

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



CACTOCTIN MOUNTAIN PARK

A Historic Resource Study

by
Dr. Edmund F. Wehrle
U.S. Coast Guard Academy

March 2000

[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

cato/hrs/hrs.htm
Last Updated: 21-Nov-2003

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



TABLE OF CONTENTS

[Cover](#)

[Introduction](#)

[Chapter 1: Settling the Catoctin](#)

- A. Native Americans
- B. Early White Exploration and Settlement
- C. Settling Western Maryland
- D. The French and Indian War
- E. The Arrival of Iron
- F. The Road to Revolution

[Chapter 2: War and Industry on the Mountain, 1776-1859](#)

- A. Introduction
- B. Forging a Revolution
- C. Revolution and the Furnace
- D. Rumsey's Steamboat
- E. Early Industry
- F. Wheat and Whiskey
- G. Catoctin Furnace from the Top Down
- H. Catoctin Furnace from the Bottom Up: Slavery
- I. The 1838 Riot
- J. The Furnace After Brien

[Chapter 3: Civil War and the Decline of Industry](#)

- A. Introduction
- B. Catoctin's Civil War
- C. "The Sound of the Steam Whistle Twice a Day"
- D. The Furnace: A Relict Industry
- E. Life and Labor at the Catoctin Furnace
- F. The Rise of Tourism

[Chapter 4: The Eve of Acquisition](#)

- A. Introduction
- B. The End of Industry on the Mountain
- C. "Pleasure Seekers": The Growth of Tourism
- D. The Wreck of the Blue Mountain Express
- E. Fire and Fire Control
- F. Moonshining and Blue Blazes
- G. The Mountain on the Eve of Acquisition

Chapter 5: A New Deal for the Mountain

- A. Introduction
- B. The Depression in Washington and Frederick Counties
- C. The New Deal in Western Maryland
- D. Bessie Darling
- E. The Birth of the Park
- F. The Ordeal of Acquisition, Part I
- G. Construction and Labor at Catoctin, Part I
- H. The Ordeal of Acquisition, Part II
- I. Construction and Labor at Catoctin, Part II
- I. Use and Segregation
- I. The CCC in the Catoctins

Chapter 6: War and Politics Shape the Park

- A. Introduction
- B. The Winds of War
- C. War
- D. Shangri-La
- E. Wartime Road Construction
- F. The War Reshapes the Park
- G. The Fate of the Park
- H. Conclusion

Prospects for Future Research

Selected Sources

Maps and Appendices

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



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[TABLE OF CONTENTS](#)

cato/hrs/hrs.htm
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Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



INTRODUCTION

Present-day Catoctin Mountain Park encompasses 5,770 acres, nestled in the hills of western Maryland. To visitors the site is both majestic and serene. No matter how crowded the park, a hiker can always find long stretches of trail to him or herself. The quiet and peace of the park today, however, masks a long and complex history. Since settlers first arrived in the region in the 1740s, the park area has witnessed both subsistence and commercial farming, industry, tourism, recreational hunting, and military usage (both during the Civil War and World War II).

Over the years, the National Park Service has made numerous efforts to document and interpret the history of the park. The lost art of charcoal making and the workings of an early sawmill, for instance, are on active display for interested park visitors. This historic resource study is part of that continuing effort to better understand and interpret the abundant cultural resources present within the park boundaries. It seeks to "address the relevant contexts for the park" and to offer "an historical framework for future interpretive and preservation efforts, and to provide baseline information for development of the Park General Management Plan."

The six chapters presented in this study depict the several overlapping phases of mountain development. The first chapter treats the Native American presence and the early, largely German, settlement of the region. Chapter 2 introduces industry to the area in the form of the Catoctin Iron Furnace. Included is a discussion of the presence of slavery at the furnace. The third chapter, focusing in particular on the Civil War, the slow decline of the iron furnace, and the emergence of a tourist industry, carries the story to the end of the nineteenth century. The mountain area on the eve of acquisition by the federal government is the subject of the fourth chapter.

