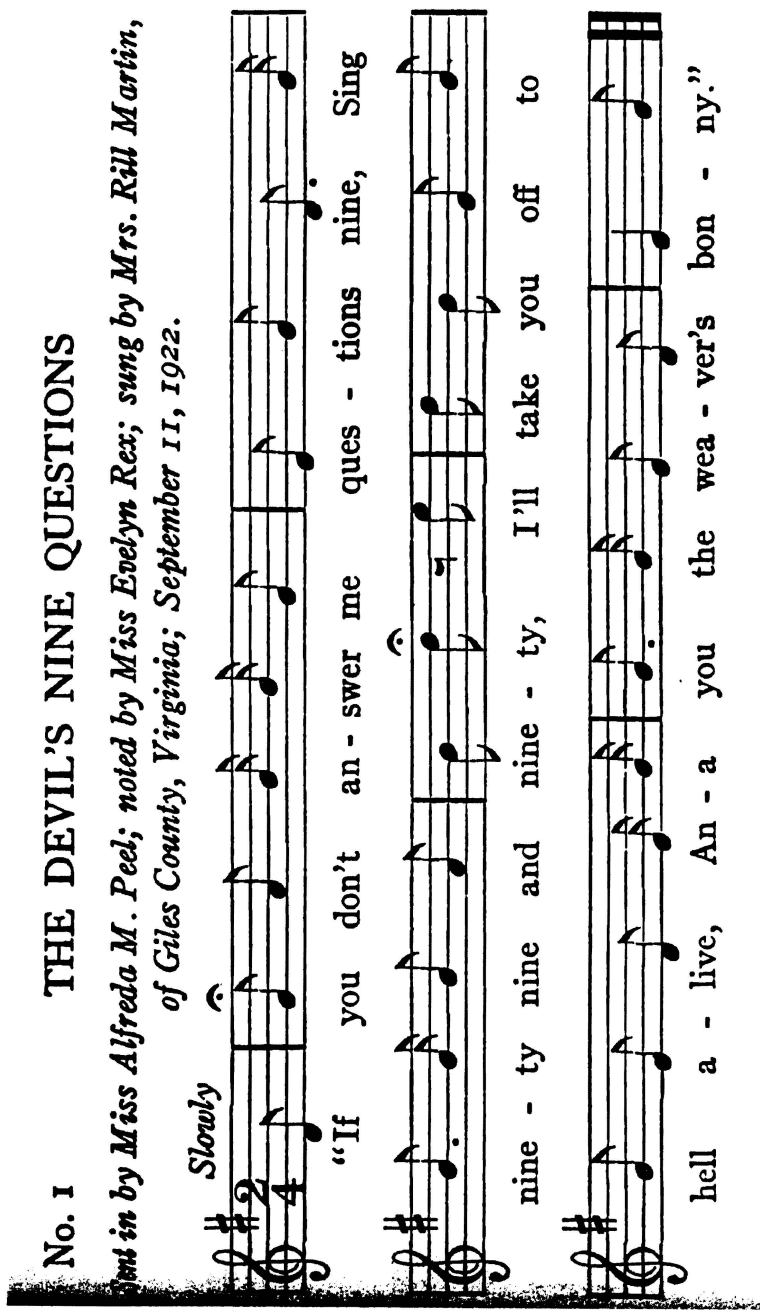
So, accompanied by the owl which made strange noises, we sat in the porch while the rain dripped from the eaves and the storm rolled away among the mountains. Ballad after ballad she sang in her cracked and quavering voice, but still they were all familiar.

"Do you know one about the devil?" I asked hopefully.

"I kin sing one about 'The Devil an' the Nine Questions':

> "Ef you don't answer me questions nine,
> Sing ninety-nine and ninety, I'll take you off to hell alive,
> And you're the weaver's bonny."

This was the ancient ballad of "Riddles Wisely Expounded," recorded here for the first time in the New World in this remote corner of the Southern Appalachians.[2]




*A selection of the music of "The Devil's Nine Questions" (from* Traditional Ballads of Virginia).

Indeed, Peel had uncovered a rare ballad important on at least two levels: first and oldest. It was the first example of this ballad to be documented in America (and only a few would be afterwards), and no ballad with older roots had ever been discovered here. It was in fact the only ballad found in American tradition that provided a demonstrable link to Medieval Europe.[3]

Why was Alfreda Peel on horseback in the Virginia backwoods collecting folk ballads? Peel was one of the founding members of the Virginia Folklore Society, established in 1913. One of the first priorities set by the VFS was to identify and preserve as many ballads as possible, a goal set by the first president, C. Alphonso Smith.[4]

Accordingly, VFS sent out dozens of individuals to conduct field work, exploring the mountain communities and collecting previously unrecorded folk ballads. Many of the collectors were, like Peel, teachers — the Virginia Education Association cooperated closely with the VFS. By 1929, fifty-one traditional ballads had been identified and were published in an exhaustive registry, *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*. By then, Smith had died and leadership of the project had passed to another professor from the University of Virginia, Arthur Kyle Davis.

For her part, Peel was one of the group's most prolific contributors and remained active in the VFS until her death in 1953 from an automobile accident. She was also an accomplished singer, and often performed the ballads she had discovered for the Society's meetings.[5] Were it not for the efforts of Peel and her co-laborers, many if not most of these ancient ballads would have been lost.

## The Devil's Nine Questions

Here is the original text as collected by Peel and published in *The Traditional Ballads of Virginia*:

If you don't answer me questions nine,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety,
I'll take you off to hell alive,[6]
And you are the weaver's bonny.[7]

What is whiter than milk?
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
What is softer than silk?
Say you're the weaver's bonny.

Snow is whiter than milk,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
Down is softer than silk,
And I'm the weaver's bonny.

What is louder than a horn?
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
What is sharper than a thorn?
Sing I am the weaver's bonny.

Thunder's louder than a horn,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
Death is sharper than a thorn,
Sing I'm the weaver's bonny.

What is higher than a tree?
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
What is deeper than the sea?
Sing I'm the weaver's bonny.

Heaven's higher than a tree,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
And hell is deeper than the sea,
Sing I'm the weaver's bonny.

What is innocenter than a lamb?
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
What is worse than woman kind?
Say I'm the weaver's bonny.

A babe is innocenter than a lamb,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
The[8] devil's worse than woman kind,
Sing I'm the weaver's bonny.

You have answered me questions nine,
Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
You are God's, you're not my own,
And you're the weaver's bonny.[9]

## The Ballad Tradition

A ballad is a narrative song, usually with a refrain, and relatively simple in structure. As a folksong, it is a cultural phenomenon without a clear origin but with some general characteristics, enumerated by the British scholar Robert Graves:

1. The ballad proper has no known author.
2. There is never an authoritative text of such a ballad.
3. It is incomplete without music, music of a repetitive kind that excites and sustains.
4. Though it may treat of Kings and Queens and notable figures in history, it is local, not cultural.
5. It is oral, not literary.
6. It is not highly advanced technically.
7. It does not moralize or preach or express any partisan bias.
8. It "begins in the last act" of the drama and moves to the final climax without stage directions.[10]

It is Graves' point number 2 that brings the great variety to the ballad tradition. Even a relatively rare ballad such as "Riddles Wisely Expounded" has many versions, of which Peel's "Devil's Nine Questions" is but one.

The definitive registry of folk ballads in the English language was compiled by Francis James Child in the late 19th century. Child's *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* represented a monumental effort on his part to catalog and categorize all surviving ballads. "Riddles Wisely Expounded" (the first in his collection, so designated Child 1) was the second oldest ballad he uncovered, with a broadside manuscript dating to about 1445 found in the Bodleian Library of Oxford.[11] This manuscript (of which Child was unaware when the first edition of his collection was published) has the superscription "Inter Diabolus et Virgo" — Between Devil and Virgin. It may represent an ancient (extra-biblical) legend of a confrontation between the Virgin Mary and Satan.

Besides the 15th century Bodleian manuscript, Child identified five other major versions, which he designated A through E. As will

**Chart 1. Structure of the different versions.**

| | Identity of the Questioner | Maiden or Three Sisters? | Sequence of Riddles | Purpose of Riddles | Key phrase in refrain |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Peel's Version | Probably Devil | Maiden | In pairs | Possession? | Ninety-Nine and Ninety |
| Bodleian Manuscript | Devil | Maiden | In a block | Possession | None |
| Child Version A | Knight | Three Sisters | In a block | Marriage | Bonny Broom |
| Child Version B | Knight | Three Sisters | In pairs | Marriage | Jennifer, Gentle, and Rosemary |
| Child Version C | Devil in disguise | Three Sisters | In a block | Possession | Bonny Broom |
| Child Version D | Unclear; probably Devil | Maiden? | In a block | Possession | Bonny Broom |
| Child Version E | Devil, perhaps in disguise | Three Sisters | In a block | Possession | Bonny Broom |

be seen, each contains parallels to Peel's Virginia discovery, and so a brief overview is in order[12]:

- In Child's **version A** the questioner is a knight seeking a wife. He comes across three sisters, and the youngest is able to answer his riddles and claim a husband.

- **Version B** is a fragmentary version of A, with different refrain and riddles but the same happy ending.

- In **version C** the suitor is an "unco" (uncouth) knight who in the last stanza is identified as a "fiend" by the astute maid (lacking any sisters) and forced to flee. This action probably derives from an old legend that Satan must take flight if named, an idea that may also be intended by the last two stanzas of Peel's version.[13]

- **Version D** seems to be a significantly altered and incomplete variation of C.

- Finally, in **version E**, the questioner is identified only as a "stranger," but threatens that all three sisters (not only the one) "shall surely be Old Nick's" if they fail to answer the riddles properly.

These versions obviously vary considerably, but have one common theme: an exchange of riddles between a male and a female or between a male and three sisters. In some versions, the male is the Devil, in others he is a knight, and in some the knight seems to be the Devil in masquerade. The stakes in the riddle contest can be the maid's immortal soul, or marriage between the two. Yet in all versions the maid is the winner, either chasing Satan or the suitor away, or (if such was her desire) claiming a husband for herself through her clever responses to the riddles. Graves' formulation that there is "never an authoritative text of such a ballad" is certainly an apt description of "Riddles Wisely Expounded."

## Roots of The Virginia Ballad

Which of these versions inspired "The Devil's Nine Questions"? Certain structural observations give some clues. In "The Devil's Nine Questions" the questions are asked and then answered in alternating pairs, as is the case in Child's version B. In A, C, D, E, and the Bodleian

manuscript all of the questions come in a block, and are answered in the same way. Thus, the Giles County ballad most resembles version B on this point of construction.

However, Peel's version, like the 15th century Bodleian broadside, notably omits the framing story about the three sisters found in Child variations A, B, C, and E, and so most resembles D on this point. D seems too fragmentary to identify the characters clearly, but the refrain employs the phrase "you may beguile a fair maid soon," indicating that only one girl was involved.

The refrain "Sing ninety-nine and ninety" is unlike any in Child. A, C, D, and E build their refrains around the phrase "the bonny broom" (note that the term bonny, as a noun rather than an adjective, describes Peel's weaver's daughter). In B, the refrain contains the repeated phrase "jennifer, gentle and rosemaree." Such a phrase is entirely lacking in the Virginia ballad. However, while these are sometimes taken to be the names of the three sisters, they may also refer to juniper, gentian, and rosemary, plants which (like the "bonny" English broom shrub) were considered to have aphrodisiac properties or at least reflected sexual symbolism. Thus, the English refrains generally hint at the sexual tension of the ballad's plot, something lacking in Peel's version.[14]

Perhaps the most interesting debate about the roots of "The Devil's Nine Questions" concerns the identity of the questioner. As originally recorded by Peel, neither character is explicitly identified. Perhaps the ballad is only a fragment and once had more of a storyline — if nothing else, the fact that there are only eight questions, not nine as the title suggests, may indicate missing stanzas. However, the riddler's threat "to take you off to hell alive" for incorrect answers and his conclusion, "You are God's, you're not my own," hint at a hidden identity as Satan.

More perplexing are some variations in the first stanza documented later, which contradict each other on the question of the riddler's identity. The first was apparently added by Mrs. Rill Martin, the original singer, in 1933:

> The Devil went a-courting and he did ride
> Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
> A sword and a pistol by his side,
> And you're the weaver's bonny.[15]

The origin of this stanza is puzzling, borrowing some of its wording from the non-Child American ballad "Froggy Went a-Courtin'." However, it explicitly identifies the questioner as the Devil. That it was added to the ballad fully eleven years after the original version was documented is also puzzling. Had Mrs. Martin heard a different version? Remembered a forgotten stanza? Taken her own liberty with the text?

The second variant opening stanza was dated August 9, 1932, and was included in an aluminum phonograph recording of the ballad sung by Peel and recorded by Arthur K. Davis. It was later recorded also by Texas Gladden, a friend and collaborator of Peel. While neither Peel nor Gladden identified the source of this stanza, this version clearly identifies the riddler as a knight:

> There was a knight came riding by,
> Sing ninety-nine and ninety;
> And there he spied a weaver's lass,
> And she the weaver's bonny.[16]

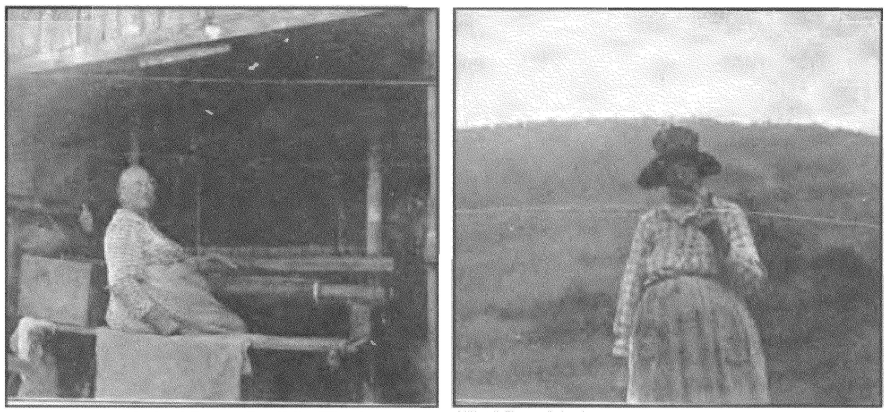
However, knight though he may appear, the riddler still threatens to take the girl "off to Hell alive." Thus, he is probably best understood as Satan masquerading as a knight, as insinuated in Child's versions C and D.

So with or without these two later and mysterious variations, we can conclude that Peel's ballad is most like Child versions C and D, in that the questioner is satanic in nature.

Finally, we can examine the riddles themselves to determine how they might link to older versions (see Chart 2). In all of the Child ballads, about 23 different riddle-and-answer pairs appear. Seven of the eight in "The Devil's Nine Questions" appear in the English versions in some fashion. Only "A babe is innocenter than a lamb" is a unique addition. "Death sharper than a thorn" is reminiscent of a riddle in all of the European versions, except that it is "hunger" that is compared to the thorn. "Thunder louder than a horn" appears in the Bodleian manuscript and versions A through E, though C substitutes "shame" for thunder and E "rumor." "Snow whiter than milk" is found in C and D; "Heaven higher than a tree" in the same two plus the Bodleian manuscript; and "Hell deeper than the sea" is in all versions except E. "Down softer than silk" is phrased thus only in C, but the

**Chart 2: Riddles used.**

| Riddle | Peel's Version | Bodleian Manuscript | Child Version A | Child Version B | Child Version C | Child Version D | Child Version E |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Snow whiter than milk | X | — | — | — | X | X | — |
| Down softer than silk | X | Silk softer than flax | — | — | X | Love for down | Love softer than melting wax |
| Thunder louder than a horn | X | X | X | X | Shame for thunder | X | Rumor for thunder |
| Death sharper than a thorn | X | Hunger for death | Hunger for death | Hunger for death | Hunger for death | Hunger for death | Hunger for death |
| Heaven higher than a tree | X | — | X | — | — | X | X |
| Hell deeper than the sea | X | X | X | X | X | X | — |
| Babe innocenter than a lamb | X | — | — | — | — | — | — |
| Devil worse than womankind | X | — | X | — | X | X | — |



*Unidentified ballad singers of southwestern Virginia (from* Traditional Ballads of Virginia*).*

Bodleian manuscript compares silk to flax in softness, while D and E compare love to the softness of down and melting wax, respectively. Finally, the closing riddle involving the "Devil worse than womankind" is in A, C, and D, although C uses the old title "Clootie" for Satan.

Thus, of the several variations, "The Devil's Nine Questions" seems most like Child's versions C and D, in that there is (1) no mention of the framing story involving three sisters, (2) the romantic conclusion of a marriage between the knight and the quick-witted lass is lacking, and (3) seven of the eight Virginia riddles are present in some form. Since C is very close to D, and since both share several commonalities with the Bodleian manuscript from 1445, it seems reasonable to assume that "The Devil's Nine Questions" represents a very old tradition. Indeed, Child (even when not originally aware of the 15th century Broadside) theorized that C and D were the earliest versions, and the "happy ending" of A and B, in which the clever lass happily claims a husband, are "modern perversions."[17]

Still, Alfreda Peel's ancient ballad may well represent a compilation of several earlier versions, or may derive from an unidentified source. But there is no escaping the fact that a song sung a generation before Columbus set sail for America was still being sung in the mountains of Giles County nearly half a millennium later.

We will never fully know how or when, but at some point in early Virginia history, an English or Scotch-Irish immigrant to Virginia, per-

haps an indentured servant, perhaps a wealthy landowner, recalled an old riddle ballad about the devil and a maid. This remnant of his or her youth across the sea was sung and taught to another, and then another. Over the generations, the song was passed on as an oral tradition, perhaps with a few changes in the melody, some alterations in the lyrics, a revised answer to one of the riddles. As the modern age dawned and a new popular culture began to overshadow tradition, fewer and fewer mountain folks remembered the old ballad. Had another generation passed, "The Devil's Nine Questions" might have been lost forever. But thanks to Alfreda Peel's labor of love, this demonstrable link between Virginia and medieval Europe is preserved.

## Bibliography


Bronson, Bertrand Harris. *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads*. Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959.

Child, Francis James. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballad*. Corrected 2nd edition prepared by Mark F. Heiman and Laura Saxton Heiman. Northfield, Minnesota: Loomis House Press, 2001.

Coffin, Tristram Potter. "Four Black Sheep among the 305". Accessed 1/16/2004 from http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/folklore/library/coffin.html

Coffin, Tristram Potter. *The British Traditional Ballad in North America*. Revised edition. Austin: Texas University Press, 1977.

Davis, Arthur Kyle. *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1929.

Davis, Arthur Kyle. *More Traditional Ballads of Virginia*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960.

Graves, Robert. *English and Scottish Ballads*. London: Heinemann Educational Books, 1957.

Peel, Alfreda Marion. *Witch in the Mill*. Richmond, Virginia: Dietz Press, 1947.

"Last Rites Held for Miss Peel." *Salem Times-Register*, June 19, 1953.

Sargent, Helen Child, and George Lyman Kittredge. *English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Edited from the Collection of Francis James Child*. New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1904.

Toelken, J. Barre. "Riddles Wisely Expounded." *Western Folklore*, vol. xxv, no. 1, January 1966.