The narrative takes a new direction in Chapter 5. In 1935, as part of a New Deal program to develop recreation areas near urban populations and address the problem of farmers working "submarginal land," the federal government began purchasing mountain land for a planned "recreational demonstration area." The acquisition and construction process, chronicled in Chapter 5, was anything but smooth. The final chapter treats the military's use of the park during World War II as well as the establishment and early use of the presidential retreat President Franklin D. Roosevelt called Shangri-La. Finally, tensions between the state of Maryland and the federal government over the fate of Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area are described. In the end, a compromise allowed the National Park Service to retain a large portion of the originally-purchased area, while the state of Maryland took over the southern portion of the park. This compromise between two opposing forces might be seen as representative of the many compromises and accommodations made over time—all of which ultimately shaped the present-day park.

My study comes of the heels of others, including historical work by Former Park Superintendent Frank Mentzer and author Dale Nelson. Barbara Kirkconnell's excellent administrative history of the park, covering in detail many of the important decisions that shaped the park offers an excellent companion piece to this HRS.

In the preparation of this report, I was especially indebted to members of the Catoctin Mountain Park staff who gave generously of their time, in particular to James Voigt, Roger Steintl, Sally Griffin, and Park Superintendent J. Mel Poole. Gary Scott, regional historian for the NPS, National Capital Region, proved a helpful and patient overseer. Among the many archivists and libraries who have generously of their time is Ann Cissel of the Thurmont Historical Society, as well as Louis O'Donoghue and Mary Mannix of the Frederick County Public Libraries Maryland Room. Janet L. Davis, historical preservation planner for the Frederick County Planning Commission provided expert counsel and opened her files for my use. In addition, the staffs of the Maryland Department of National Resources, the Maryland Hall of Records, the Maryland Historic Trust, and the Frederick County Historical Association proved particularly helpful. Special thanks also goes to Judith Early, of the NPS, National Capital Region, who generously read and edited draft chapters of this report.

While these individuals gave kindly of their time, and while their insights and help have made the study richer, any oversights remain the responsibility of the author.

[<<< Previous](#) [<<< Contents >>>](#) [Next >>>](#)

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter One:

Settling the Catoctins

For centuries before the arrival of European whites, the Catoctin mountain area sat largely uninhabited with the exception of occasional groups of roaming Native Americans, lured by the rich natural resources of the area. Even as white colonists settled other areas of Maryland, the western part of the state remained sparsely populated. Then, beginning in the 1740s, whites began arriving in greater numbers. Early settlers were mostly Germans, escaping the political and religious turmoil of Europe. They carried with them an intense religious devotion and proficiency in farming. Life for the early pioneers could be hard, even terrifying when war broke out. Yet the availability of large, bountiful tracts of land offered real rewards. As the revolution approached, eastern elites, largely of English origin, also began noting the rich resources of the Catoctin area. Among them were Thomas Johnson, future governor of Maryland, and his partners who planned to build a iron furnace at the foot of the mountain. Chapter 1 then is the story of pioneers, rapid development, and swift change.

Native Americans

Traveling through Maryland in the 1680s, Dutch explorer Jaspar Danckaerts was impressed by the burgeoning colony, but he sensed that something was missing. "There are few Indians," noted the Dutchman, "in comparison with the extent of the country." He blamed the English for having "almost exterminated" the native population. [1] The relative paucity of Indians in Maryland actually was a permanent feature of the region and predated the arrival of the English by centuries. But Danckaerts' general point was correct: Native Americans did not populate Maryland as heavily as they did other areas of North America. And within the Maryland region, no area had a smaller Indian population than western Maryland, which reflected the general trend of sparse inhabitation found in the northern and central Appalachian region. [2]

During the Paleo-Indian era (1300-7500 BC) the first Native Americans entered the continent by crossing the Bering Strait. Nomadic hunters, these early travelers left few traces. Still, archeologists have uncovered enough evidence to establish that such early natives did inhabit the region that became Maryland. [3] Gradually as the climate warmed and forests developed, the early Indian population increased--especially around the waterways of the Chesapeake. By the Woodland period (2000 BC-1600 AD), agricultural villages and organized tribes had emerged in the coastal areas. [4]

The Blue Ridge and Monocacy Valley areas, however, contained significantly fewer occupants than eastern areas. Some scholars have theorized that during the Woodland period and after western Maryland served as a buffer zone between coastal settlements and the western Indians occupying the Ohio Valley.

Yet archeologists have uncovered significant evidence that western Maryland was not completely uninhabited. In the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries, amateur archeologists such as E.R. Goldsborough began making surveys of the Monocacy Valley and

Catoctin area. His surveys pointed to numerous sites containing evidence of Native American inhabitation. Although Native American sites in Eastern Maryland continue to draw the majority of scholarly interest, by the second half of the twentieth century, building on the work of Goldsborough, professional archeological surveys were underway in western Maryland. These studies suggest that native Americans did value and seek to exploit the rich natural resources available in the region.

More than anything else, the Catoctin and Monocacy areas served as fertile hunting grounds for eastern tribes. Around the mountains, exploring parties pursued deer and other game. In order to facilitate hunting in the uninhabited territory, Native Americans set brush fires to clear out game. At times the fires burnt with such fury that they could be smelled forty miles away. [5] Also of value were the rich deposits of rhyolite available in the western mountains. [6] Rhyolite could be fashioned into arrowheads, hoes, and other important tools. Those in search of the compound would dig small pits into the flattops of ridges. [7] The work of local archeologist Spencer O. Geasey in the 1960s and 1970s, focusing on rock shelters and rhyolite pits in Frederick County, stirred interest and suggested the need for more archaeological work. [8]

Between 1978 and 1980, the Maryland Geological Survey conducted an "intensive archeological reconnaissance" of upper Frederick County. As part of the survey, Michael Stewart excavated "aboriginal quarries" along the west slope of Catoctin Mountain near Foxville. Seeming to date from the Woodland period, the site was "characterized by large amounts of primary chipping debris, few diagnostics, and occasionally by small pits against the face of the outcrop." Finding ample evidence of rhyolite manufacturing, Stewart and the survey group concluded that the site might have been part of a larger "rhyolite procurement and processing system." Although, little is known of the mechanics of this system, archeologists hypothesize the existence of "a regional exchange network operating between bands or by movement of groups from the Coastal Plains to the interior processing camps." [9] What one archeologist characterized as "periodically revisited temporary" camps existed in the area to support to the rhyolite extraction. [10]

Other Western Maryland excavations have indicated more permanently inhabited sites. State archeologist Tyler Bastian excavated a Monocacy Valley site called Biggs Ford Village, where he found an ornament and other artifacts from the Late Woodland Period. [11] More recently, in 1992, the Archeological Society of Maryland initiated a major effort to excavate a Late-Woodland site high on a bluff over the Monocacy river, northwest of the present site of the Frederick Airport. While preliminary investigations do not lend themselves to absolute conclusions, the Rosenstock Village site, as it was named, did contain evidence of a possible permanent settlement. [12] Future digs may someday fill out the picture of prehistoric life in the Monocacy Valley region, but preliminary surveys suggest that temporary camps existed in the Catoctin Mountain area, while more permanent, yet still small, dwelling areas lay to the south--especially along the Potomac.