"The Virginia Folklore Society: A Retrospective", Virginia Folklore Society. Accessed 1/12/04 from http://faculty.virginia.edu/vafolk/archive.htm

Zweig, Dana. "Early Child Ballads". Accessed 8/20/04 from www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ballads/early_child/index/html

*Alfreda Peel in later years (standing, with acress Dorothy Stewart) on the set of her play "Three Mile Field" (Salem Historical Society).*

## Endnotes

1. Unfortunately, after Peel's death in 1953, all copies of her play were called in by her estate's attorney and apparently lost. Anyone with information on "Three Mile Field" is urged to contact the Salem Historical Society.
2. Recounted in Arthur Kyle Davis, *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 1929), 46-47.
3. Tristram Potter Coffin, "Four Black Sheep among the 305" (accessed 1/16/2004 from http://www.humnet.ucla.edu/humnet/folklore/library/coffin.html), 3.
4. "The Virginia Folklore Society: A Retrospective" (accessed 1/12/04 from http://faculty.virginia.edu/vafolk/archive.htm)
5. Ibid.
6. A later (1941) recording by the Lomaxes and Peel's friend Texas Gladden worded this threat as follows: "Or you're not God's, you're one of mine." The source of this variation is not clear. See Bertrand Harris Bronson, *The Traditional Tunes of the Child Ballads* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1959), 7.
7. Variant line is "An-a you are the weaver's bonny." Also, "the" precedes milk and silk in some versions in stanzas 2 and 3.
8. A typographical error in *Traditional Ballads of Virginia* caused this line to be reprinted, and even sung on professional recordings, as "She-devil's worse than woman kind." "The editor regrets the necessity of parting with the picturesque and distinctive variant," noted Arthur Kyle Davis in his correction (see Davis,

*More Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1960), 7, note 3).

9. Davis: *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, 59-60.
10. Quoted in Davis, *Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, 4. Graves adds a ninth point on the origin of ballads, ascribing them to communal authorship rather than an unknown individual. It was a controversial idea even in 1927 when written, and since not relevant here, is omitted.
11. Helen Child Sargent and George Lyman Kittredge, *English and Scottish Popular Ballads, Edited from the Collection of Francis James Child* (New York: Houghton Mifflin and Co., 1904), 1-3. The oldest ballad recorded, no. 23, has roots in the 12th century and deals with Judas' betrayal of Christ. After receiving his thirty pieces of silver, Judas is in turn robbed by his own sister. This ballad is one of Child's most controversial inclusions, however. Some deny that it was ever a song transmitted orally, as traditional balladry requires, but was instead a literary creation. See Dana Zweig, "Early Child Ballads" (www.pbm.com/~lindahl/ballads/early_child/index/html), 9-10.
12. Francis James Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballad*, corrected 2nd edition prepared by Mark F. Heiman and Laura Saxton Heiman (Northfield, Minnesota: Loomis House Press, 2001), 1-10.
13. Davis, *More Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, 5.
14. Coffin, "Four Black Sheep among the 305", 4; see also J. Barre Toelken, "Riddles Wisely Expounded" (*Western Folklore*, volume xxv, number 1, January 1966), 1-16, for more on the figurative sexual references in such riddle ballads.
15. Davis, *More Traditional Ballads of Virginia*, 3-7.
16. *Ibid.* Gladden also altered the order of some of the riddles for unexplained reasons.
17. Child, *The English and Scottish Popular Ballad*, corrected 2nd edition, 9.

# Old Deeds Tell A New Story

Robert B. McNeil

Two maps depict the Town of Blacksburg, Virginia, as it was when it was established in 1798. One map tilts to the right; the other to the left. Both have errors.

The map that leans to the right (of north) is the older of the two and purports to be a duplicate of the original. Today, a copy of that map resides in the Montgomery County courthouse at Christiansburg, on page 313 of Deed Book 98 (Figure 1).

The other map, the left-leaning one, was drawn by the late J. R. Hildebrand of Roanoke, and is based on information provided by historian Mary B. Kegley,[1] of Wytheville, who simply changed the orientation of the courthouse map by 90 degrees — from the northeast to the northwest. One effect of her change was to put the block with the first four building lots at the map's upper left-hand corner, where a reader's eye ordinarily falls, instead of in the lower left-hand corner, where it appears on the other map. The Kegley map has spawned other copies,[2] and all reflect the same errors in block numbering that were copied from the courthouse map.

I spent much of the summer of 2004 reading old Montgomery County deeds in an attempt to learn more about Blacksburg and its early streets. That is how I found the maps and the differences between what they show and what the early deed writers described.

The map in the courthouse is entitled "Plat of Blacksburg Town"; it appears to show the lots and streets as they were laid off sometime before January 1798, when the General Assembly approved William Black's petition for the establishment of Blacksburg. The map also bears other names and dates, which indicate that it has been passed from hand-to-hand over the years without a clear chain of possession. The information on the face of the map may well raise more questions than it answers.

The first name on the map is that of James R. Kent, who in the middle part of the 19th century was probably the richest, most powerful man in Montgomery County.[3] He owned the Kentland plantation along the New River at Whitethorne, where he ran a lucrative business raising beef cattle. In addition to his agricultural interests, he had served as sheriff of Montgomery County and as a local judge. During his lifetime, he was a banker, resort hotel developer (Montgomery White Sulphur Springs), and railroad promoter. When his name was added to the map, he was also a puzzled man.

On July 5, 1849, Kent declared that he had a true copy of the town map; he wrote: "The above plan of Blacksburg came into my hands. I don't know how, and I wish to retain the original until I know for what it was given me, and by whom."

The presence of such a message on the map suggests that Kent may never have relinquished possession of the original. If his questions had been answered, it is reasonable to expect he would have returned the original to the town trustees, making it unnecessary to file his unusual note in the records of the county's circuit court. If he kept the original, however, it may have been destroyed when Union soldiers raided Kentland in 1864 and burned the office Kent maintained apart from his house.

Regardless of what happened to the original, a copy of the map with Kent's note lasted through the years and emerged in the 1930s in the new and enhanced form that exists today. Other lettering on the current map says it was traced on August 8, 1925, by A. Murrill, who is not otherwise identified. Murrill's name is accompanied by a reference to the deed[4] whereby William Black gave land for the town that would bear his name. And, finally, the map shows that on October 31, 1934, Blacksburg's then-Mayor F. W. Eheart and Town Clerk J. P. Hurd declared that they were filing a true copy of something that obviously had been evolving since that July day in 1849 when J. R. Kent first saw it.

Representing Blacksburg in its beginning, the Eheart-Hurd map and its successors show the early town's 10 streets, 16 blocks, and 64 numbered lots. However, the streets, with a few exceptions, bear 21st century names that would be more familiar to citizens of contemporary Blacksburg than they would have been to either William Black or James R. Kent. Sometime, over the years, the map was changed.

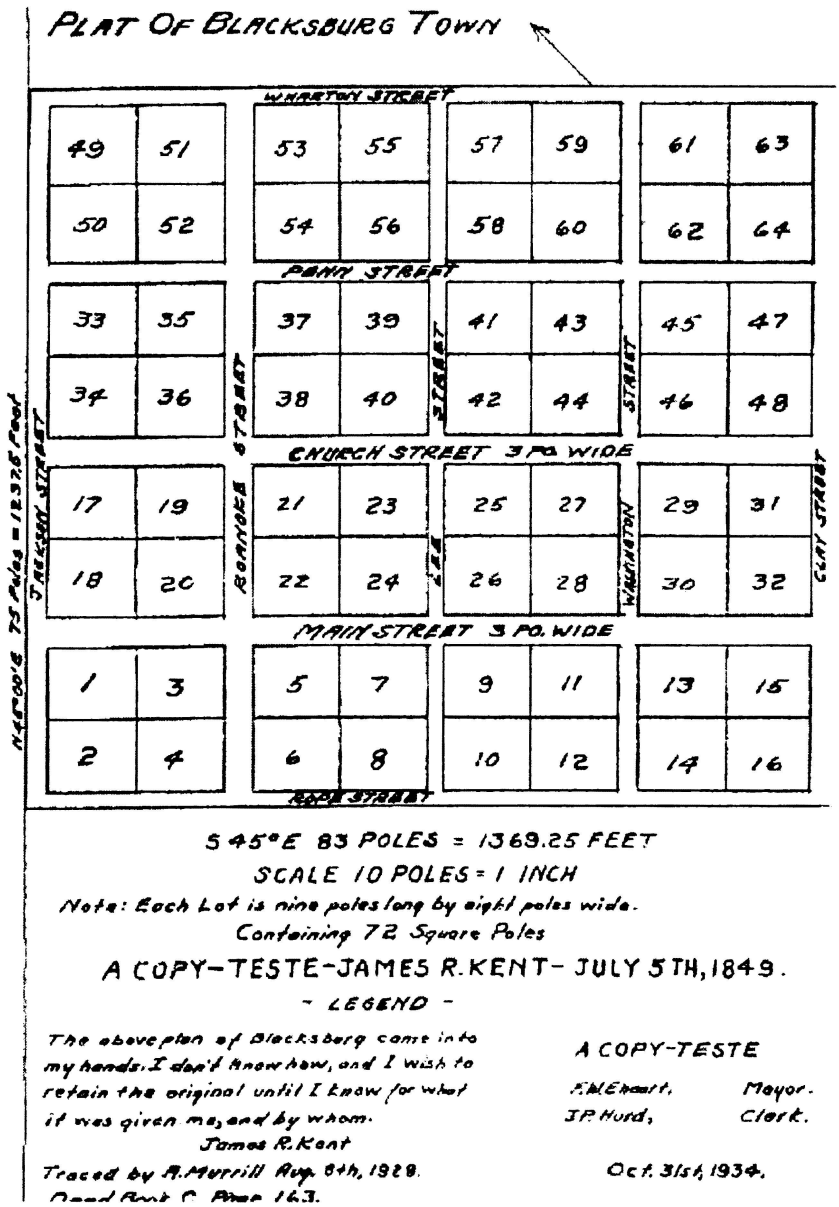



*Figure 1. Map of early Blacksburg on file in the county courthouse.*

The path to learning what might have been on the original town map leads, oddly enough, back to Kentland. It was there in the attic that Montgomery County court officials hid their historic records in the spring of 1864 to protect them from an advancing Union army, fresh from the battle at nearby Cloyd's Mountain near Dublin and the burning of the railroad bridge across the New River near what is now the City of Radford. By that time, other courthouses in Virginia had been burned, and Montgomery County authorities believed their courthouse was a likely target.

Contrary to local fears, the federal troops who reached Christiansburg did not damage the courthouse, but those who turned toward Blacksburg[5] threatened to burn Kentland. As soldiers prepared to torch the house, Kent defied their order to vacate his home, and the building, with the hidden court papers inside, was spared.

The old records were returned to their rightful place in the courthouse and have now been microfilmed. As I began to read them in search of information about Blacksburg's earliest street names, I wondered, among other things, if the citizens of the new little town in the Mississippi basin had felt western enough to name one of their streets in honor of the first U.S. president from the west. Was Jackson Street named for Andrew or for Stonewall, the Confederate general who led many Montgomery County men in battle in the early 1860s? Since Jackson Street did not appear in a deed before the Civil War, it can be assumed that the honoree of that street name is not "Old Hickory."

Other writers[6] of Blacksburg history have said the first streets were named "Smithfield, Roanoke, Main, Water, Tom's Creek, and the lower street," but that list provides neither sources nor dates, and contains two apparent duplications. A previously published map[7] shows Tom's Creek and Main Streets in the same corridor, while Water Street occupies space where the first deed places "the lower street." Since all 64 of the original lots were corner lots bounded by streets on two sides, it seems reasonable to believe that the deeds would tell with more exactitude which streets were called what and when they were so named. I found that and more.

The deeds show that Blacksburg's streets during the town's first 10 to 20 years were just as reported. Main Street, however, was not a proper name in the beginning but a description, as in "the main street called Toms Creek Street" (from an 1803 deed[8]). Also, Water Street,[9]

which ran parallel to Main Street during much of the 20th century, ran, in the earliest days, southwest and northeast along what is now Lee Street. That made it possible for "the lower street" on the southwest border of the town to co-exist with Water Street.

The deeds also show that Lots No. 1 through 16 in four of the town's original 16 blocks were numbered in a clockwise fashion, contrary to what is shown on traditional maps. The remaining 48 lots, however, were unchanged (Figure 2).

Also, the records demonstrate that the early deed writers were uncomfortable with Blacksburg's unconventional, off-center orientation to the north.[10] They sometimes wrote "north" when they meant "northwest," confirming Mary Kegley's judgment that the proper orientation of the town's map is toward the northwest. The deed writers also wrote "east" for "northeast"; "south" for "southeast"; and "west" for "southwest." Occasionally, they used both directions, such as "east" and "northeast" to describe two sides of the same lot. And every once in a while they seemed to write whatever popped first into their heads. With patience, however, the significance of a deed usually can be determined.

One of the major differences between the old deeds and the traditional maps is the original location of Water Street. That it ran southwest and northeast is shown by an 1806 deed[11] transferring Lot No. 24 to Samuel Black. That property was described as being "bounded by Thoms Creek Street [now Main Street] on the southwest, by Lot No. 22 on the northwest, by Lot No. 23 on the northeast, and by the Watter Street on the southeast." Water Street was also used as a boundary for Lots No. 26,[12] 42,[13] 55,[14] and 56 when they were sold and resold, confirming that Water Street ran all of the way between the southwest and northeast boundaries of the town. The 1830 deed for Lots 55 and 56 was the first to use the modern spelling of Water Street.

The fact that a clockwise numbering system existed is established by the first deed,[15] which was executed by the new town trustees on August 8, 1798. Describing the purchase of Lots No. 1 and 3 by John Preston, the deed said Lot No. 1 was "bounded on the east by the main street, on the south by Lot No. 2 purchased by Robert King, on the west by Lot No. 4 purchased by John McGee,[16] and on the north by Smithfield Street" (now Jackson Street).

The description of Lot No. 3 follows the same pattern. That lot, according to the deed, was bounded on the south by Roanoke Street, on the west by "the lower street" (as today's Draper Road was called), on the east by Lot No. 2, and on the north by Lot No. 4. Traced on a map, those descriptions clearly show that the lots were numbered clockwise, starting from the upper left corner of the block on the Eheart-Hurd map and the upper right corner on the other maps.

The importance of the lot numbering arrangement and the location of Water Street is demonstrated by the deed for the 1828 sale[17] of Lots No. 6 and 8 to John B. Goodrich. It describes Lot No. 6 as being "on Toms Creek Street adjoining lots five, seven and eight." The language of the deed also reserved public access to the Town Spring on the property, which, according to the deed, was in a 16-foot square enclosure near Water Street "with a pass way to it six feet from said Watter Street." Those specifications could not be met unless Water Street and Toms Creek Street intersected.

In the same deed, Goodrich's other purchase, Lot No. 8, was described as being "on Roanoke Street and Roap Street."[18] In modern terms, that would be the lot at the corner of Roanoke Street and Draper Road, where traditional maps place Lot No. 6. Again, the description of the property does not conform to those maps.

Mistakes, either in writing a deed or in transcribing it, can call for creative reading to determine the actual location of some lots. For example, Harmon Sifford bought Lots No. 26, 9, and 12[19] in 1807, which would give him three lots on Water Street, assuming Lots 9 and 12 were numbered clockwise. Unfortunately, the deed is one of the confusing ones, and the compass directions — two sides of Lot No. 26 facing the northeast, for example — do not match reality.

Ignoring the inaccurate compass references, the deed says Lot No. 26 was "bounded by Toms Creek Street..., by Lot No. 25..., by Lot No. 28...and...by Watter Street." With those directions, Lot No. 26 can be located easily on a traditional map.

The descriptions of Lots No. 9 and 12 are more complicated, but the proper placement of those two lots is aided by the knowledge that an 1811 deed for Lot No. 10[20] described that property as "fronting on main street," which would be the beginning of a clockwise pattern for that block. Ignoring the compass directions, again due to obvious inaccuracies, the deed says Lot No. 9 was bounded by Toms Creek Street,

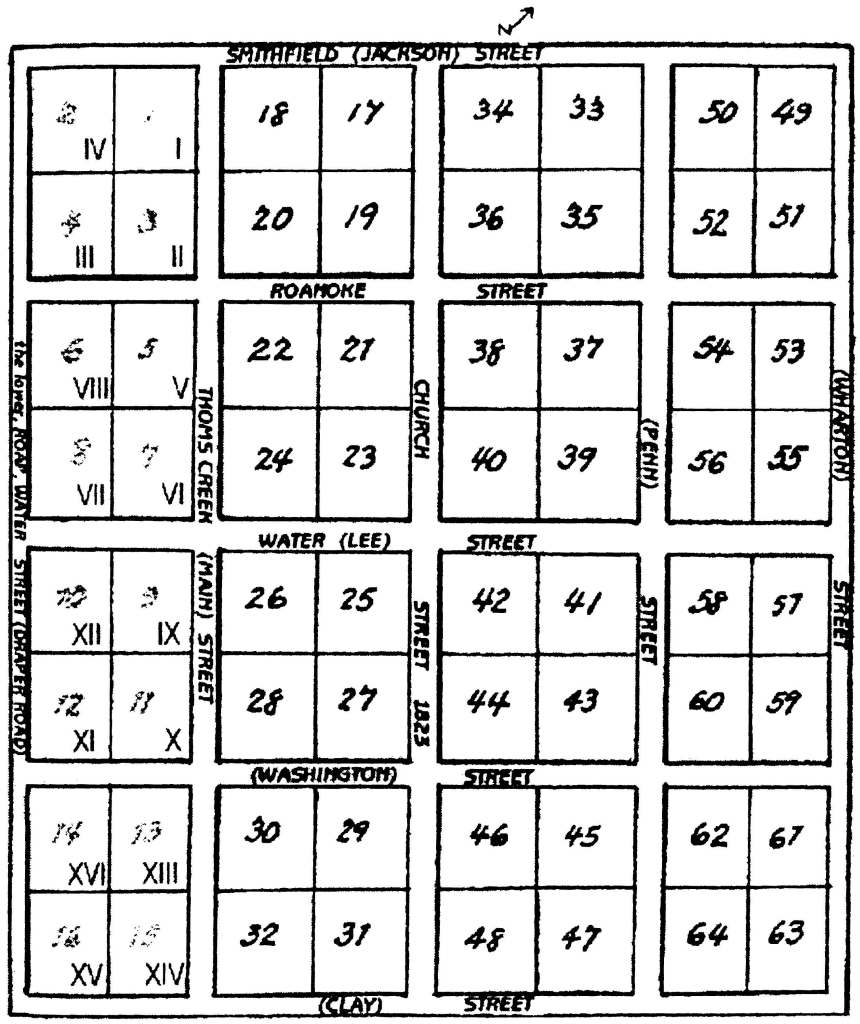



*Figure 2. This map, based on the Hildebrand-Kegley map of Blacksburg in 1798 (see endnotes 1 and 2), shows the lot numbers (the gray numbers 1–16 on the left) that do not coincide with the lot numbers described in early deeds. The proper numbers, according to the deeds, are shown in Roman numerals. The early street names are followed, where applicable, by the modern name in parentheses. Roanoke Street has the only name that is unchanged from the beginning.*

Lot No. 10, Lot No. 12, and Water Street. The same deed locates Lot No. 12 on Water Street and next to Lot No. 9 and Lot No. 10. There is no reference to a fourth side. Those directions, while imprecise, certainly suggest that Sifford's three lots touched Water Street and that 9 and 12 were in a clockwise rotation.

The sale of Lots No. 13 and 14[21] in 1821 to William E. and Thomas Rutledge confirms again the clockwise numbering system along the southwest side of Toms Creek Street. The deed describes Lots 13 and 14 as being "on Toms Creek Street, adjoining Lots No. 15 and 16...." It is worth noting that Toms Creek Street is the only named street in the deed, although the two lots were bounded by the rights-of-way for what now would be Washington and Clay streets. Apparently, those passages had no names in 1821.

The deeds tell what was done but not why. Without evidence, such as a letter or a diary, from one or more of the original participants, it may never be known why the town's first trustees deviated from the system of lot numbers shown on the only town map known to have survived. That the map was important is indicated by the fact that each deed for a town lot contained a declaration that the property being sold was "a certain lot or parcel of land ... designated in the plat or plan of said Town by the number [the applicable lot number]." It is possible that the map we know differs from the original or that the trustees made a mistake in their first deed and decided, in the interest of consistency, to perpetuate the error in the four blocks southwest of Main Street while following the town plan in the remaining 12 blocks.

According to the story of the deeds, four and maybe five of Blacksburg's original ten streets had names from the beginning. With one exception, they were destination names: Roanoke (for the river or the valley; the city was many years in the future); Smithfield, and Tom's Creek. Water Street was first used as a lot boundary in 1803, placing it among the earliest, if not the first, streets. The only street without a destination name had, instead, a descriptive name: "the lower street." In the beginning, it followed the town's southwestern boundary. Roanoke is the only original street name that has survived into the 21st century.

The current Church Street was not named in a deed until 1823, a quarter of a century after the establishment of the town. That first

mention came when the town trustees sold William Argabright three lots, Nos. 45, 46, and 47[22] "on the northeast side of Church Street" and Lot No. 29,[23] "on the southwest side of Church Street."

Everyone knew, of course, that there was church activity in the area that would become Church Street. In 1819, when Adam Croy, Jr., bought Lots No. 37 and 38,[24] they were described as adjoining each other "and the meeting house lot." The actual sale, however, of one half of Lot No. 40[25] to the trustees of the Methodist Meeting House was not recorded until August 14, 1830, seven years after the name of Church Street showed up in a deed.

There were several occasions prior to 1823 when Church Street could have been mentioned as a boundary but was not. That name did not exist in 1807, and the deed writer went out of his way to avoid it, when John D. Helms purchased Lot No. 17.[26] The boundaries of that lot were given as Smithfield Street, Lot No. 19, Lot No. 18, and Lot No. 34, which was in the next block, across what would become Church Street.

As time passed and the writers of Blacksburg's deeds became more familiar with the town and its residents, they also became less meticulous in their descriptions of the land being transferred. And, as interest grew in building lots on the northeast and southeast sides of town, the writers had to learn to do without named streets as lot boundaries. Gone was the precision with which Lots 1 and 3 were described in 1798. In its place came an easier style that allowed the town trustees to sell to William Thomas on October 1, 1821, Lot Nos. 61, 62, 63, and 64 "the whole composing the square on the southeast corner of said town and being the same lots now occupied by William Thomas."[27]

Even when a street was available for use as a boundary, it was not always mentioned. On May 23, 1846, the trustees sold a lot[28] on Water Street to Wesley Argabright that they described as "adjoining the lot on which the said Wesley Argabright now lives and fronting the house which James M. Evans occupies the said lot is known and designated in the plan of the said town as lot No. 41." The street on the lot's northeast boundary, now known as Penn Street, had no name in 1846.

Street names continued in use when available, and the deed writers occasionally managed to tell an interesting story. An example is

the deed of September 15, 1841, which recorded that James R. Kent of Kentland bought the home of Edwin I. Amiss, a prominent attorney and banker, practically out from under Amiss and sold it back to him. The deed[29] says Kent sold Amiss "two lots lying between Smithfield Street, Tom's Creek Street, Roanoke Street and Church Street and ... numbered on the plan of said town 18 and 20 being the same on which the said Edwin I. Amiss now lives and on which he has erected a large brick building..."

Kent bought the two lots, according to the deed, at a public auction arranged by a James Mitchell, who was described as heir-at-law to his deceased minor son, John. It is not explained how John came to be owner of the property or why Amiss didn't buy it from the father in the first place.

Amiss was involved in a controversy over the location of Main Street, according to local historians, who said he blocked the use of what is now Church Street for the main street. The old deeds, however, indicate that the town's first citizens thought of today's Main Street as the principal thoroughfare or "the main street."

That's the way it was described in the first deed (1798): with the article "the" but without capital letters. In 1803, the street, mentioned as a boundary of Lot No. 20, was referred to as "the main street called Toms Creek Street."[30] When Lot No. 1 was re-sold in 1815, the northeastern boundary was given as "main street," but someone went back and squeezed a "the" into the narrow space before "main street." When Lot No. 2 was resold in 1818, it was described as "a corner lot on the south side of Main Street" — no "the" but a capital "M." But there was no consistency in those references, and Toms Creek appeared in deeds until at least 1841.[31]

An unusual street name found in the deeds involved John Goodrich, who in 1828 purchased the Town Spring. He also bought 25 acres just outside the Blacksburg limits with one corner "at the northeast end of Cross Street and also called Roanoke Street of said town."[32] There is no other reference to Cross Street, which may refer to the intersection of Roanoke and Main Streets, two main arteries.

In the end, the story of the deeds adds a few more footings on which to build a solid understanding of Blacksburg's early history. Beyond that, the message of the deeds is that the study of any town's history should be a continuing challenge to conventional wisdom be-

cause the simple act of re-reading the county's deed books may produce a new way of looking at the past.

## Endnotes

1. F. W. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, Vol. I (Orange, Virginia, 1980), p. 197.
2. See James Paxton, "A Story of Continuity and Change: Blacksburg, 1798-1998," *The Smithfield Review*, 2 (1998), p. 22; and *A Special Place for 200 Years: A History of Blacksburg*, ed. Clara B. Cox (Town of Blacksburg, 1998), p. 13.
3. For information about James R. Kent, I have relied on Patricia Givens Johnson's *Kentland at Whitethorne* (Blacksburg, 1995), pp. 35-51. The text of Kent's inscription on the town map, however, comes from the map itself, and the speculation about the map's fate is my own.
4. Deed Book C, p. 163.
5. For reference to Union General George Crook's decision to abandon his army's drive east toward Lynchburg and turn instead toward Blacksburg and, ultimately, his base in West Virginia, see Richard D. Duncan, *Lee's Endangered Left*, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1998), pp. 42-72.
6. John P. Hale, whose work in *Trans-Alleghany Pioneers* (condensed by Lottye Phillips Bryant to cover only Draper's Meadow, Smithfield, and Blacksburg) is available in the Special Collections Department of Virginia Tech's University Libraries, p. 5. The same set of streets is named by Mrs. S. A. Wingard (1939 manuscript), Mary Apperson (1944 speech), and Mrs. W.D. Altman (May 30, 1957, *Montgomery News Messenger*). All three are available in the Blacksburg history section in Newman Library.
7. Paxton, "Continuity and Change ...," p. 22.
8. Deed Book C, p. 636.
9. This street originally was referred to as "Watter Street," just as "Toms Creek Street" (now Main Street) was first spelled "Thoms Creek Street" and "Smithfield Street" (now Jackson Street) in one deed (1807) was spelled "Smythfield Street." I use the modern spelling except in direct quotes.
10. For a discussion of the town's alignment 45 degrees from due north, see Donna Dunay et al., *Blacksburg — Understanding a Virginia Town: Town Architecture* (Blacksburg: the Town of Blacksburg, the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, and Virginia Cooperative Extension, 1986), p. 95.
11. Deed Book D, p. 326.
12. Deed Book D, p. 413 (1807).
13. Deed Book D, p. 414 (1807); Deed Book D, p. 513 (1808), and Deed Book E, p. 87 (1811).
14. The sale of Lots 55 and 56 is recorded in the same deed, found in Deed Book K, p. 469 (1830).
15. Deed Book C, p. 141.

16. No deed for the King and McGee transactions has been found. It appears that the trustees of the town used the Preston deed to get the purchase of the King and McGee lots written into the record.
17. Deed Book K, p. 194 (1828).
18. The handwriting on the deed makes it difficult to determine whether the name attributed to the southwest boundary street is "Roop" or "Roap." Mary Kegley (op. cit., p. 197) calls it "Roop," but James Paxton (op. cit., p. 22) uses "Roap," and a 1934 *Plat of Blacksburg Town* (Deed Book 98, p. 313) says "Rope," which could be a misunderstanding of the spoken "Roap." I prefer "Roop" because I have heard the word before — it is a familiar Montgomery County name, but the two middle characters of the word appear similar to the "oa" in Roanoke and do not look at all like the double "oo's" in Goodrich. So, reluctantly, I say "Roap" although I cannot determine what it means, if anything.
19. All three lots are included in one deed at Deed Book D, pp. 413-14.
20. Deed Book E, p. 115.
21. Deed Book G, p. 589.
22. Deed Book H, p. 345.
23. Deed Book H, p. 346.
24. Deed Book G, p. 580.
25. Deed Book K, pp. 471-2.
26. Deed Book D, p. 412.
27. Deed Book H, p. 250.
28. Deed Book O, p. 201.
29. Deed Book N, p. 128
30. Deed Book C, p. 636.
31. Deed Book N, p. 128.
32. Deed Book K, p. 174.

# Improper Archeology, "Fabulous Saltville,"[1] and the Ancient History of Southwest Virginia*

Jim Glanville

History in the region west of the Virginia Blue Ridge has been profoundly influenced by the salt deposits that lie beneath Smyth and Washington counties in southwestern Virginia. Even before the arrival of humans (less than 20,000 years ago), salt licks attracted ice-age mammals to the site of modern-day Saltville, a town that straddles the two counties. Humans naturally followed, and arguably the first knowable fact of North American history is that a mastodon feast took place about 14,500 B.C. in Saltville. The appellation "fabulous" used in the title of this article is a professional acknowledgment of the richness of Saltville's archeological endowment.

What follows is the story of Southwest Virginia up to the arrival of Europeans, with an emphasis on Saltville and Smyth County. The story is told using the combined evidence of the historical record, the professional archeological literature, and amateur archeology. The intent of this article is to focus attention on the archeology of Saltville and Smyth County and to encourage others either to present different views or extend the study of what is here called "improper archeology."

## Introduction

In a previous article,[2] the author suggested that conquistadors attacked Saltville in 1567 — as described in contemporary Spanish documents and supported by recent excavations in North Carolina that revealed a contemporary Spanish base of operations near Morganton. Working on that article spurred his interest in the cul-

ture of the people then living in Saltville and Smyth County, and more generally in the history of Southwest Virginia in the millennia before European contact.[3] A study of the archeological literature describing the region west of the Blue Ridge followed. It soon became apparent that Saltville and Smyth County archeology was a major part of the story and that much more archeological information about Saltville and Smyth County could be found in amateur records than in professional ones.

Amateur archeology, particularly relic collecting and excavating Native-American graves, has been a Smyth County tradition for a hundred years or more. In this article local relic collectors who dug Native-American graves will be called *tombaroli.*[4] Interviews with living, former *tombaroli*[5] and other investigations during the past twelve months have led to the recovery of many amateur records, some described here. The author has mixed feelings about the record of amateur archeology in Saltville. On one hand it was undertaken by some remarkable people and contains considerable, unique information that otherwise would have been lost. On the other hand, it destroyed large and important parts of the archeological record and was often undertaken for personal gain, not in the pursuit of knowledge. The record is, however, what it is.

As *Homo sapiens sapiens* spread out from Africa across the planet, modern humans reached the American continent very late in the human story.[6] The conventional view is that people finally crossed a land bridge from Siberia to Alaska about 20,000 years ago,[7] but modern scholarship is increasingly open to additional hypotheses such as direct ocean crossings from the Old World.[8]

The history of the early years of human occupation in southwestern Virginia can be incompletely reconstructed from archeology. Before that, the history of the region is geologic.[9] Saltville, in modern-day Smyth County, has been a locus of human activity in Southwest Virginia across a span of 15,000 years. The first human arrivals doubtless followed game trails[10] to the salt lick[11] at Saltville. Much later, as will be described, Native Americans operated a salt production and trading center there. For the period immediately prior to the time that Europeans came into the region, we have, in addition to archeological evidence, various written records that illuminate pre-contact Native-American cultures and their development.

Saltville has two major archeological claims to fame: (1) its international reputation as a site of a very early human occupation in the Americas[12] — one of just a handful of such sites. The evidence for this first claim has been widely recorded in the professional literature and will be described; and (2) for becoming a center of salt-making and -trading operations in the centuries prior to European contact. This second claim has been discussed in the professional archeological literature, but actual evidence for the claim comes only from historic records and the reports of *tombaroli*. Ironically, because of its ready solubility in water, salt itself is almost never found in the archeological record.[13]

The term "improper archeology"[14] refers to a study of any aspect of the activities of the *tombaroli* and relic hunters or collectors. The methods of improper archeology are primarily those of the historian and the detective. Improper archeology includes any historical aspect of archeology outside strict professional purview such as examining family and other records of amateur archeologists — including collecting pictures and records of artifacts they once possessed, reading local writings such as newspaper interviews, transcribing long-lost tape recordings, interviewing living former *tombaroli*, and studying the publications of relic collectors. Because of the important role of amateurs and former *tombaroli* in providing insight into the history of Southwest Virginia, their activities are examined in this article. Several new archeological conclusions are reached based on an analysis of recently gathered improper archeological evidence. The activities of three important amateurs — Nathan Brisco, Rufus Pickle, and Robey Maiden, all of whom opened many Native-American graves in and around Smyth County — are highlighted.[15]

Nathan M. Brisco (1900?–1955) was a school teacher who later worked in the insurance business. He was active in amateur archeology in the 1930s and published a six-part article in the Marion newspaper[16] in 1933. A previously unrecognized, undated report on the archeology of Smyth County[17] by Brisco was discovered in the files of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond during the summer of 2004. Based on internal evidence, the undated report must also have been prepared about 1933. In 1933 Brisco donated a number of Smyth County artifacts to the Smithsonian's National

Museum of Natural History (NMNH).[18] He is not known to have published in the professional archeological literature.

Rufus Wilson Pickle (1896–1975) was raised up in Saltville and later lived in Marion. He worked as a plumber and pipe fitter at the Mathieson Alkali Works in Saltville and later as a plumbing teacher at Washington County Technical Center. He maintained a large basement artifact museum and collaborated on amateur archeology for many years with Ralph Space, the developer and owner of the Space Farms tourist attraction[19] in New Jersey. By pre-agreement, Pickle's extensive artifact collection went to Space on Pickle's death. Pickle was a member of the Tennessee (but not the Virginia) Archeological Society and published three short articles in the *Tennessee Archaeologist* in the late 1940s.[20] A lengthy description of Pickle's archeological work was published as a series of articles by local Saltville historian Frank Sanders in the *Saltville Progress* in the summer of 1971.[21] Tom Totten taped an interview with Pickle in May 1975.[22] The interview has been recently transcribed and an excerpt from it is published for the first time in this article.

Robey G. Maiden (1911–1975) was for some time an Olin Corporation employee; later he became a semiprofessional relic collector. A newspaper biography of Maiden by Henry Diggs was published in 1949.[23] Maiden was occasionally quoted in the professional archeological literature[24] but never published independently. The chief record of his work is the six-part series of articles,[25] edited by Mack Blackwell, Jr.,[26] entitled "Tales That Dead Men Tell" and published in the *Saltville Progress* in January and February 1965. Robey's brother, Clarence Maiden, was an artifact dealer.

Regrettably, much improper archeology was relic hunting from Native-American graves — a practice that professional archeologists call looting. However, over the past twenty years, attitudes about the excavation of human burials, especially excavations conducted for profit, have altered dramatically, and changes in the law have outlawed the practice. In nearby Wythe County, active *tombaroli* have, in recent years, been prosecuted. Changes in the law and changes in social and professional attitudes toward indigenous peoples of America and their graves are described in this article.

This study is particularly appropriate for *The Smithfield Review*: On January 10, 1793, General Francis Smith Preston (1765–1835) of

Smithfield married Sarah Buchanan Campbell (1778–1846) of Saltville, the daughter of General William Campbell (1745–1781) and Elizabeth Henry (1749–1825) a sister of Patrick Henry.[27] After their marriage, Francis Preston assumed direction of the salt works in Saltville; several of the couple's fifteen children were born there before the family moved to Abingdon. "Smithfield," the Preston home in Blacksburg, and the later Preston family residence in Abingdon (now the Martha Washington Inn) stand at the foci of a 130-odd-mile-long ellipse that covers the area examined in this article. Figure 1 shows the counties of Southwest Virginia in our designated study area.

## Conventional Time Periods

Archeologists and anthropologists conventionally divide prehistoric time into conventional time periods.[28] To set the stage for what follows, such periods are first summarized for Southwest Virginia in Table 1. In the sections that follow each period is briefly described and includes the main human activities characterizing the period and its material culture (the typical objects and other evidence found in the archeological record by excavation). The dates of archeological time periods in Virginia cited in Table 1 are those adopted by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources (VDHR).

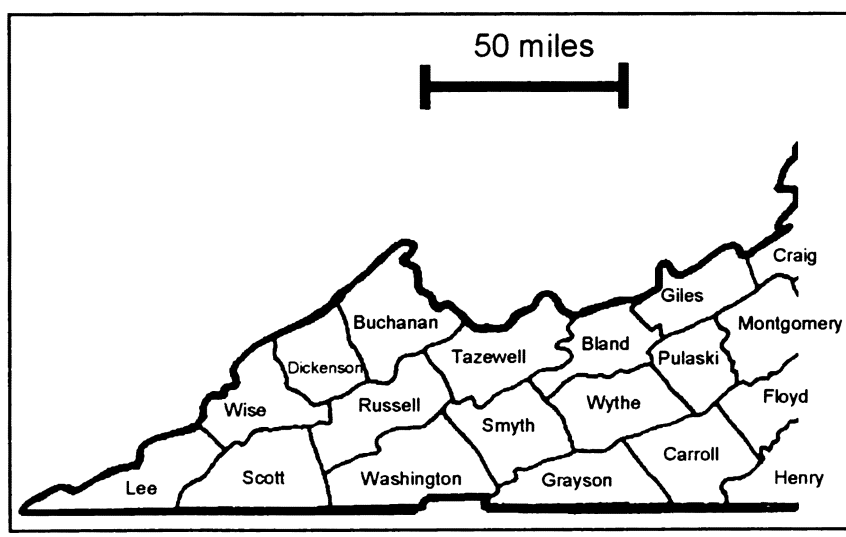



*Figure 1. The counties of Southwest Virginia.*

**Table 1. Archeological Time Periods in Virginia**

| Period | Lifestyle of the people | Conventional Date Ranges[29] |
|---|---|---|
| Paleoindian | Nomadic hunter-gatherers | 15,000-8,000 B.C. |
| Early Archaic | Territorial hunter-gatherers | 8,000-6,000 B.C. |
| Middle Archaic | Territorial hunter-gatherers | 6,000-2,500 B.C. |
| Late Archaic | Territorial hunter-gatherers | 2,500-1,200 B.C. |
| Early Woodland | Partly sedentary hunter-gatherers | 1,200-500 B.C. |
| Middle Woodland* | Sedentary hunter-gatherers | 500 B.C.-A.D. 900 |
| Late Woodland | Horticulturalists/Farmers | A.D. 900-1600 |
| Contact | Horticulturalists/Farmers | A.D. 1600-1800 |

*Terminology is a potential minefield for the lay person. Middle Woodland as used in Southwest Virginia extends through what is called Late Woodland (*i.e.*, A.D. 500–900) in many other regions of North America. Late Woodland (as used by people in the Northeast especially) is contemporary with Mississippian (A.D. 900–1600) on the Ohio River and downstream from Southwest Virginia on the Tennessee River.