Clearly, the major source of transportation for the Native Americans sojourning in Western Maryland were the Potomac and Monocacy Rivers. But there also appear to have been a series of Indian trails allowing for passage through some of the more difficult terrain. Although nearly impossible to recreate, such trails do seem to have provided the basis for the later Monocacy wagon road, which sliced diagonally through the region from eastern Pennsylvania to central Virginia (see Map 1). [13]

With the arrival of European settlers in Maryland, beginning in the 1630s, a clearer picture emerges of the native population in the region. Early accounts from white settlers suggest a state of tension between coastal Indians and their neighbors to the northwest. Smaller tribes--in particular the Piscataway (also known as the Conoys) and Nanticokes, both from the

Algonquian language group--occupied the Chesapeake area. [14] To their north and west were the Susquehannock, a more warlike tribe, which made its home on the Susquehanna River. The Susquehanna--related to the Iroquois-- but not part of the confederation-- frequently clashed with both their Algonquian neighbors to the south and the confederacy to the north. [15] These series of raids and battles may have discouraged permanent settlement in the western reaches of Maryland, which sat as disputed territory between warring tribes.

Intertribal tensions also shaped early relations with the newly arrived Europeans in the 1630s. The Chesapeake Algonquian tribes strove to establish good relations with the whites, so as to tip the scales against the Susquehanna. They shared their technology with the newcomers and introduced Europeans to maize, beans, pumpkins, and squash. [16] But good relations were not to last. Lord Baltimore, after essentially removing the Susquehanna threat, turned on his Indian allies. [17] By the late seventeenth century, the proprietary government of Maryland had forced the Piscataway out of the Chesapeake region. Most moved to Pennsylvania, but some settled temporarily near Point of Rocks, on Heater's Island, on the Potomac River. [18] By the 1720s, the tribe had left Maryland completely. [19]

The displacement caused by the arrival of white Europeans brought other Native American tribes briefly to the Monocacy Valley region. Leaving their native South Carolina, the Algonkian Shawnee tribe temporarily inhabited the region before moving further north. [20] At other junctures, the Delaware and the Catawbias used the Monocacy River for travel and hunting purposes. The Tuscarora tribe, originally from the Carolinas, moved northward, after the Tuscarora war in 1711-1713. An English map from 1721 clearly shows a Tuscarora village at the mouth of the Monocacy River on the Frederick County side. The tribe, of course, also gave its name to the creek flowing to the south of the present-day park. [21] Like other eastern tribes during the difficult eighteenth century, the Tuscarora only briefly made Maryland their home before moving westward.

By the second decade of the eighteenth century, then, most Indians tribes had passed through western Maryland onto points further west. Although they dramatically reasserted themselves during the French and Indian War, on the eve of the white settlement of western Maryland, Native Americans were simply not a factor in the region.

Early White Exploration and Settlement

The absence of hostile Indians, however, did not lead to the immediate European settlement of Western Maryland. Indeed the first whites to come to the mid-Atlantic region (arriving in 1607) remained primarily in the Chesapeake area for almost a century. The appeal of the Tidewater region rested on the profitability of tobacco. By the late seventeenth century-- while western Maryland remained largely uninhabited--thriving plantations, a self-indulgent gentry, and an African slave-based labor system had sprung up in the Chesapeake. Since good tobacco could not be cultivated in the western reaches of the colony, there existed little interest in exploration and development. [22] The absence of a navigable river in central western Maryland, the threat of Indian raids, and an ongoing border dispute between Maryland and Pennsylvania also worked to discourage settlement of the region. [23] While eastern Maryland thrived, western Maryland sat virtually vacant of white settlers.

By the early-eighteenth century, however, the market for tobacco had softened and the colonies began to diversify their economies. [24] Like the Native Americans whom they had displaced from the Tidewater region, European settlers began to look west in hope of exploiting the rich natural resources of the region. Trappers, traders, and missionaries were frequent visitors to the area by the early part of the century. In 1712, explorer Baron de Graffenried climbed Sugar Loaf Mountain and recorded: "We discovered from this height three chains of mountains, the last higher than the one before, somewhat distant and a very

fine valley between the first ranges." Soon squatters and a few other hearty souls began setting up permanent homes in the region. [25]