The various time period summaries derive from many sources: The VDHR publication by Egloff and Woodward and its associated website,[30] a very recent list of periods specific to Southwest Virginia published by Stanyard,[31] an earlier VDHR paper by Hodges,[32] an older summary by Hranicky,[33] a pamphlet published by the Roanoke Chapter of the Archeological Society of Virginia,[34] a discussion of time periods from a Virginia Native-American perspective,[35] a recently published regional cultural history for Lee County,[36] and an article describing the archeological time periods of the nearby Blue Ridge to the east.[37] To keep Southwest Virginia's prehistory in a regional perspective, time periods for neighboring states have been included. North Carolina time periods have been described by Claggett,[38] Tennessee time periods are described at a state museum web site,[39] Kentucky time periods are listed at the official state archeology website,[40] and West Virginia time periods have been described by Solecki[41] and McMichael.[42] Information about probable plant foods available during each period has been derived principally from Chapman and Watson[43] by extrapolation from eastern Tennessee sites. Pictures of many of the numerous plants used by Native Americans over archeological time are provided by Wagner and Civitello.[44]

A number of studies have covered multiple archeological periods in Southwest Virginia. Among these, the single most important is Holland's 1970 regional survey conducted on behalf of the Smithsonian Institution.[45] A reconnaissance in 1979 for a proposed, but never built, dam in Washington County surveyed Southwest Virginia's history and noted the attraction of the region's salt for mastodons, woolly mammoths, moose, bison, woodland musk ox, etc., and that "the aboriginal populations also utilized the salt resources at Saltville."[46] Two now somewhat-dated ethnographic studies of the region are Bushnell's short article from 1926,[47] and Ellen Copenhaver's 1933 thesis.[48] Native-American use of caves across the whole archeological record in Virginia has been reviewed by Barber and Hubbard.[49] An environmental history of the nearby Shenandoah Valley is in the thesis by Carbone,[50] and many older literature references for southwestern Virginia archeology are given in the standard, but now outdated, bibliography of Virginia Indians.[51] By way of comparison, it is interesting to read Mike Johnson's long-term history of Fairfax County covering roughly the same period as in this article.[52]

For synoptic coverage of Saltville and Smyth County there is MacCord's brief review article in the county's standard history[53] and MacDonald's 1984 comprehensive bibliography of Saltville archeology.[54] Vegetation changes across the entire time period have been studied using microscopic examination of plant remains from a site in the Saltville Valley,[55] and at least one site in the valley has been shown to have a long occupational history traversing many archeological periods.[56]

Although Virginia archeologists generally agree about the date ranges of Virginia's archeological periods, disagreements continue about the period in which particular events occurred in Southwest Virginia. For example, professionals continue to disagree about the period during which beans entered Southwest Virginia and the period during which large villages were established.

## The Paleoindian Period

The Paleoindian period, which ranges from 15,000 to 8,000 B.C., is sometimes divided before and after 9,500 B.C., with the range 15,000 to 9,500 B.C. called pre-Clovis.[57] Overall, direct evidence from the

Paleoindian period in Virginia is sparse because few permanent human habitation sites are known, and many of those have been disturbed.[58] However, basic occupation patterns can be sketched with the help of information from other regions. The climate during this period was generally cold and moist. Extensive areas of open uplands covered with sedges and grasses developed above the flood plains, which probably resembled today's Arctic tundra. Stands of spruce, fir, and pine covered the mountains, whose tops were likely snow-covered yearlong. Humans lived as nomadic hunter-gatherers (foragers and scavengers) at a low population density and ranged over wide territories. They probably established temporary camps at places where animals passed along game trails or where animals congregated, such as at watering holes and salt licks. Because most of the plant species in spruce woodlands yield little food, humans hunted large animals such as mastodon, woolly mammoth, musk ox, camel, bison, caribou, and white-tailed deer. Artifacts recovered from this period are made of chipped stone and include projectile points and other tools variously described as scrapers, gravers, wedges, drills, and hammerstones.[59] Because they are abundant in the archeological record and extremely well-catalogued, projectile points are used as "time-markers" or "cultural identifiers." Paleoindian projectile points from the Saltville vicinity have been described by Barfield.[60] Also found from this period is evidence of tool making, such as the presence of debitage (stone waste from artifact manufacture) at tool quarrying and making sites. Logic suggests that paleoindians also made tools from wood, animal bones, tortoiseshell, etc.; however, these and other organic materials almost inevitably fail to survive in the archeological record. The latter part of the Paleoindian period is characterized by fluted stone points known as Clovis points. In Virginia, major concentrations of Clovis points occur in Dinwiddie County, in Warren County, and in the Saltville valley in Smyth County. Randy Turner[61] has written that the Smyth County-centered concentration of Clovis points "undoubtedly is related to the presence of salt deposits at Saltville, creating a particularly attractive environment for the attraction and exploitation of Late Pleistocene fauna."

## Saltville in the pre-Clovis period

Since the 1930s, and until a few years ago, the prevailing scientific view was that humans entered an unpopulated North America in a single wave around 11,000 years ago, quickly spread continent-wide, and established a widely dispersed Clovis culture. In this view, there was not and could not be any pre-Clovis culture. But the gradual accumulation of evidence from various pre-Clovis sites led to a re-thinking; Saltville is one of a number of probable pre-Clovis sites.[62] As a probable pre-Clovis site, Saltville regularly appears in the columns of the national press.[63]

Given the elusiveness and scarcity of evidence from the Paleoindian period, proving the presence of humans anywhere and deducing anything about their activities are enormous challenges. Finding marks of human handiwork on ancient bones is one of the few means of proof. Saltville provides such evidence.

That the Saltville Valley is a repository of fossilized big mammal bones has been known since the earliest days of Euroamerican salt making and was communicated to Thomas Jefferson in 1782 in a well-known letter from resident Arthur Campbell.[64] Later, in 1848, when workers opened the railroad cut in the west end of the Valley, large numbers of fossilized ice-age bones were uncovered.[65] Scientific study of the bones began in 1917 when William Dye Mount (at the time the superintendent of the Mathieson Alkali Works) sent specimens uncovered during work on the well fields[66] to the Carnegie Institute in Pittsburgh.[67] Subsequently, fossilized bones from Saltville received considerable scientific scrutiny from Virginia Tech geologists,[68] Smithsonian Institution scientists,[69] and others.[70] It was the Saltville amateur archeologist Rufus Pickle who first wrote in 1946 of finding mastodon bones that displayed "indications of human handiwork"[71] in a sink hole in the well field area. Pickle's work, though occasionally acknowledged[72] and praised,[73] was not sufficient in itself to establish a solid claim for a pre-Clovis site at Saltville.

Almost exactly fifty years after Pickle, Jerry McDonald made a full-scale claim for pre-Clovis humans at Saltville. McDonald had spent over ten years working in Saltville[74] when he announced in 1996 that "archeological evidence shows that humans killed and cooked a mastodon" at a "14,000-year-old research dig site in Saltville."[75] News

of the claim quickly circulated in the archeological community and became widely acknowledged.[76] However, when formal publication of McDonald's work was rejected by *Nature* (perhaps the most prestigious of all scientific journals) the appearance of a detailed scientific report on the Saltville pre-Clovis site was delayed for about five years.[77]

Further information about the Paleoindian period in the Southeast can be found at the U.S. National Park Service's useful and extensive websites[78] and in professional surveys devoted to Paleoindian period occupations of the Southern Appalachians[79] and Virginia.[80]

## The Early Archaic Period

The Early Archaic period, which ranges from 8,000 to 6,000 B.C., is characterized by the slow development of human lifestyle from the preceding period. Nomadic hunting and gathering continued as the main way of life with a substantially increased population density (more known sites). Still large, but better defined hunting territories emerged, and hunting for white-tail deer increased as the megafauna (mastodon, woolly mammoth, bison, caribou, etc.) either became extinct or migrated north with changing local climate. The question continues to be hotly debated as to whether humans were the prime cause of megafaunal extinction or if extinction was primarily induced by climate change.[81] The mastodon kill site in Saltville plays a role in this debate. The climate during this period grew warmer and drier, and the forests were composed of pine, spruce, fir, oak, birch, and beech. Southwest Virginians at this time were generalized hunters and gatherers who, in addition to deer hunting, collected a wide array of plant materials, river foods, and small game for their subsistence. Plant foods likely included hickory nuts, chestnuts, acorns, grapes, and honeylocust pods. During this period, archeological sites begin to show functional variations: some are classed as base camps and others as transient hunting or collecting camps. Projectile points from this period show the addition of characteristic side and corner notches and are given region type names such as Kirk, Hardaway, St. Albans, and LeCroy. The use of spear throwers (*atlatls*) probably began during this period.

The standard professional work for this period (as well as the following one) is the 1990 synthesis edited by Reinhart and Hodges.[82]

It includes chapters describing the chronology of the periods,[83] the material culture and technology of the period,[84] settlement patterns of the period,[85] and a discussion of the means of human subsistence during the period.[86]

## The Middle Archaic Period

Ranging from 6,000 to 2,500 B.C., the Middle Archaic period saw the continuation of foraging as the major human lifestyle; caves and rock shelters became places where people left evidence of their visits. The climate during this period continued to grow warmer and moister; oak, pine, and hemlock were abundant forest species. By this time, humans were probably living in small bands and making increasing use of uplands and marginal areas. Bands probably moved with the seasons. Their camps and settlements, as revealed by archeological sites, were located both high in the mountains and in river bottoms. Hunting continued to focus on white-tail deer. Near rivers, fish, waterfowl, and possibly shellfish were exploited. Fish weirs may have developed during this period.[87] Plant foods in this period continued to be primarily nut crops derived from the oak-hickory-chestnut forest that replaced the conifers of earlier time, but human diets toward the end of this period probably began to include both wild and cultivated curcubits (squashes, gourds, and melons). Stone tool technology continued to evolve, and large artifacts such as axes, adzes, and celts appeared; these types of tools suggest the beginning of working the land. The characteristic chipped stone points from this period are given type names such as Big Sandy, Kanawha, Morrow Mountain, Guilford, and Halifax. Regional exchange networks appear to have been established during this period.*

## The Late Archaic Period

The Late Archaic period ranges from 2,500 to 1,200 B.C. Foraging continued to be the major human lifestyle, but the period is characterized by the beginning of horticulture.[88] Larger and more permanent settlements were established as storage and cooking technology improved with the development of steatite (soapstone) bowls that

*The references cited at the end of the preceding section (The Early Archaic Period) are also appropriate for the Middle Archaic period.

begin to show up in the archeological record of the period. A growing population during this period is indicated by the increased density of known archeological sites compared to earlier periods. During most of this period, the climate was very warm and dry; the oak-hickory-chestnut forest reached its ecological climax and provided many plant and animal resources for humans, who also hunted deer, bear, and turkeys. Evidence exists that riverine environments were becoming favored locations for settlements in Southwest Virginia. Squash and starchy seed plants began to be cultivated. Indeed, by this period plant foods were becoming abundant and diverse; domesticated squashes, gourds, and melons became established sometime after 2000 B.C. Cultivated chenopods (the most common chenopod is lamb's-quarters or "pigweed," a spinach-like plant valued primarily for its seeds) were added to the human diet around the end of this period. Projectile points from this period are given such type names as Lamoka, Perkiomen, Savannah River, and Guilford. Exchange networks probably continued to operate on local and regional scales.

The Late Archaic period (and the subsequent Early Woodland period) — including descriptions of the increasingly sedentary, village-dwelling societies and the Late Archaic and Early Woodland period material culture, demography, and settlement patterns — are all detailed in the standard professional work for Virginia covering these time ranges.[89] Vegetation exploited in Virginia during the Late Archaic and Early Woodland periods, along with the horticultural practices of the periods, have been surveyed by Stevens.[90]

## The Early Woodland Period

Ranging from 1,200 to 500 B.C., the Early Woodland period is marked by the first appearance of fired clay (pottery) cooking and storage vessels, and the widespread adoption of ceramic technology. It is believed that pottery diffused into southwestern Virginia from cultures to the southeast. Because pottery and pottery fragments (shards or sherds) endure in the archeological record, often in abundance, their collection and statistical analysis is one of the most important methods of assessing Native-American cultural history.[91] Furthermore, because paddles wrapped in fibrous materials were used to beat together the pottery coils from which the vessels were made,

inadvertent evidence for textiles from the period comes in the form of pottery markings. By this time, the hunter-gatherers had become at least partially sedentary, and semi-permanent settlements in villages and hamlets had been established. Seasonal movement continued; hunting, gathering, and fishing remained the primary mode of subsistence. Land working and a focus on specific plant foods suggest increasingly sophisticated horticulture. Soon after the beginning of this period, the cultivation of sunflower probably began, adding to the squash and starchy-seed horticulture developed during the Archaic period. Exchange networks during this period became more localized.*

## The Middle Woodland Period

The Middle Woodland period lasted from 500 B.C. to A.D. 900. During this time the climate became cooler and moister, and pine trees reappeared beside the existing oak, chestnut, and hickory. Humans became sedentary hunter-gatherers and continued to establish large semi-permanent settlements, but seasonal movement also went on.[92] Humans probably began to cultivate corn (maize), beans, and squash in some areas[93]; but hunting, gathering, and fishing likely remained their most important methods of obtaining food. Particularly in far Southwest Virginia, in Lee and Scott Counties, mound construction became an important aspect of political, social, and religious life. Meyers has inventoried the six so-far identified mound sites in Southwest Virginia,[94] and other mound sites probably existed in the region.[95] During this Middle Woodland period, the bow and arrow replaced the spear as a hunting weapon — a development heralded by the appearance of small, true arrowheads. No one knows exactly when the bow was introduced, but in eastern North America evidence at many places suggests A.D. 600 to 800.[96] Well-made tobacco pipes made their first appearance; early specimens resemble large, straight cigars. Tobacco arrived in Southwest Virginia, perhaps around A.D. 200 to 400.[97] Plant remains from this period in Saltville suggest that the local landscape consisted of forested areas interspersed with gardens.[98]

*The references cited at the end of the preceding section (the Late Archaic Period) are also appropriate for the Early Woodland period.

During this period Native-American culture in the southwestern part of Virginia was clearly adopting a character different from that of other regions of the state. The emergence of this distinctive regional flavor has been described by McLearen,[99] who noted, for example, that the probably-indigenous ceramics found in Southwest Virginia during this period differ from those in the Shenandoah Valley and other regions of the state. Furthermore, outside influences on the region become discernible with the appearance of stone gorgets from eastern Tennessee, sheet mica from North Carolina, and artifacts and ceramics of the Fort Ancient culture[100] from West Virginia. The pattern of cultural diffusion that becomes evident in this time period was no doubt facilitated by the river valleys and drainage patterns of the region. It has been estimated that 80% of the archeological remains in the United States occur only within the 2% of its land area situated along river valleys.[101] The connection between river valleys and the cultural diffusion evidenced in the archeological record for Southwest Virginia is immediately apparent in the region's watershed map (Figure 2).[102]

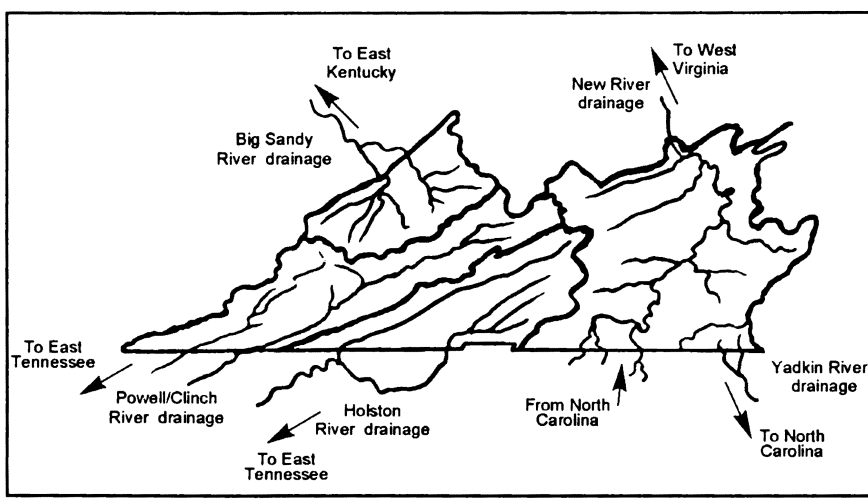



*Figure 2. Watersheds of southwestern Virginia. By the Middle Woodland period, when the archeological evidence becomes sufficient to reveal outside cultural influences, it is apparent that southwestern Virginians were in contact with their neighbors in all directions. Sketch based on the watershed map of Virginia prepared by the Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation.*

A somewhat different picture of cultural diffusion during the woodland period is offered by Egloff,[103] who tells that the ceramic record reveals that humans lived in rock shelters and in hamlet and village settlements on ridges, hilltops, and upland valleys, as well as on the flood plains, and that travel across mountain ranges was common. Long-distance communication by a variety of routes apparently became well-developed during the Middle Woodland period.

A summary of the Middle Woodland settlements in Southwest Virginia has been provided by Blanton.[104]

## The Late Woodland and Contact Periods

We come now to the time when both the archeological record and the historical record become extensive. For Smyth County, this is the time frame when the record of improper archeology becomes a crucial supplement to the record of proper archeology.

The term "protohistoric" refers to a period that immediately antedates recorded history. For convenience, and for our purposes here, in Southwest Virginia we will arbitrarily designate the protohistoric period to range from A.D. 1400 to A.D. 1670. The former date is the earliest known time[105] for any of the Native-American shell gorgets that are so abundant and so characteristic of Saltville and Smyth County in the Late Woodland period.[106] The latter date marks the arrival of the first English-speaking explorers in Southwest Virginia. A discussion of protohistoric Southwest Virginia follows the "Overview."

### Overview

The Late Woodland[107] period ranges from A.D. 900 to 1600, overlapping our specified protohistoric period from 1400 A.D. to 1670 A.D. By now the climate had become essentially modern, and horticulture had assumed a major importance following the arrival of cultivated plants from their centers of domestication in meso-America. Varieties of squash came first, followed by corn (maize) and beans. Based on the information of MacNeish[108] and Milner[109] we can make an informed judgment that full Late Woodland period cultural characteristics were established in Southwest Virginia by around 1150 (± 100 years) A.D. A growing population established large permanent

villages in the rich-soil regions of the river bottoms. High in the mountains, small encampment sites testify to the continuation of hunting and gathering activities. In Lee County, mound sites were used as political centers, and here (and perhaps at other places) political power became institutionalized and inherited rather than achieved. During the later part of the period, many villages were fortified or palisaded, suggesting increased conflict. Bow-and-arrow technology became widespread and the stone digging hoe was introduced. Tobacco pipes took more elaborate forms. Southwest Virginia during this period enjoyed ample contacts with peoples and cultures of neighboring regions. As Mary Ellen Hodges has stated: "Our knowledge of the Indians of Southwest Virginia at this time indicates that these people were strongly influenced by other cultures outside the state."[110] Pottery types from this period in Southwest Virginia along with types from nearby Tennessee and Kentucky have been tabulated by Jefferies[111] and include such classifications as Dallas, Pisgah, Radford, and gastropod.

Toward the end of this period, diet and subsistence strategies of southwestern Virginians had become extremely varied, and we know a good deal about them from the written records of Europeans who entered the southern Appalachian region beginning with the De Soto *entrada* in 1540. Davis[112] recently surveyed what Native Americans were eating at that time, and has described the widespread use of controlled burning as an horticultural practice. Note, however, that much of the modern-day plant life of southwestern Virginia dates from the much later period of Euroamerican settlement of the region, when pioneers and settlers introduced many nonnative species.[113] Clover, common grass varieties, chicory, cress, dandelion, and many other common regional species are all of European origin.

During the Late Woodland period Saltville and Smyth County populations increased to become the largest centers in the region. These populations were present when the Europeans arrived. The first European contact in Southwest Virginia came in the sixteenth century, as the historian Summers[114] and the amateur archeologist Brisco[115] long ago noted. In 1540 the De Soto *entrada* passed through North Carolina, and two of its members briefly visited Lee County. Twenty-seven years later a second Spanish *entrada* reached Smyth County.[116] After a hiatus of more than 100 years, English-speaking Euroamericans reached Southwest Virginia around 1670. Archeologi-

cal evidence — of both proper and improper variety — as well as historic records, illuminate this period. Assessing the interplay of evidence from these three very different sources as applied to the protohistoric period forms the basis of much of what follows.

## Protohistoric Settlement in Southwest Virginia

An authoritative and comprehensive view of protohistoric Southwest Virginia as it is presently conceived in the proper archeological literature is summarized in the three reports described immediately below. However, in addition to the sites described in these reports many additional Saltville and Smyth County sites are known.[117]

The first report includes three recent shaded and annotated maps[118] that illustrate the archeological phases and cultural affiliations in the eastern half of North America for A.D. 1400–1450, A.D. 1500–1550, and A.D. 1600–1650. For Southwest Virginia the map sequence is ambiguous and confusing. In 1400–1450 A.D., Southwest Virginia is vacant, bordered to the southwest by the Rapidan/Pisgah culture. In 1500–1550 A.D., Southwest Virginia is shaded as the Radford culture with the also-shaded full intermontane culture occupying the New River Valley to the northeast. In 1600–1650 A.D., no cultural affiliation is shown, but the Trigg site in Radford and the Smyth County Chilhowie High School site (labeled Sm8 on the map) are pinpointed.

The second report is a synthesis of the Late Woodland and protohistory of Southwest Virginia by MacCord,[119] who defined the "Intermontane Culture" as existing from 1200 to 1600 A.D. and being characterized by the use of limestone-tempered pottery, flexed-human burials oriented in an easterly direction, palisaded villages enclosing round or ovate wigwams, and a well-developed trade with the Atlantic coast region. MacCord based his arguments on the reports of excavations from twenty-nine sites in the region, only one of which, the Fox site[120] in Chilhowie, was in Smyth County.

The third report is another synthesis of the Late Woodland and protohistory of Southwest Virginia by Egloff,[121] who based his assessment on twenty-five sites in the region (and seven more from nearby Roanoke and Botetourt Counties). Twenty of his sites duplicated those of MacCord, but Egloff added several sites — including, in addition to the Fox site, a second site at Chilhowie in Smyth County, the

Bonham site.[122] Egloff stated that the region showed "a great variation in house shape and size not only between sites but also within them" and noted that the land along the three forks of the Holston River that traverse Smyth and Washington Counties contains much "first class" agricultural soil.

Examples of significant Late Woodland sites in Southwest Virginia not mentioned in any of the three professional reports above are the Mendota site in Washington County and the Smyth County sites at Chilhowie, Broadford, and Buchanan. Each of these four sites (shown in Figure 3) has yielded numerous Late Woodland period shell gorgets as catalogued in *Shell Gorgets*, the standard work on the subject.[123] Shell gorgets are a generally important class of artifacts for understanding exchange and trade patterns everywhere in the Late Woodland period. One important class of shell gorgets, with a stylized

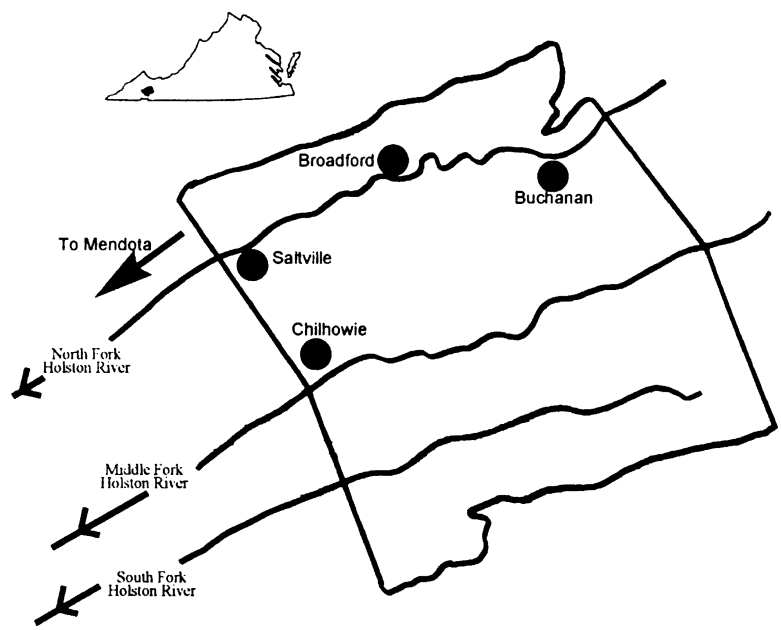



*Figure 3. Sites in Smyth County that have yielded numerous Late Woodland period shell gorgets. The locations of the Buchanan, Broadford, and Mendota sites along the North Fork of the Holston River hint at the former existence of a delocalized salt-making industry based on the transportation of high strength brine from Saltville to wood-rich outlying sites for evaporation into dry salt.*

*Figure 4. A rattlesnake gorget believed to have been collected in Saltville in the 1930s. Photograph in author's files.*

rattlesnake motif, has been designated the "Saltville Style"[124] and originates in Southwest Virginia. Achieving an understanding of the distribution pattern and political economy of Saltville style gorgets must surely be one key to unlocking the protohistory of Late Woodland Southwest Virginia. Figure 4 illustrates a rattlesnake gorget from the (now dispersed) Ed Sanders' collection; it is believed to have been collected in Saltville in the 1930s.[125] Until recently, this particular gorget (identified by improper archeology) was unknown to the specialists.[126]

Considering the evidence of improper archeology, any discussion of the Late Woodland and protohistory of Southwest Virginia that fails to examine Saltville ignores the mastodon in the living room.

## Protohistoric Salt Making in Smyth County

This section reviews protohistoric salt making and trading as a basis for the large quantity of regionally unique grave goods recovered from Saltville and other Smyth County sites.

Salt is a universal article of trade,[127] and salt making and salt trading have been important in many cultures throughout both prehistoric and historic times, for example in Africa,[128] China, and Europe.[129] Historian Norman Davies has written that by the time of the Iron Age in Europe, salt was a staple necessity and salt trading had become a "continent-wide business."[130] The discovery in 1846 of richly filled graves dating from about 500 B.C. at Hallstadt (near Salzburg)[131] revealed a wealthy Celtic salt trading center so important that it gave its name to the entire Hallstadt Culture that lasted for hundreds of years. Incidentally, "Hallstadt" loosely translates from Celtic to English as "Saltville."

The existence of long-distance salt trading from Saltville and the development there of a centralized society were first proposed by Gardner about 25 years ago.[132] Somewhat later it was suggested that the large Mendota site, down river from Saltville in Washington County, might have been the capital village of a southwestern Virginia chiefdom.[133] Archeologists use "chiefdom" in a specialized sense to characterize a particular type of society. Some archeologists think the salt-making society that developed in Saltville was not a chiefdom.[134] However, the word is frequently applied to Southwest Virginia, and so, noting a reservation, we will use it here. In 1991, a long car ride to a conference gave the archeologists Mike Barber and Gene Barfield time to discuss[135] why Saltville has yielded so many grave goods. Shortly after, they proposed that the goods derived from a salt-based economy[136] that they labeled a "salt powered chiefdom."[137] Later, they published a refined and extended argument.[138] In the interim, the discovery in the Spanish archives of documentary evidence that Spaniards had attacked a town with a salt spring in 1567 led Robin Beck[139] to conclude that the attack took place where Barber and Barfield had placed "a chiefdom level society along the Holston River drainage." Beck and Moore later seated the Chiscas[140] in Saltville and suggested that they were trading salt along native trails in all directions.[141] Meyers[142] has summarized the arguments for Saltville

and Smyth County as the center of a salt-economy. However, despite the numerous literature discussions of salt trading from Saltville, there is no direct archeological evidence for Native-American salt making, only extensive circumstantial evidence.[143] An analysis of the amount of fuel wood needed to boil brine to make salt proposes that Saltville brine was transported to various woodland sites (including by water via the north fork of the Holston River) such as those shown in Figure 3.[144] The occurrence of shell gorgets and large quantities of pottery sherds at these sites adds support to the analysis.

## The Evidence from Improper Archeology

Nathan Brisco made first descriptions of Late Woodland period Smyth County archeology in 1933 in a newly recognized report[145] and in a series of newspaper articles.[146] He described many excavations of Native-American burials and noted that in Saltville "Indian remains are far thicker than ... in any other part of this section." His description of the stone-lined grave he found between Saltville and Glade Spring[147] indicates that the grave belonged to the stone box type "so typically associated with the Mississippian cultural tradition."[148] Finally recognized as such 70 years after its excavation, Brisco's find seems to be the only authentic example of this mortuary practice discovered in Virginia.[149]

Brisco's multiple-artifact donations to the Smithsonian (highly unusual in the 1930s) and formal reports mark him as the pioneer of Smyth County archeology. He had a passion for the careful recording of archeological evidence and wrote that graves should be "investigated only by those persons filled with the scientific spirit whose sole aim is the advancement of knowledge."[150] Sadly, very few residents of Smyth County are familiar with him,[151] and his personal records have been lost.

Modern, professional Woodland period archeology in Saltville began in 1940 with correspondence between Robey Maiden and the staff of the U.S. National Museum.[152]As a consequence, Waldo Wedel visited ten village sites and a number of caves in Saltville. Wedel described the archeological prospects of Saltville as "most promising," and learned from Maiden that at least "several hundred" graves had been dug at Broadford and Saltville. Thirty-five years later, Maiden

received a visit from the archeologist Michael Michlovic,[153] who reported that industrial activity and the activities of local collectors made the search for worthwhile sites "less than promising," but added that he did not wish to "find fault with any of the parties involved," a reference no doubt to Maiden's selling of relics. As previously noted, Maiden's work was summarized in a series of *Saltville Progress* newspaper articles in 1965.[154] By the time Maiden's work was described in the newspaper, he had excavated many more graves, and wrote of "the silent testimony given by several thousand of these ancient dead men."[155] Particularly noteworthy of Maiden's career is his correspondence with the preeminent American Indian-artifact collector George Heye[156] concerning the sale of a ceremonial pipe. That pipe was probably not the one shown in Figure 5, but was similar to it. The letter,[157] reproduced below, makes its first-ever appearance in this article.

> Saltville, Virginia, May 17, 1940: "Mr. George G Heye, N.Y.C. New York. Dear Sir: I received your check and the cast several days ago. The bowl of this cast was broken from the stem and also a piece about an inch and a half long was broken off alongside this break. Otherwise I like the reproduction very much. I have mended it myself and decided to keep it as it is. Below you will find my receipt. Received from George G. Heye, $40.00 for large Indian pipe and cast of same. Sincerely, Robey G. Maiden."

Maiden was the first person to understand the mixed cultural influences found in Native-American Southwest Virginia. His remark in 1947 that "in addition to the Eastern Woodland Indian type found here there is also present a trace of the Middle Mississippian and Mound Builder culture"[158] is the first statement of this fact by any archeologist — amateur or professional.

It is impossible to know how many Native-American graves Maiden opened in Saltville and Smyth County — primarily with the objective of recovering grave goods such as shell gorgets and shell necklaces, along with obtaining skeletal remains for medical schools. Over the years he was active, he probably opened several thousand.

From the 1965 series of newspaper articles that Maiden wrote in collaboration with Mack Blackwell, Jr.[159] we learn that native copper beads were found at the Saltville High School site[160] but that no European trade goods of any kind were ever found there. He detailed a

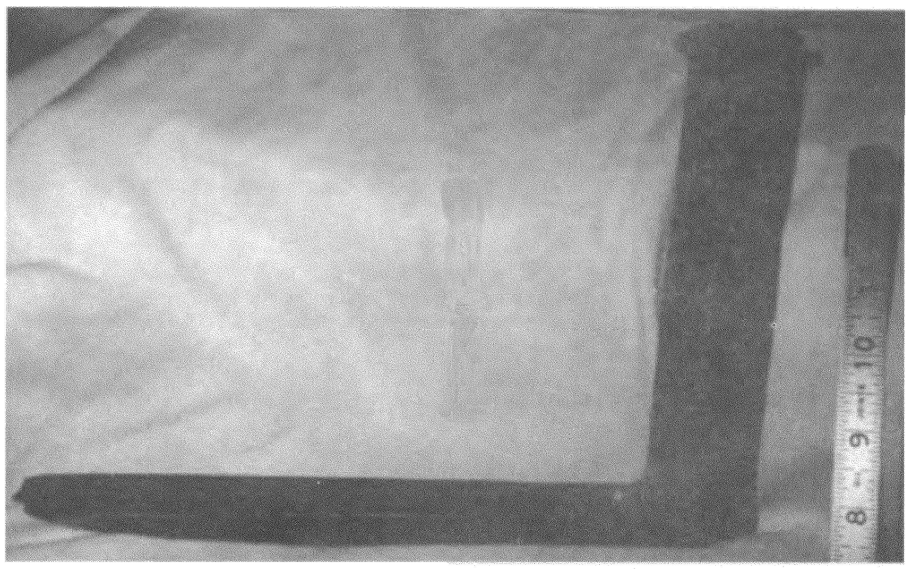


*Figure 5. A large ceremonial pipe collected by Robey Maiden. Photograph in author's files.*

wide variety of burial practices in the newspaper — supplementing and amplifying earlier reports by Brisco. Of particular interest is Maiden's comment that "post molds, which delineate the houses lived in by the Indians on the Saltville village site, show most of the dwellings to have been rectangular in floor plan with two to three fire pits in each." This report of rectangular floor plans contrasts sharply with MacCord,[161] who selected "round or ovate wigwams" as one of the defining characteristics of his "Intermontane Culture." Maiden's contributions clearly deserve a close examination and appraisal by professional archeologists.

In 1955 Ben McCary, who had corresponded with Maiden for a number of years, wrote an article[162] based entirely on Maiden's activities. This report describes the typical grave goods being routinely collected by Maiden, such as olivella shell beads, large discoidal shell beads, bone awls,.polished bone beads, a variety of shell ornaments, etc. McCary observed that information of this type would "throw a faint light on the life of the Indians of that region until scientific and systematic investigations can be carried out." Fifty years later, we await those scientific and systematic investigations.

Rufus Pickle was a dedicated lifelong collector of artifacts and relics. Part of his large basement museum is shown in Figure 6. Pickle's "almost" find[163] of evidence of pre-Clovis occupation in Saltville was described earlier. In addition to his previously cited three short published papers and the recently transcribed tape-recorded interview, Pickle gave an extended interview to Frank Sanders that was published in the *Saltville Progress*.[164]

In the 1975 interview, recorded just a few months before Pickle's death, he provides some sense of how amateur archeology was practiced before indiscriminate digging became illegal, as well as a sense of how much has been lost of the archeological record in Saltville. Responding to Helen Totten's question, "Mr. Pickle, did you dig where they excavated at the school house? Did you dig there?" the tape records that he stated:

> Yeah, I dug quite a lot there. In fact of the matter I dug a long time before they ever built the school house. I would

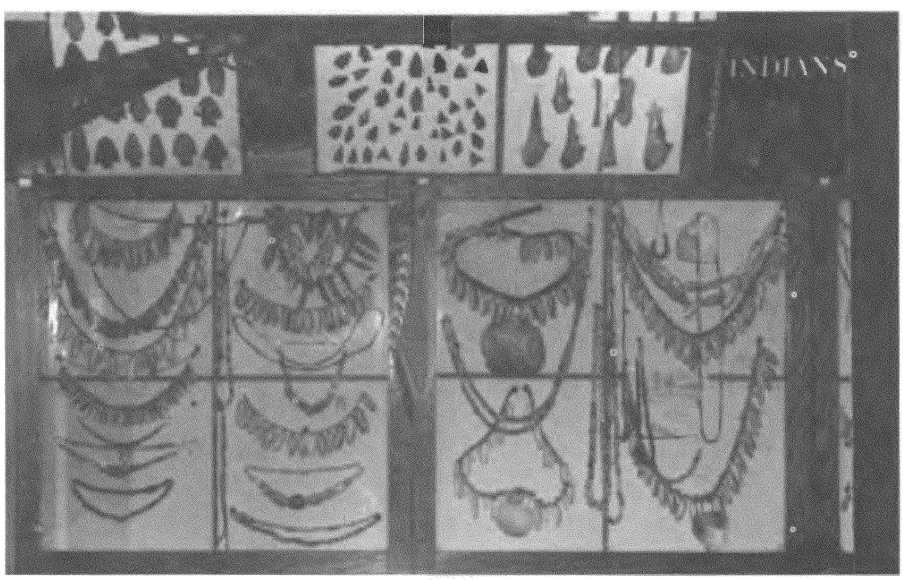


*Figure 6. Part of Rufus W. Pickle's basement collection. Four gorgets appear to be shown. Many Saltville and Smyth County residents tell of visiting the Pickle museum as children. Pickle had a long-standing agreement with the New Jersey relic collector Ralph Space that the survivor of the two would purchase the entire collection of whoever died first. Space outlived Pickle. Photograph in author's files.*

> go over there and dig me a ditch, just sit there and dig me a ditch, just after dark, and then I'd get my lantern down in the ground, you see, and then I could get down in there with that and they couldn't run me out, they couldn't even see me, you see. I'd dig there many a night. That's about by [here Pickle indicated a specific location behind the schoolhouse where at the time he believed a number of undisturbed graves might be found]. And that's where the temple house was.[165] They had a big temple house there. It was about, I guess, it was about fifteen foot in diameter, and hit [*sic*] was made in a circle, it was a complete circle, and hit [*sic*] had been put down out of clay, the bottom of it, the floor had, and it must have been about six inches thick that floor. It had been tamped and burnt and tamped. And it stood up around the edges about eight inches. And right in the middle of it was a big center pole, you know, where they had the teepee over that — they had it enclosed — and that would hold water, that was holding water in there. But they tore that all to pieces, and I don't know if anybody ever made a photograph of it. But that's the most beautifulest thing at all for the Indians to have there.

The "big center pole" structure that Pickle described (and without his description we would have nothing) sounds like a Mississippian-style feature. Meyers, for example, tells of a Lee County site that has the remains of a "single-set post structure similar to those found at Dallas phase occupations in eastern Tennessee."[166] Such evidence suggests that specialists would benefit from a review of Pickle's work along with the other evidence developed from improper archeology.

Very little of the rich treasure of Late Woodland period Saltville and Smyth County artifacts can now be traced, and even less can be assigned a provenance. The only public collection is the Pat Bass Collection curated at the Museum of the Middle Appalachians in Saltville; about half of this collection is Late Woodland period material. A few items have been recently identified as being in the collections at the National Museum of the American Indian and the National Museum of Natural History, and there are gorgets at the Peabody Museum. Some artifacts from the Hatfield[167] collection were exhibited in Saltville several years ago, but the vast bulk of the material is in private collections, such as the artifacts described and pictured in

the relic collector literature.[168] Private collecting of Native-American artifacts is a significant hobby[169] and also the basis for a considerable dealing business.

It is hoped that the publication of this article will lead to the discovery of additional historical improper archeological evidence and that others will be challenged to reconstruct more of the story.

## Grave Goods and Native-American Remains: Changing Attitudes

This section briefly considers changes in social attitudes and changes in the law toward the disturbance of Native-American graves and the removal of goods found in those graves, such as shell gorgets.

By the late 1980s a significant attitude shift was apparent, and the "often cavalier attitude towards native American remains that dominated earlier archeology [was] beginning to give way."[170] For example, the practice of skull collecting in the name of science has ended; the long history of this gruesome practice has been well-described by Gould.[171] New codes of ethics were drawn up by professional anthropological and archeological associations, codes that reflected an increased sensitivity within American society to Native-American sensibilities. Museums began to reject earlier practices in which they "actually competed with each other and hired people to rob graves of Native American people."[172] Compounding the latter activity, artifacts that did reach museums have frequently been lost or misplaced.[173]

In 1990 the Native-American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA) was signed into law, culminating "decades of struggle by Native American tribal governments and people to repatriate thousands of dead relatives or ancestors."[174] An accurate count of the total numbers of Native-American graves opened by grave robbers in the United States is impossible, but the practice was widespread and estimates range from one hundred thousand to two million dead disturbed for storage or display by government agencies, museums, universities, and tourist attractions — or simply to loot the artifacts buried with them.[175] Similarly, no published estimate has been made of the number of Native-American graves disturbed in Southwest Virginia.[176]

In Virginia, there have been a number of recent criminal investigations of persons who conducted illegal excavations.[177] In July 1999, a two-year investigation ended in the conviction of three members of the Reed Creek Archeological Society for illegally excavating Native-American burials from the Jones site near Austinville in Wythe County.[178] Globally, the looting of ancient sites for artifacts for the international collectors' market is currently a huge problem.[179]

## Fakes and Frauds

One of the great limitations and pities of improper archeology is that an artifact or relic taken from its context loses much, or possibly all, of its significance for the archeological record. As bad as loss of provenance is, worse is the problem of fake artifacts and outright fraud. Serious relic collectors have long been aware of this long-standing practice and know that "there are modern artificers who can duplicate almost any Indian relic you want."[180] In Southwest Virginia the author has been shown reproductions of artifacts by their actual makers, and has been told in some cases the precise details of how particular reproductions were manufactured. The existence of fakes and frauds is a complicating factor for improper archeology.

## Summary and Conclusions

In terms of continent-wide pre-contact history, Southwest Virginia is a backwater. No strongly distinctive Native-American cultures developed at any time in the region. In the years following Spanish contact, Southwest Virginia became depopulated.[181] When English-speaking frontiersmen and land speculators arrived during the 1750s, only the ruins of previous Native-American occupation were found. However, within an otherwise unremarkable region, Saltville in modern-day Smyth County stands out as a uniquely important site and has earned a national reputation. Its salt made it unique. Late Pleistocene mammals left many bones at the salt lick, and recent research connecting early human activities with those bones makes Saltville an outstanding candidate to be one of a handful of pre-Clovis sites in all of the Americas. We can plausibly argue that the first ascertainable fact of North-American history was a mastodon feast in the Saltville valley about 14,500 B.C.

The reports of amateur archeologists and former *tombaroli* are indispensable in assessing the significance of Saltville and Smyth County. They deserve a careful examination and appraisal by professional archeologists. The first clear indication of pre-Clovis occupation in the region was reported by an amateur. In addition to confirming the importance of Smyth County as a regional center during Late Woodland and protohistoric times, amateur reports considerably extend our knowledge of Mississippian cultural influence in Southwest Virginia. For example, the only extant case of a stone box grave in Virginia derives from its description in an amateur report written 70 years ago in Smyth County.

Aided by the evidence of "improper archeology," we can confirm professional reports that protohistoric Smyth County developed as a salt production center. It is perhaps no coincidence that the river sites of Broadford, Buchanan, and Mendota, which may have been delocalized centers for brine boiling, are also principal sites at which many shell gorgets have been found. Saltville-style gorgets are an important class of artifacts whose significance for understanding Virginia archeology has yet to be properly assessed.

Considering the evidence uncovered by "improper archeology," it is important for professionals to conduct investigations of the Late Woodland archeology of Smyth County and Saltville, using the best modern practices and techniques.

## Acknowledgments

Thanks first to Hugh Campbell for his continuing support and encouragement. For helpful discussions, thanks to: Eugene Barfield, Henry Diggs, Deena Flinchum (who also invariably offered sound editorial advice), David Fuerst, Harry Haynes, Tom Klatka, Danny Lowe, Maureen Meyers, and Charlie Bill Totten. Thanks to Mrs. Betty Brisco for information about her father-in-law Nathan Brisco. Thanks to Socorro Garcia (Mrs. Robey Maiden) for information about her husband. Thanks to Freda Chapman and Carrie Golliher for information about Rufus Pickle, their father and grandfather, respectively. Special thanks to Tom Totten of Saltville, who provided the tape of his Rufus Pickle interview as well as many photographs of artifact collections. Thanks to Lawrence Richardson for his enthusiastic support, sharing insights into the history of Smyth County, and for sup-

plying copies of the Brisco newspaper articles. Thanks to Roger Allison, who granted unlimited access to microfilm copies of the *Saltville Progress* and called attention to the Pickle interviews. Thanks to Howard MacCord for several courtesies. Thanks to Fred DeBusk, who allowed access to his important collection of memorabilia. For help in various ways, thanks to Chub Arnold, Helen Barbrow, Jim Bordwine, Jerry Catron, Dr. Ralph Eshelman, Jimmy Hatfield, Margaret Maiden, Dr. Jerry McDonald, June Stubbs, Dr. Kay Simpson, and Jeff Weaver. Grateful thanks to all the many anonymous informants and former *tombaroli* who shared personal stories of "improper archeology"; some of their stories may yet be told elsewhere. Thanks to Dr. Michael Barber, Forest Archeologist of the George Washington & Jefferson National Forests, and Dr. Jon Muller, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Southern Illinois University, both of whom kindly reviewed an earlier draft of this article; neither is in any way responsible for any errors or misconceptions that remain. Dr. Patricia Nietfeld at the National Museum of the American Indian and Dr. James Krakker at the National Museum of Natural History provided information about their respective collections. At the Interlibrary Loan Office at Newman Library (Virginia Tech) Robert Kelly, Lucy Cox, Sharon Gotkiewicz, Janet Bland, Harry Kriz, and other staff members provided quick and responsive service. Responsive service was also provided by Rita Copenhaver, Sharon Dempsey, Pat Hatfield, and Tod Owens at the Smyth-Bland Regional Library in Marion. Tara C. Craig at the Butler Library (Columbia University) kindly arranged for the Copenhaver thesis to be microfilmed. At the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in Richmond, Ariel Lambert and Quatro Hubbard provided ready access to their files. Finally, thanks are due to several anonymous reviewers who have aided the author in substantially strengthening this article and improving its logic. All the mistakes, infelicities, and embarrassments that remain are the sole responsibility of the author.

## Endnotes

1. C. G. Holland, "Touching the History and Archeology of Southwest Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 3(1): 20-28 (1948). Holland was then the *Bulletin*'s editor and in this editorial wrote: "One hears of fabulous Saltville with its cemeteries and of rude men who go around that re-

gion with their noses to the ground smelling out dollars in Indian pots and spelling out loss to some greater advantage than just their own."

2. Jim Glanville, "Conquistadors at Saltville in 1567? A Review of the Archeological and Documentary Evidence," *The Smithfield Review*, 8 (2004): 70-108. Hereafter "Conquistadors at Saltville?"
3. Will Sarvis, "Prehistoric Southwest Virginia: Aboriginal Occupation, Land Use, and Environmental Worldview," *The Smithfield Review*, 4 (2000): 125-151.
4. The Italian masculine noun *tombarolo* (singular) and *tombaroli* (plural) is a combination of *tomb* and *cheat* (as in a card sharp). Originating with Etruscan burials, it well describes the unofficial, amateur archeologists who surreptitiously removed artifacts from the Native-American burials of Saltville and Smyth County before such activities became illegal. See Rory Carroll, "Tomb raiding's no game," *Guardian*, Wednesday April 18, 2001, and, also by Rory Carroll, "Loot," *Guardian*, Saturday May 4, 2002. See also Dora Jane Hamblin, *Pots and Robbers* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1970), pp. 73-90. The present article tells the story of the *tombaroli* of Smyth County.
5. While the professional archeologists condemn the *tombaroli*, the *tombaroli* for their part have little good to say about the professionals. "Square diggers" was the contemptuous judgment of professional archeologists recently offered by one former *tombarolo*. Little love is lost on either side.
6. Brian M. Fagan, *People of the Earth — An Introduction to World Prehistory*, 10th ed. (Upper Saddle River: Prentice-Hall, 2001). Figure 4.1 on page 121 of this widely adopted college-level text book shows a map of the settlement of the world by *Homo sapiens sapiens* (modern humans) beginning around 150,000 years ago. In the Figure, an arrow in North America points more or less directly at Saltville and gives the date of human arrival as 13,000 B.C. Only New Zealand and the islands of the Pacific Ocean have a later human arrival date. Fagan in his recent popular book, *The Long Summer: How Climate Changed Civilization* (New York: Basic Books, 2004), shows in the map on page 44 all of North and South America and much of Greenland superimposed by the routes of human settlement. Only five places are identified on the map: Clovis, New Mexico; Folsom, New Mexico; Meadowcroft, Pennsylvania; Monte Verde, Chile; and Saltville.
7. The arrival of modern humans across the Arctic land bridge is told in many places. See, for example, the popular treatment by J. M. Adovasio (with Jake Page) in *The First Americans — In Pursuit of Archaeology's Greatest Mystery* (New York: Random House, 2002).
8. Thomas D. Dillehay, *The Settlement of the Americas — A New Prehistory* (New York: Basic Books, 2000).
9. James R. Craig, *Geologic Evaluation of the Saltville Area, Smyth County, Virginia* (Saltville: Saltville Planning Commission and Tennessee Valley Authority, 1973). See also Fred Webb, Jr., "The Geologic History of Smyth County, Virginia," in *Smyth County, Virginia, Volume 1, Pathfinders and Patriots: Prehistory to 1832*, ed. Joan Tracy Armstrong (Marion, Virginia: Smyth County Museum and Historical Society, Inc., 1983).

10. Southwest Virginia was heavily traveled by Native Americans. William M. Myer (*Indian Trails of the Southeast* [Washington, D.C.: Bureau of American Ethnology and the U.S. Government Printing Office, 1925; reprinted, Nashville: Blue and Gray Press, 1971]) in his landmark study of Native-American trails in the Southeast describes Saltville as an important convergence point. From Saltville, two branches of the Ohio Prong of the Great Indian Warpath diverge in a generally northeasterly direction, the upper toward Hinton, West Virginia, and the lower toward Bland, Virginia; to the southwest the Ohio Prong led to Long Island, Tennessee, and beyond, while to the south the Old Cherokee Path — after crossing the Chesapeake branch of the Great Indian Warpath (modern day Interstate 81) at Glade Spring just six miles from Saltville — led to Morganton, North Carolina, and beyond.
11. Elizabeth Lemmon Sayers, *Smyth County, Virginia, Volume 1, Pathfinders and Patriots: Prehistory to 1832*, ed. Joan Tracy Armstrong (Marion, Virginia: Smyth County Museum and Historical Society, Inc., 1983). "In 1753 a grant had been made to Charles Campbell under the auspices of Augusta County and in the name of King George III. This grant was known as Buffalo or Salt Lick and its descriptive name indicates that it was a gathering place for the animals who roamed the area." (p. 199). The lick was also a gathering place for the Native Americans who hunted the game.
12. David J. Meltzer, "Peopling of America," *Developments in Quaternary Science* 1: 539-563, 2003. On line at www.smu.edu/anthro/faculty/dMeltzer/pdf%20files/QUS_2004_Peopling_of_North_America.PDF, this lengthy, up-to-date review includes a discussion of the importance of Saltville. Hereafter cited as "Peopling of America." See also Saltville's recent appearance in the 2004 *Encyclopedia Britannica*: Brian Fagan, "Anthropology and Archaeology" from Encyclopædia Britannica Premium Service. http://www.britannica.com/eb/article?tocId=232714 Describing the work of Jerry McDonald, discussed in the present article, Fagan writes: "At Saltville MacDonald [*sic*] discovered that early Americans skinned and cut up a mammoth carcass."
13. Heather McKillop, author of *Salt: White Gold of the Ancient Maya* (Gainesville: The University of Florida Press, 2002), made, in a recent discussion with the author, the interesting remark that archeologists who study salt are in the very unusual position of not having anything tangible to study. Most archeology is precisely the study of artifacts. But archeological salt was either consumed or washed away by the first rain.
14. In the Spring of 2004 the author was invited to a private home in Saltville to view an impressive museum of Native-American artifacts. Frustrated by the richness of the collection, and by its simultaneous total lack of scientific documentation, he expostulated in frustration: "We're never going to get a proper archeology of Saltville, but that shouldn't stop us from trying to get the best possible improper archeology." This article is in part an effort toward documenting for the first time the improper archeology of Saltville and Smyth County.
15. The author is preparing for publication an anthology of the work of Brisco, Maiden, Pickle, and others.

16. Nathan Brisco, "Archaeological Notes on Smyth County," *Marion Democrat*. Six articles all with same title: June 6, June 13, June 20, June 26, July 4, and July 11, 1933. Hereafter cited as "Archaeological Notes."
17. Nathan M. Brisco, *Indian Remains of Smyth County, Virginia*. 40 pages, maps missing. Manuscript on file at Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond. Hereafter cited as *Indian Remains*.
18. Artifacts donated to the Smithsonian by Brisco include a discoid-shaped stone, an earthen jar, and various projectile points from the Broadford vicinity of Smyth County and potsherds from the Gwyn Site (artifact information from James Krakker, Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History, 2004).
19. http://www.spacefarms.com/aboutus.htm
20. Rufus W. Pickle, "Discovery of Folsom-like arrowpoint and artifacts of mastodon bone in southwest Virginia," *Tennessee Archaeologist*, 3(1) (1946): 3-7; "Regarding some interesting artifacts," *Tennessee Archaeologist*, 3(2) (1947): 23-24; "An Indian burial cave near Saltville, Virginia," *Tennessee Archaeologist*, 5(1) (1949): p. 6.
21. Frank B. Sanders, an eight-part series of newspaper articles in the *Saltville Progress*, featuring Rufus Pickle and his private relic collection: "Part 1: A Visit To a Fine Private Museum," July 8, 1971; "Part 2: Visiting a Fine Private Museum" July 15, 1971; "Part 3: A Visit to a Private Museum — Gorgets and Beads," July 22, 1971; "Part 4: A Visit to a Private Museum — Huge Fossil Bones," July 29, 1971; "Part 5: A Visit to a Private Museum — Old Relics and a Hunk of Pure Silver," August 5, 1971; "Part 6: Arrow Heads, Battle Axes, and Peace Pipes," August 12, 1971; "Part 7: Folsom Man at Saltville," August 19, 1971; "Part 8: Another Visit to the Pickle Museum," August 26, 1971. Hereafter cited as "Pickle's Private Collection." Sanders was an avocational historian who wrote a regular column about local history that appeared for many years in the *Saltville Progress*.
22. Rufus W. Pickle, a taped interview conducted by Thomas Warden Totten and Helen Virginia McCready Totten on 21 May 1975, original tape and transcript in author's files.
23. Henry E. Diggs, "Saltville's Robey Maiden Has Collected Some Fame, Along With Indian Relics," *Bristol Herald Courier*, April 10, 1949, p. 3A. Hereafter cited as "Saltville's Robey Maiden."
24. Waldo Wedel, "Archeological Reconnaissance near Saltville, Virginia, in 1940." *Archeological Society of Virginia's Quarterly Bulletin*, 45(3)(1990): 114-122. Hereafter cited as "Archeological Reconnaissance." Ben McCary, "Additional Information on the Archaeology of the Saltville Area as Reported by Mr. Robey Maiden," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 9(3) (1955): 7-11. Hereafter cited as "Reported by Robey Maiden."
25. Robey Maiden, "Tales That Dead Men Tell" (with Mack Blackwell, Jr.), a six-part series of articles with various subtitles. Saltville: *The Saltville Progress*, January 14, January 21, January 28, February 4, February 11, and February 18, 1965. Hereafter cited as "Tales That Dead Men Tell."

26. Mack Blackwell, Jr. was in the 1960s Chief Engineer of the Mathieson Alkali Works (see Tom Mahr, "Salt of the Earth," *Esso Oilways* [Houston: Humble Oil & Refining Company, July 1966], pp. 14-19). Blackwell wrote extensively about Saltville history and published regularly in *The Saltville Progress*, but his long-planned book was unfortunately never published.
27. See the website http://members.fortunecity.com/fpreston/prsffrsm.htm See also Patricia Johnson Givens, *William Preston and the Allegheny Patriots* (Blacksburg, Virginia: Walpa Publishing, 1976), p. 310.
28. See, for example, Brian M. Fagan, *World Prehistory—A Brief Introduction*, 5th ed. (Upper Saddle River, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, 2002). Chronological Table B (p. 123) shows cultural periods on five continents between 50,000 B.C. and 3,000 B.C. Chronological Table C (p. 195) continues from 3,000 B.C. to 1500 A.D.
29. Of course, picking a year to mark the beginning or end of a period does not impart any special significance to that particular year. Archeological periods blend smoothly and seamlessly one into the next, and ways of life change only slowly. But we humans find markers convenient as an aid in organizing our thinking and in cataloging our ideas.
30. Keith Egloff and Deborah Woodward, *First People: The Early Indians of Virginia* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1992). Hereafter cited as *First People*. Produced by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Excerpts from this book are on line at http://state.vipnet.org/dhr/arch_NET/timeline/time-line.htm
31. William F. Stanyard, *Archaeological Investigations at Sites 44WG281 and 44WY25 in Washington and Wythe Counties, Virginia* (Atlanta: TRC Company, 2004). Hereafter cited as *Archaeological Investigations*.
32. Mary Ellen N. Hodges, *A Brief Relation of Virginia Prehistory: A Summary of Current Ideas on the Cultural History of the Native Inhabitants of Virginia, ca. 10,000 B.C. to the Present* (Richmond: Department of Conservation and Historic Resources, Division of Historic Landmarks, 1981). Hereafter cited as *A Brief Relation*.
33. William J. Hranicky, "Survey of the Prehistory of Virginia," *Chesopiean*, 11(4): 76-94, 1973. Hereafter cited as "Survey."
34. Anonymous, *The Archeology of Southwest Virginia* (Roanoke, Virginia: The Archeological Society of Virginia, Roanoke Chapter, 1992). A 16-page booklet published in cooperation with the United States Department of Agriculture, United States Forest Service, prepared under the editorship of Thomas Klatka.
35. *Running Deer. The Settlement of Virginia, 12,000 BP to 1600 AD.* Published on line at http://www.runningdeerslonghouse.com/webdoc254.htm
36. William H. Reid, Prehistoric Settlement and Subsistence in the Cumberland Gap Region of Southwest Virginia. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis (Washington, D.C.: American University, 1966). Published in revised form as *Prehistoric Settlement and Subsistence in the Cumberland Gap Region of Southwest Virginia* (Occasional Publication No. 1. Richmond, Virginia: Cultural Resources Group, Louis Berger and Associates, 1997). The cultural history of the Cumberland gap region of Virginia (Lee County) is described on pages 28-40.

37. Michael Hoffmann and Robert Foss, "Blue Ridge Prehistory: A General Perspective," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 34 (1980): 185-210.
38. Stephen R. Claggett, "North Carolina's First Colonists: 12,000 Years Before Roanoke," Originally published in *The Ligature*. (Raleigh, N.C.: North Carolina Division of Archives and History, 1986). Revised 15 March 1996 and republished on line at http://www.arch.dcr.state.nc.us/1stcolo.htm
39. Anonymous, *Archaeology and the Native Peoples of Tennessee*, an online summary of time periods and the human activities therein. On line at http://mcclungmuseum.utk.edu/permex/archaeol/archaeol.htm#Periods
40. Anonymous, *The Archaeological Heritage of Kentucky*, on line at: http://www.state.ky.us/agencies/khc/cult1.htm
41. Ralph Solecki, "An Archaeological Survey of Two River Basins in West Virginia," *West Virginia History*. In two parts, volume 10 (1949): Part 1: "Introduction," pp. 189-212; Part 2: The Bluestone Reservoir Survey," pp. 319-432.
42. Edward V. McMichael, *Introduction to West Virginia Archaeology*, 2nd revised edition. Morgantown: West Virginia Geological and Economic Survey, 1968. Hereafter cited as *WV Archaeology*.
43. Jefferson Chapman and Patty Jo Watson, "The Archaic Period and the Flotation Revolution," pp. 27-38 in *Foraging and Farming in the Eastern Woodlands*, ed. C. Margaret Scarry (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993). The term flotation refers to the relatively recent and highly effective technique of the discipline called paleoethnobotany. Soil samples from excavated sites are agitated in water, enabling contained organic materials to float to the surface. So doing allows microscopic plant remains to be recovered, analyzed, and identified. Flotation is followed by statistical analysis to provide archeological evidence of the plants present at the site and their possible uses. Pictures of flotation in action can be seen at the website cited in the following footnote. Although dated, still useful is the classic work by John R. Swanton, *The Indians of the Southeastern United States*, Bulletin 137 of the Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution (Washington, D.C.: U.S. Government Printing Office, 1946). Swanton discusses food and food preparation on pages 265-380.
44. Gail E. Wagner and Jamie Civitello, *Ancient Gardening in South Carolina: 10,000 B. C. – A.D. 1700*, an on-line paper written in celebration of South Carolina Archaeology Month, September 8 – October 7, 2000. Available on line at http://www.cla.sc.edu/ANTH/gardening/ancientgardening.htm This web site also shows pictures of a flotation operation operating as described in the preceding footnote.
45. C. G. Holland, *An Archeological Survey of Southwest Virginia: Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology Number 12* (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1970). Hereafter cited as *Archeological Survey*.
46. William M. Gardner, *A Phase I Archeological Resources Reconnaissance of the Proposed Appalachian Power Company Hydroelectric Project in Poor Valley and Hidden Valley, Washington County, Virginia* (Thunderbird Research Corporation, February 1979). Report on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources,

Richmond. Hereafter cited as *Appalachian Reconnaissance*. The cited quotation comes from p. 33. The many animal species that frequented the salt lick are listed on p. 15. On p. 17 Gardner remarks that "It is doubtful if any other area of Virginia [compared with southwestern Virginia] has been subjected to such a rape of its cultural resources."

47. David I. Bushnell, "The Indian Inhabitants of the Valley of Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 34(4) (1926): 295-298.
48. Ellen G. Copenhaver, *Life and Culture of the Indians of Southwest Virginia* (Columbia University, M.A. Thesis, 1933). Handwritten. Both Ellen Copenhaver and Nathan Brisco were Marion residents, writing about the history of southwest Virginia at the same time. When the author ordered a copy of this thesis, he was hoping that it might shed more light on Brisco's work. However the internal evidence is that Copenhaver and Brisco never communicated.
49. Michael B. Barber and David A. Hubbard, Jr., "Overview of the Human Use of Caves in Virginia: A 10,500 Year History," *Journal of Cave and Karst Studies*, 59(3) (1997): 132-136.
50. Victor A. Carbone, *Environment and Prehistory in the Shenandoah Valley* (Ph. D. dissertation, Catholic University, Washington, D.C., 1976). The environmental history of Virginia is recounted on pp. 45-56.
51. Lynn E. Kauffman, James C. O'Neill, and Patricia A. Jehle, eds. and compilers, *Bibliography of the Virginia Indians* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1976). Special Publication Number 2.
52. Michael F. Johnson, *American Indian Life in Fairfax County, 10,000 B.C. to A.D. 1650* (Falls Church, Virginia: Heritage Resources Branch, Office of Comprehensive Planning, Fairfax County, Virginia, 1996).
53. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "Archaeological Indian Study," in *Smyth County. Virginia, Volume 1. Pathfinders and Patriots: Prehistory to 1832*, ed. Joan Tracy Armstrong (Marion, Virginia: Smyth County Museum and Historical Society, Inc., 1983).
54. Jerry N. McDonald, *A Survey and Inventory of Archeological Resources of the Town of Saltville, Virginia. A Report of Activities and Results*, Report submitted to the Town of Saltville, August 28, 1985, on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond.
55. Hazel R. Delacourt and Paul A. Delacourt, "Late Quaternary Vegetational Change in the Central Atlantic States," pp. 23-35 in *The Quaternary of Virginia — A Symposium Volume*, ed. J. N. McDonald and S. O. Bird of the Virginia Division of Minerals. Publication 75, 1986.
56. Ellen H. White, "Projectile points from a multicomponent site (44Sm51) in the Saltville Valley," pp. 132-133; Eugene Barfield, "Tools and debitage: Cultural debris from a multicomponent site (44Sm51) in the Saltville Valley," pp. 133-135. Both in *The Quaternary of Virginia — A Symposium Volume*, ed. J. N. McDonald and S. O. Bird of the Virginia Division of Minerals. Publication 75, 1986.

57. Clovis is an archeological site in New Mexico where spear projectile points of a distinctive type were first found. The date 9,500 B.C. marks the end of the last period of North American glaciation — the Wisconsin glaciation.
58. C. Clifford Boyd, Jr., "Paleoindian paleoecology and subsistence in Virginia," pp. 141-148 in *Paleoindian Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. J. Mark Wittkofski and Theodore R. Reinhart (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia Special Publication No. 19, second edition, 1994).
59. The much older stone tool industries of Europe are well described in the classic book by Henri Breuil and Raymond Lantier, *The Men of the Old Stone Age (Palaeothic & Mesolithic)*, 2nd ed., translated by B. B. Rafter (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1965). The collecting, analyzing, cataloging, and trading, of stone artifacts from this, and indeed all, archeological periods is an important aspect of both professional and amateur archeology. The extent of professional interest in stone points can be understood and appreciated by the lifetime of work of Ben C. McCary, a former professor of languages at the College of William and Mary, whose publications were aggregated in *Survey of Virginia Fluted Points* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, Special Publication Number 12, 1984). McCary's work has been continued and extended by William Jack Hranicky of Alexandria in works such as *Prehistoric Projectile Points Found Along the Atlantic Coastal Plain* (Boca Raton: Universal Publishers, 2003). The enormous extent of amateur interest in collecting stone points can be understood and appreciated by an examination of publications such as Robert M. Overstreet's *Official Overstreet Indian Arrowheads Identification and Price Guide* (New York: Random House Information Group, 2003), which is now in its eighth edition.
60. Eugene B. Barfield, "Paleoindians, Megafauna and Salt: The Earliest Aboriginal Culture of the Saltville Valley in Virginia," pp. 12-28 in *Upland Archeology in the East: Symposium Number Five*, ed. Eugene B. Barfield and Michael B. Barber (Richmond, Virginia: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1996).
61. Randolph E. Turner, III, "Paleoindian Settlement Patterns and Population Distribution in Virginia," p. 81 in *Paleoindian Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. J. Mark Wittkofski and Theodore R. Reinhart (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia Special Publication No. 19, second edition, 1994). Hereafter cited as Turner, "Paleoindian settlement."
62. Robson Bonnichsen and Karen Turnmire, "An Introduction to the Peopling of the Americas." Pages 1-26 in *Ice Age People of North America: Environments, Origins, and Adaptations*, ed. Robson Bonnichsen and Karen Turnmire (Corvallis: Oregon State University Press and the Center for the Study of the First Americans, 1999). See also Meltzer, "Peopling of America."
63. For example, John Noble Wilford, "The Oldest Americans May Prove Even Older," *The New York Times*, June 29, 2004.
64. Thomas Jefferson, *Notes on the State of Virginia* (London: John Stockdale, 1787). Reprint edition with an introduction and notes by William Peden (1955), pp. 43-44.

65. Wyndham Robertson, "Some notes on the Holstein (Va.) salt and gypsum," *The Virginias*, 3(2): 20-21, and 3(3): 42 (1882).
66. For about 75 years, from 1895 to 1970, the Mathieson Alkali Works (later Olin-Mathieson Corporation and still later Olin Corporation) extracted salt from beneath Saltville by injecting fresh water deep underground where the water dissolved solid salt, making a liquid brine that was pumped to the surface and thence to the company's chemical plant. The discovery of fossil bones was a frequent industrial event, and no doubt stimulated the passion for relic collecting that captivated many Saltville residents.
67. O. A. Peterson, "A fossil bearing alluvial deposit in Saltville Valley, Virginia," *Annals of the Carnegie Museum*, 11(3-4) (1917): 469-474.
68. Byron N. Cooper, "New Fossil Finds at Saltville, Virginia," *Mineral Industries Journal*, 10(4): 1-3, 1964. Incidentally, it is in this article that Cooper reports the chemical analysis of a modern salt spring at Saltville containing about 3% sodium chloride (salt).
69. Clayton E. Ray, Byron N. Cooper, and William S. Benninghof, "Fossil Mammals in a Late Pleistocene Deposit at Saltville, Virginia," *Journal of Paleontology*, 41 (1967): 608-622.
70. Jerry N. McDonald and Charles S. Bartlett, Jr., "An Associated Musk Ox Skeleton from Saltville, Virginia," *Journal of Vertebrate Paleontology*, 2(4) (1983): 453-470.
71. R. W. Pickle, "Discovery of Folsom-like arrowpoint and artifacts of mastodon bone in southwest Virginia," *Tennessee Archaeologist*, 3(1) (1946): 3-7. Like Clovis, Folsom is a site in New Mexico; projectile points from the two sites come from the same culture.
72. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "Late Pleistocene Remains Found in Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 18 (1964): 61-62. Noting the mastodon bones and the nearby presence of a fluted projectile point, MacCord called this an "almost find" of a late Pleistocene association of man and artifact.
73. Ed Bottoms, "Notes on the Geology, Pleistocene Paleontology, and Archaeology of Saltville, Virginia," *The Chesopiean*, 7(4-5) (1969): 80-89.
74. A well illustrated, informal report describing his work on what he called "The Paleoindian Capital of Western Virginia" can be found in Jerry N. McDonald's "Saltville: A Window on the Ice Age of Southwestern Virginia," *Virginia Explorer*, 8(Spring/Summer) (1992): 8-15.
75. Edward N. Verner, "Earliest Evidence of Human Presence in North America Found in Saltville, Virginia" (press release dated 16th April 1996). The release cites a paper delivered by Jerry N. McDonald in Charlotte, N.C., on Thursday April 11, 1996 at the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Geographers.
76. George Wisner, "Saltville Site Has Evidence of 14,000-year-old Feasts," *Mammoth Trumpet*, 11(4): (1996) 18-20.
77. Jerry N. McDonald, "An Outline of the Pre-Clovis Archeology of SV-2, Saltville, Virginia, with Special Attention to a Bone Tool Dated 14,510 yr BP."

*Jeffersoniana*, No. 9, pp. 1-59, Virginia Museum of Natural History, 2000. The date specified in the title refers to radiocarbon dating using the $^{14}C$ (carbon-14) isotope. BP stands for "before present." For technical reasons related to atmospheric changes beyond the scope of our discussion here, this date translates to about 14,500 B.C.

78. Anonymous, Staff of the U.S. National Park Service, *Southeastern Prehistory: Paleoindian Period* (Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. National Park Service). On line at: www.cr.nps.gov/seac/outline/02-paleoindian/; David G. Anderson, "Earliest Americans [In the Southeastern United States] Theme Study — Draft" (Atlanta, Georgia: U.S. National Park Service). On line at: www.cr.nps.gov/seac/outline/02-paleoindian/se_paleo/01-intro.htm
79. Leon Lane and David G. Anderson, "Paleoindian Occupations of the Southern Appalachians — A View from the Cumberland Plateau," pp. 88-102 in *Archaeology of the Appalachian Highlands*, ed. Lynne P. Sullivan and Susan C. Prezzano (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001).
80. Turner, "Paleoindian settlement."
81. Peter D. Ward, *The Call of the Distant Mammoth: Why the Ice Age Mammals Disappeared* (New York: Springer Verlag, 1997); Alexandra Witze, "Scientists question whether humans caused extinction of mammals," *Dallas Morning News*, Thursday September 25, 2003; Alexandra Witze, "The Mysteries of Megafauna: Who or what caused the extinction of the giant mammals that once inhabited the New World?" *American Archaeology*, Spring 2004, pages 16-25; Guy Gugliotta, "Suspects in Demise of Giant Mammals: Experts Debate Whether Humans or Climate Change — or Both — Helped Eliminate Such Creatures Eons Ago," *Washington Post*, Monday October 11, 2004, p. A9. In the scientific literature, the debate has reached serio-comic proportions, with one of the combatants invoking no less an authority than Monty Python: "This isn't an argument, it's just contradiction." See: Donald K. Grayson and David J. Meltzer, "A requiem for North American overkill," *Journal of Archeological Science*, 30 (2003): 585-593; the reply by Stuart Fiedel and Gary Haynes, "A premature burial: comments on Grayson and Meltzer's 'Requiem for overkill,'" *Journal of Archeological Science*, 31 (2004): 121-131; and the reply to the reply: Donald K. Grayson and David J. Meltzer, "North American overkill continued?" *Journal of Archeological Science*, 31(2004): 133-136.
82. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges, eds., *Early and Middle Archaic Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1990). Special Publication No. 22 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.
83. Keith T. Egloff and Joseph M. McAvoy, pp. 61-80 in "Chronology of Virginia's Early and Middle Archaic Periods," *Early and Middle Archaic Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1990). Special Publication No. 22 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.
84. Clarence R. Geier, "The Early and Middle Archaic Periods: Material Culture and Technology," pp. 81-98 in *Early and Middle Archaic Research in Virginia: A*

*Synthesis*, ed. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1990). Special Publication No. 22 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.

85. Scott K. Parker, "Early and Middle Archaic Settlement Patterns and Demography," Pages 99-120 in *Early and Middle Archaic Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1990). Special Publication No. 22 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.
86. Thomas R. Whyte, "A Review of Evidence of Human Subsistence During the Early and Middle Archaic Periods in Virginia." in *Early and Middle Archaic Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen N. Hodges (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1990), Special Publication No. 22 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.
87. Hodges, *A Brief Relation*, p. 7.
88. Archeologists usually prefer to call Native-American plant cultivation "horticulture" or "gardening" rather than "agriculture," because Native Americans neither plowed the soil nor broadcast seeds. For example, "Even during the Late Woodland, we are never speaking to modern agriculture. We are talking intensive gardening using swidden or slash-and-burn means." Michael Barber, personal communication.
89. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen Hodges, eds., *Late Archaic and Early Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis* (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1991). Special Publication No. 23 of the Archeological Society of Virginia.
90. J. Sanderson Stevens, "A Story of Plants, Fire, and People: The Paleoecology and Subsistence of the Late Archaic and Early Woodland People in Virginia," pp. 185-220 in *Late Archaic and Early Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. Theodore R. Reinhart and Mary Ellen Hodges (Richmond: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1991).
91. Works that describe pottery distributions and sequences in Southwest Virginia include Evans' pioneering study (Clifford Evans, *A Ceramic Study of Virginia Archeology*, with Appendix: "An Analysis of Projectile Points and Large Blades" by C. G. Holland [Bulletin 160, Bureau of American Ethnology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., 1955]); Holland's important 1970 regional survey (Holland, *Archeological Survey*); Boyd's thesis (C. Clifford Boyd, Jr., *An Evolutionary Approach to the Prehistory of Upper East Tennessee and Adjacent Areas* [Doctoral thesis, Department of Anthropology, University of Tennessee, Knoxville, 1986]); and a review by Egloff that covers the counties of Lee, Russell, Scott, Tazewell, and Wise (Keith T. Egloff, *Ceramic Study of Woodland Occupation along the Clinch and Powell Rivers in Southwest Virginia* [Virginia Department of Historic Resources Research Report Series No. 3., 1987]). Hereafter cited as *Ceramic Study*.
92. Stanyard, *Archaeological Investigations*, p. 14.
93. Ibid.

94. Maureen S. Meyers, "The Mississippian Frontier in Southwestern Virginia," *Southeastern Archaeology*, 21(2) (2002): 178-191. See Figure 3, page 182. Hereafter cited as "Mississippian Frontier."
95. From local informants, the author has information he believes reliable about the locations of probable mound sites in both Montgomery and Tazewell Counties and has heard hints of a possible mound site in Smyth County.
96. Jon Muller, personal communication, 2005.
97. Gayle J. Fritze, "Early and Middle Woodland Period Paleoethnobotany," pp. 39-56 in *Foraging and Farming in the Eastern Woodlands*, ed. C. Margaret Scarry (Gainesville: University of Florida Press, 1993), pp. 54-55. Determining the origin of tobacco and its diffusion in native America is a complex problem.
98. Justine Woodard McKnight, "Flotation-recovered Archeobotanical Remains from the R. B. Worthy High School Site, Smyth County, Virginia" (2004). Report on file at the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, Richmond. Construction of R. B. Worthy began in fall 1955; the school opened in fall 1957. It was renamed Northwood High School in 1987.
99. Douglas C. McLearen, "Virginia's Middle Woodland Period: A Regional Perspective," pp. 39-64 in *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. T. R. Reinhart and M. E. N. Hodges. Special Publication No. 29 (Richmond: Council of Virginia Archeologists, 1992).
100. Edward V. McMichael, "WV Archeology." Map 5 on page 36 shows the Fort Ancient culture located mainly in the west of modern-day West Virginia, but with an outlying group located on the modern-day Virginia-West Virginia border in Giles County. The Fort Ancient culture derived from Native Americans who originated in the St. Louis area (an important center of Mississippian culture).
101. William Duncan Strong, "The Coordinated River Valley Approach — A World Problem," in *Symposium of River Archeology*, J. O. Brew, chairman, *American Antiquity* 12(4) (1947): 210-212. Strong wrote "From time immemorial the river valleys of the world have been the trade routes and living centers of human society. It might be estimated, as it has for the region of the United States, that some eighty percent of all the all the archaeological remains in the world occur in only two percent of its area, that is bordering or in conjunction with its river valleys."
102. The sketch shown in Figure 2 is based on a portion of the *Map of Virginia's Watersheds* (Richmond: Virginia Department of Conservation and Recreation, n. d., circa 2004). On-line version available at www.dcr.state.va.us/sw/index.htm
103. Egloff, *Ceramic Study*, pp. 48-49.
104. Dennis B. Blanton, "Middle Woodland Settlement Systems in Virginia," pp. 65-96 in *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. T. R. Reinhart and M. E. N. Hodges. Special Publication No. 29. (Richmond: Council of Virginia Archeologists, 1992).
105. J. P. Brain and P. Phillips, *Shell Gorgets: Styles of the Late Prehistoric and Protohistoric Southeast* (Cambridge: Peabody Museum Press, 1996), p. 396. Hereafter cited as *Shell Gorgets*.

106. Brain and Phillips, *Shell Gorgets*, pp. 43, 84, 102-103 (the Saltville style section), 147, etc. Many of the photographs of gorgets in this book were taken by Jon Muller, who recounted to the author that in the summer of 1965 he traveled 25,000 miles through the South in a Dodge Dart collecting photographs for his Ph.D. thesis research (Jon David Muller, *An Experimental Theory of Stylistic Analysis* [Harvard University, Department of Anthropology, Ph.D. dissertation, 1967]). After he left Boston heading south, the first place Muller encountered gorgets was Saltville, where he met both Rufus Pickle and Robey Maiden. On page 183 of his thesis Muller tells of the "Maiden Collection" of gorgets in Saltville. It was Muller who originally designated the rattlesnake gorgets of Smyth County as belonging to the "Saltville style" (Muller, *Experimental Theory* ..., pp. 80, 149-166).
107. In Kentucky, this period is called Late Prehistoric; in Tennessee it is called Mississippian. Native Americans by the Late Woodland period developed in the vast middle of the United States — the Mississippi River drainage region — diverse and flourishing cultures, collectively called Mississippian, with long-range trade networks and impressive population centers focused on large mounds at locations such as Cahokia, Illinois, and Moundville, Alabama. Southwestern Virginia lies at the fringe of the Mississippian cultural world. See Meyers, "Mississippian Frontier."
108. Richard S. MacNeish, *The Origins of Agriculture and the Settled Life* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1991), pp. 230-252. Here is assembled and listed much of the data about the plants found at various sites and their associated arrival dates.
109. George R. Milner, *The Moundbuilders: Ancient Peoples of Eastern North American* (London: Thames and Hudson, 2004), pp. 86-87. Here are presented useful graphical summaries of the establishment dates of various plant foods in the eastern United States.
110. Hodges, *A Brief Relation*, p. 9.
111. Richard W. Jefferies, "Living on the Edge: Mississippian Settlement in the Cumberland Gap Vicinity," pp. 198-221 in *Archaeology of the Appalachian Highlands*, ed. Lynne P. Sullivan and Susan C. Prezzano (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2001), Table, p. 204.
112. Donald Edward Davis, *Where There Are Mountains: An Environmental History of the Southern Appalachians* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2000), pp. 27-34. Hereafter cited as *Where There Are Mountains*.
113. Davis, *Where There Are Mountains*, pp. 107-121. In a particularly poignant irony, Davis tells that the Cherokee rose, the state flower of Georgia, is a non-native Appalachian species introduced from China in 1757.
114. Lewis Preston Summers, *History of Southwest Virginia, 1746-1786, Washington County, 1777-1870* (Johnson City, Tennessee: Overmountain Press, 1989), pp. 21-23. Originally published 1903.
115. Brisco, *Indian Remains*.
116. Glanville, "Conquistadors at Saltville?"

117. The Virginia Department of Historic Resources maintains a comprehensive list of archeological sites in Smyth County (and every other Virginia county). Of some 300 total Smyth County records, about 45 are assigned as "Woodland" period sites, and of those seven are more specifically designated as "Late Woodland sites." Sometimes, however, the only known information about a listed site is a sketchy, hand written, one-page "Site Survey Form." Still more sites are known only to the *tombaroli*.
118. George R. Milner, David G. Anderson, and Marvin T. Smith, "The Distribution of Eastern Woodlands Peoples at the Prehistoric and Historic Interface," pp. 9-18 in *Societies in Eclipse, Eastern North America at the Dawn of History*, ed. David S. Brose, C. Wesley Cowan, and Robert C. Mainfort, Jr. (Washington, D.C.: Smithsonian Institution Press, 2001). The maps in question are Figures 2.1, 2.2, and 2.3, pp. 11-13.
119. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "The Intermontane Culture: A Middle Appalachian Late Woodland Manifestation," *Archeology of Eastern North America*, 17(Fall) (1989): 89-108. Hereafter "Intermontane."
120. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "The Fox Site, Smyth County, Va.," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 29(1) (1974):1-5. This is a very brief report.
121. Keith T. Egloff, "The Late Woodland Period in Southwestern Virginia," pp. 187-224 in *Middle and Late Woodland Research in Virginia: A Synthesis*, ed. T. R. Reinhart and M. E. N. Hodges. Special Publication No. 29 (Richmond: Council of Virginia Archeologists, 1992). Hereafter "Late Woodland in SW VA."
122. According to the Virginia Department of Historic Resources October 2004–September 2005 work plan, the Agency will soon prepare a "publication-suitable" manuscript reporting the Bonham Site excavation and also a complete final archeological report on the Fox site. See: www.dhr.virginia.gov/pdf_files/DHR_WkPln-04-05-AugDRAFT.pdf
123. Brain and Phillips, *Shell Gorgets*. These authors describe and picture many gorgets from the listed sites.
124. Jon Muller, *Mississippian Political Economy* (New York: Plenum Publishing Company, 1997). Shell gorgets (including those from Saltville) are discussed on pages 370-379.
125. Tom Totten and Charlie Bill Totten, personal communications, 2004.
126. Jon Muller, personal communication, 2004.
127. Harlan Gilmore, "The Role of Salt as an Element of Cultural Diffusion," *American Anthropologist*, 51(5) (1955): 1011-1015.
128. Paul E. Lovejoy, *Salt of the Desert Sun: A History of Salt Production and Trade in the Central Sudan* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986).
129. Robert P. Multhauf, *Neptune's Gift: A History of Common Salt* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1978), pp. 31-34 and 39-61.
130. Norman Davies, *The Isles — A History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1999), p. 30.
131. Gerhard Herm, *The Celts: The People Who Came Out of the Darkness* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1975). On pages 100-103 Herm describes mining in-

spector Georg Ramsauer's accidental discovery of the Hallstadt burial ground with its hundreds of richly endowed graves — the goods from which were eventually auctioned in New York. See also Barry Cunliffe, *The Ancient Celts* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997), pp. 64-67. The classic case for Hallstadt's wealth being a consequence of salt trading is made in Jacques A. E. Nenquin, "Salt, a Study in Economic Prehistory," *Dissertationes Archaelogicae Gandenses*, 6 (1961): 9-162.

132. Gardner, *Appalachian Reconnaissance.*

133. E. Randolph Turner, "The Archeological Identification of Chiefdom Societies in Southwestern Virginia," *Upland Archeology in the East: A Second Symposium, 1983* (Atlanta: U.S. Dept. of Agriculture, Forest Service, Southern Region).

134. David Fuerst, Personal communication, 2004. Also, Jon Muller in a 2005 personal communication remarked "I remain very skeptical of chiefdom-level organization in Southwest Virginia, especially one based on salt exploitation and trade."

135. Gene Barfield, personal communication, 2004.

136. Michael B. Barber and Eugene B. Barfield, "A New Perspective on the Development of Chiefdoms in Southwest Virginia: Is it Worth Its Salt?" Paper presented at the Middle Atlantic Archaeological Conference, Ocean City, Maryland, April 7, 1991.

137. Michael B. Barber, "Saltville and Environs: The Woodland period," pp. 39-50 in *Upland Archeology in the East: Symposium Number Five*, ed. Eugene B. Barfield and Michael B. Barber (Richmond, Virginia: Archeological Society of Virginia, 1996). Hereafter cited as "Saltville and Environs." The phrase "salt powered chiefdom" appears on page 45.

138. Michael B. Barber and Eugene B. Barfield, "The Late Woodland Period in the Environs of Saltville: A Case for Petty Chiefdom Development," *Journal of Middle Atlantic Archaeology*, 16 (2000): 117-132.

139. Robin A. Beck, Jr., "From Joara to Chiaha: Spanish Exploration of the Appalachian Summit Area, 1540-1568," *Southeastern Archaeology*, 16(2) (1997): 162-169.

140. Smyth County amateur archeologist Lawrence Richardson had long before concluded that the Chiscas were the tribe living in Smyth County at the time of European contact. However his work is yet to be published (Lawrence Richardson, "The Chisca Indians," unpublished manuscript, 2004, copy in author's files). Hranicky, in his 1973 "Survey," suggested that the Yuchi (another name by which the Chiscas were known) lived in southwestern Virginia during the protohistoric period, being attracted there by the "great salt lick."

141. Robin A. Beck, Jr. and David G. Moore, "The Burke Phase: A Mississippian Frontier in the North Carolina Foothills," *Southeastern Archeology*, 21(2) (2002): 192-205.

142. Meyers, "Mississippian Frontier," pp. 186-187.

143. Jim Glanville, "Native American Salt Making at Saltville, Virginia," paper presented at the Joint Southeastern Archaeological Conference and Midwest Archaeological Conference meeting, October 22, 2004, St. Louis, Missouri.
144. Jim Glanville, "Saltville, Pre-contact Salt Making, and Spaniards," paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Archeological Society of Virginia, October 31, 2004, Lexington, Virginia.
145. Brisco, *Indian Remains*. The author found this report in the archives of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources in the summer of 2004.
146. Brisco, "Archaeological Notes."
147. Nathan Brisco, "Archaeological Notes on Smyth County," *Marion Democrat*, Tuesday June 13, 1933.
148. Ian W. Brown, "A Study of Stone Box Graves in Eastern North America," *Tennessee Anthropologist*, 6(1) (1981): 1-26. Figure 3 of Brown's paper shows a distribution map of stone box graves. They approximately center near Knoxville, Tennessee.
149. Howard MacCord, personal communication, 2004.
150. Nathan Brisco, "Archaeological Notes on Smyth County," *Marion Democrat*, Tuesday June 6, 1933.
151. The author has met members of the insurance profession who remember Brisco. However, no living, former *tombarolo* was aware of Brisco or his archeological work.
152. Wedel, "Archeological Reconnaissance."
153. Michael G. Michlovic, "The Early Prehistoric Archeological Resources of Saltville, Smyth Co., Virginia," *Archeological Society of Virginia Quarterly Bulletin*, 31(2) (1975): 101-105.
154. Robey Maiden, "Tales That Dead Men Tell."
155. Professional confirmation of the extent to which burials in the region have been looted comes from MacCord "Intermontane," 1989, who says that 1972 excavations showed 16 of 21 professionally excavated graves at Sullins had been previously opened by *tombaroli*. Egloff, "Late Woodland in SW VA"( 1992), states that 19 of 22 professionally excavated graves at Bonham had been previously opened by *tombaroli*.
156. Heye was a legendary collector whose collection, in effect, became the recently-opened National Museum of the American Indian. See Clara Sue Kidwell, "Every Last Dishcloth: The Prodigious Collecting of George Gustav Heye," pp. 232-258 in *Collecting Native America*, ed. Shepard Krech, III, and Barbara A. Hail (Washington: Smithsonian Institute Press, 1999). See also Roland W. Force, *Politics and the Museum of the American Indian: The Heye and the Mighty* (Honolulu: The Mechas Press, 1999).
157. Patricia Nietfeld of the recently-opened National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI) found this correspondence after the author inquired about possible artifact donations by Robey Maiden to the Smithsonian collections.
158. Henry E. Diggs, "Saltville's Robey Maiden."
159. Robey Maiden, "Tales That Dead Men Tell."

160. The author has seen pictures of a portion of the C. C. Hatfield artifact collection. Copper artifacts were plentiful in that collection, but their provenance cannot now be ascertained.
161. The term "almost find" was coined by MacCord in "Intermontane."
162. Ben C. McCary, "Reported by Robey Maiden."
163. Howard A. MacCord, Sr., "Late Pleistocene Remains Found in Virginia," *Quarterly Bulletin of the Archeological Society of Virginia*, 18: 61-62 (1964). MacCord wrote: "What we need, and need badly in Virginia, is to find human bones or artifacts reliably associated with bones of some of the big game animals. ...The one 'almost' find we have on record so far is that by R. W. Pickle in Saltville, Va."
164. Frank B. Sanders, "Pickle's Private Collection."
165. This temple site would be one of many locations in Saltville worthy of consideration for a modern, professional archeological investigation.
166. Meyers, "Mississippian Frontier," p. 180.
167. C. C. Hatfield, "Southwest Virginia Indians. The Description of a Scientific Exhibit at the Medical Society of Virginia Meeting, October 8-10, 1961." Copy in author's files.
168. Ben W. Thompson, ed., *Who's Who in Indian Relics No. 3* (St. Louis, Missouri: Parks and Thompson, 1972). Charles Burnette is pictured on page 62 with a collection of his artifacts identified as being "mostly from southwest Virginia." On page 63 are pictured a large, 6x5-inch rattlesnake gorget and an "Earth, Moon, and Stars" gorget, both reported as being from Smyth County. Fred Sharpe of Marion is pictured on pages 311 and 312 but the provenance of the artifacts pictured on pages 311-314 is not given; however, the Sharpe collection clearly included at least nine gorgets.
169. H. C. Wachtel, ed., *Who's Who in Indian Relics* (Union City, Georgia: Charley G. Drake and American Indian Books, 1980), pp. 5-6. Wachtel says here "I venture to say that the people you see mentioned or pictured in this publication, have or have had, in their possession the greater portion of the fine quality Indian Relics in the United States, outside of museums." The psychology of Native-American relic collecting has been examined by David S. Rotenstein in *Ending Contexts: A Historical Perspective on Relic Collecting*, formerly on line at www.dsrotenstein.com/relics/relics/htm; copy in author's files.
170. Robert E. Bieder, *A Brief Historical Survey of the Expropriation of American Indian Remains* (Bloomington, Iowa: Robert A. Bieder, 1990). The citation comes from page 61.
171. Stephen Jay Gould, *The Mismeasure of Man* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1977).
172. Jack F. Trope and Walter Echo-Hawk, "The Native-American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act: Background and Legislative History," *Arizona State Law Journal*, 24(1992): 35-77. Hereafter Trope and Echo-Hawk "NAGPRA." Statement of Jerry Flute, p. 42.
173. Federal Judge Glen Williams of Abingdon has noted "...local people who gather up these artifacts from the soil and sell them for a small price are no

worse in their looting than museums that cart off these artifacts and then they are seen no more." (Personal communication, 2005).

174. Trope and Echo-Hawk, "NAGPRA," p. 36.

175. Ibid., p. 39.

176. Based on the record of improper archeology and reports of local informants the author guesses that disturbed graves in Smyth County and the immediately adjoining counties number many thousands — perhaps as many as 10,000.

177. Robert D. Hicks, "An End-of-Millennium (Almost) Report on Time Crime," On line at the Archeological Society of Virginia website at http://asv-archeology.org/timcrime.htm

178. Robert D. Hicks, "Time Crime: protecting the past in the United States," *Newsletter of the Illicit Antiquities Research Center*, Issue 9, Autumn 2001. On line at http://www.mcdonald.cam.ac.uk/IARC/cwoc/issue9/timecrime.htm

179. Roger Atwood, *Stealing History: Tomb Raiders, Smugglers, and the Looting of the Ancient World* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2004). Compared to the massive destruction of the archeological record around the world described in this book, what has happened in Southwest Virginia has been on a relatively small scale.

180. Ben W. Thompson, ed., "The Fraud Issue," in *Who's Who in Indian Relics, No. 5* (Kirkwood, Missouri: The Messenger Printing Co., 1980), p. 268.

181. Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Became Thinned: Native American Population Dynamics in Eastern North America* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983). European diseases were likely the prime cause of depopulation. Between 1520 and 1625 Dobyns estimates (pp. 291-295) that the Native-American population of Florida Timacuan-speakers fell from more than 700,000 to less than 40,000. On the coastal plain of Virginia, it has been estimated that the Indian population dropped from 20,000 to 1,800 between roughly 1610 and 1669, with diseases such as smallpox and measles wiping out entire villages (Egloff and Woodward, *First People*, p. 45). A similar precipitous population decline must have occurred in Southwest Virginia between the 1567 de Soto *entrada* and the later arrival of English explorers.

# Book Review

## Edited by Tom Costa

### Wilma A. Dunaway, *Slavery in the American Mountain South.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003.

Southern Appalachia's reputation for being a region where slavery was weak, the least Southern part of the Old South, has been challenged on several previous occasions. Here Wilma A. Dunaway mounts a similar but more comprehensive attack. First, she takes a comprehensive approach and considers the entire region of 215 counties in nine states. Second, her study incorporates both statistical analysis and qualitative sources. It may not be quite the definitive treatment she aspires to, but nevertheless comes close.

Dunaway begins by tracing population patterns. Slavery appeared early in the Mountain South, but its growth over time was not uniform or steady. The author identifies several reasons for interregional differences. One was the late opening of the region's southernmost frontier, following the Cherokee removal. Another, fueling the growth of slavery in the more mountainous areas, was the demand for unskilled laborers in extractive industries. The third was the export of surplus slaves to the cotton frontier. By 1860, nearly three of every ten adults in the Mountain South were enslaved, about fifteen percent of the population, with considerable difference between subregions. Free blacks, who endured substantial restrictions, augmented the slave population. About eighteen percent of households in Southern Appalachia owned slaves, compared with nearly 29 percent for the South as a whole. Yet, the slave-owning population in Appalachia dominated the politics, economy, and culture just as it did elsewhere in the antebellum South. As Dunaway shows, the lower level of slavery in the Mountain South produced a society which resembled the rest of the South more than it did the North.

Most Appalachian slaves labored on small or medium-sized plantations that mixed subsistence agriculture with the production of sur-

pluses and cash crops for the export market. Plantation owners usually managed their operation personally. Since labor needs varied over the crop cycle, slaves on small plantations were often put to other tasks, such as livestock care. Large plantations were comparatively rare due to the limited availability of fertile land. Instead, profits were invested in other regional enterprises such as mining and internal improvements. More than two-fifths of the black population was engaged in nonagricultural work. Many Appalachian slaves were employed in towns, engaged in tourism services, transportation industries, herding, and manufacturing.

Statistical analysis forms the heart of the early chapters; later chapters rely more upon qualitative sources. Chapter 5 addresses interracial relations with poor whites. Chapter 6 addresses repression and resistance, followed by a closer consideration of slave culture. This part of the book allows for slave voices to come through, but breaks less new ground. It is, however, essential for Dunaway's goal of a comprehensive treatment.

Scholars of Appalachia will find this a very useful book, but this reviewer found a couple of problems. On page 53, the author fails to distinguish between free blacks who had been bound out by the Augusta County, Virginia court and those who had been bound out in other parts of the state. On page 84, Thomas Jefferson's caretaker at his Natural Bridge property was not a slave but a former slave. These are both small problems, but raise the question about the data presented for other parts of the Mountain South with which this reviewer is less familiar. More annoying, most of the citations in chapter 7 are off by one number.

Two questions arise in terms of study design. First, while the author defines the Mountain South in terms of terrain, she defines the subregions primarily in terms of state boundaries. Why not be consistent and define subregions also by geography, such as by watersheds? Second, this reviewer had reservations about the author's decision to include counties whose western border was marked by the Blue Ridge but more properly belong to the piedmont in terms of economic and social character. It hardly comes as a surprise that this tier of southern counties was found to be different from the rest of the Mountain South.

— Ellen Eslinger
DePaul University

# Index

## A



## B

## C

## D



## E

## F



## G

## H



## I

## J



## K



## L

## M

## N

## O



## P

## R

# S

## T

## U



## V

## W

The Smithfield Review
Volume IX, 2005

*The Smithfield Review* publishes book reviews. The editors plan for each issue to carry one to three reviews of books dealing with all periods of trans-Appalachian history and culture. We enlist active scholars and professionals to write the reviews. Review copies, requests to review books, and other inquiries may be addressed to:

Tom Costa, Book Review Editor
*The Smithfield Review*
Department of History and Philosophy
The University of Virginia's College at Wise
Wise, VA 24293

*The Smithfield Review* is published annually by the Montgomery County Branch of the Association for the Preservation of Virginia Antiquities, Blacksburg, Virginia.

Subscriptions are $10 per year, including tax; please add $3.00 for shipping. Make checks payable to *The Smithfield Review.*

Proposals or manuscripts to be considered for publication are welcome. Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope. Texts may be of varying length, but should ordinarily not exceed 8,000 words. Annotations should be collected as endnotes and should follow the *Chicago Manual of Style*, latest edition.

Please address all correspondence to:

*The Smithfield Review*
555 Edgewood Lane
Blacksburg, VA 24060

Pres Sheffey literally pushed the door open a little farther to reveal what transpired in this region during three of the four years of civil war. That in itself makes his letters invaluable. ...He left for war with the same feelings inherent in every American recruit of every war: to defend hearth and home, and to fight for the way of life that was his country. At the same time, the Marion soldier gave to history through his letters a fascinating mixture of love and war.

— James I. Robertson, Jr. (pp. 15-16)

Ed Bodell died on March 1, 1959, at the age of 101. With his death, a small family enterprise ended. It remains as a memory preserved in the few pieces owned by family and serious collectors of this long-ago Blacksburg craft. — Dorothy H. Bodell (p. 25)

Indeed, Peel had uncovered a rare ballad important on at least two levels: first and oldest. It was the first example of this ballad to be documented in America ... and no ballad with older roots had ever been discovered here. ... Why was Alfreda Peel on horseback in the Virginia backwoods collecting folk ballads? Peel was one of the founding members of the Virginia Folklore Society, established in 1913. One of the first priorities set by the VFS was to identify and preserve as many ballads as possible... — John Long (p. 31)

According to the story of the deeds, four and maybe five of Blacksburg's original ten streets had names from the beginning. With one exception, they were destination names: Roanoke ... Smithfield, and Tom's Creek. — Robert B. McNeil (p. 50)

Saltville ... stands out as a uniquely important site ... Its salt made it unique. Late Pleistocene mammals left many bones at the salt lick, and recent research connecting early human activities with those bones makes Saltville an outstanding candidate to be one of a handful of pre-Clovis sites in all of the Americas. We can plausibly argue that the first ascertainable fact of North-American history was a mastodon feast in the Saltville valley about 14,500 B.C.

— Jim Glanville (p. 81)

***The Smithfield Review*, Volume IX, 2005**