The Chesapeake gentry, seeking investment opportunities, also grew interested. In 1727, a Chesapeake planter, Benjamin Tasker acquired a patent for 7,000 acres, west of the Monocacy, roughly twelve miles up the Potomac. The investor called his purchase "Tasker's Chance," as if to underscore the still risky nature of western ventures. Maryland's colonial government--seeking to encourage settlement of the backcountry--issued a proclamation in 1732 waiving the usual 40 shillings Sterling per 100 acre fee to anyone who would settle land in the western holdings of the colony. [26]

Yet settlement was hampered by a bitter debate over the exact boundaries of Maryland. Pennsylvania claimed much of the land west of the Susquehanna (which, of course, would include the present-day park). Indeed, Maryland's interest in populating the area had everything to do with efforts to buttress its claims against Pennsylvania. Quickly the dispute turned violent and a bitter war broke out in the 1730s. English-born pioneer Thomas Cresap--a robust Daniel Boone-type character--was Maryland's chief defender. His wife, known to sport a gun, two pistols, a scalping knife, and a tomahawk, was no less committed to the cause. To Cresap, area farmers loyal to Pennsylvania were "poachers." When captured by Pennsylvania authorities in 1736 and brought to Philadelphia to stand trial, Cresap infuriated his captors by declaring Penn's city, "one of the Prettyst [sic] Towns in Maryland." [27]

The bitter conflict slowed settlement of the Monocacy Valley region even as immigrants began passing through the region and noting its potential. Fleeing religious persecution and dwindling economic opportunity, Germans, especially from the Palatinate region of the Rhine, began migrating in large numbers to Pennsylvania in the 1730s. By 1750, the population of Pennsylvania was one half-German. Seeking inexpensive but fertile land, some Germans moved southwest from Pennsylvania, along the Monocacy Road or "Great Wagon Road." [28] Most likely an outgrowth of the old Indian trail through the region, the Monocacy route began in Pennsylvania on the west side of the Susquehanna at Wrightsville, then proceeded through York and Hanover counties to Taneytown, Maryland. From there, the road moved into the future Frederick County through the future Williamsport, then southwesterly across the Monocacy and Potomac. [29] Germans traveling the road might have been tempted to join the smattering of settlers already in western Maryland, but, despite the promises of Maryland's leaders, they feared paying double taxes or getting caught in the violent cross fire between warring colonies. [30] Most, therefore, pressed onward to the Shenendoah Valley.

By the 1740s, the conflict had settled somewhat, although it would fester for another thirty years. By that time Benjamin Tasker's son-in-law, Daniel Dulany, was ready to take the initiative in settling the area. Acquiring his father-in-law's land in 1744, Dulany hired Thomas Cresap to conduct a survey of western Maryland. Cresap reported that land in the Monocacy Valley equaled if not surpassed "any in America for natural Advantages." Encouraged, Dulany patented other land in the area, and subdivided Tasker's Chance, initially offering plots at bargain prices. [31] Although a member of the Chesapeake gentry, Dulany actively sought to attract Germans to his holdings. With a reputation as solid, industrious farmers, Dulany thought them to be the perfect pioneers to tame his land, and he offered them land sometimes at below cost. [32]

Many Germans took up Dulaney's offer. The 7,000 acres that made up Tasker's original chancy purchase soon became the site of a thriving city named for Lord Baltimore's son, Frederick. Many others, having accumulated enough money to purchase land themselves, took up residence to the north of Tasker's Chance, along the Monocacy River, near the Catoctin Mountains. The area had real appeal to German immigrants. The attractions,

according to historian Elizabeth Kessel, included a "large measure of civil and religious freedom and unprecedented opportunity of owning . . . and accumulating large amounts of land . . . for a simple fee and only a minor obligation of a quitrent (annual tax), and land could be passed on to heirs with full force of law." [33]

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

cato/hrs/hrs1.htm
Last Updated: 21-Nov-2003

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter Two:

War and Industry on the Mountain

Introduction

In 1841, *The Baltimore Phoenix and Budget* carried a long article reflecting on a half-century of change having occurred in the shadow of the Catoctin mountains. The piece began by recalling the idyllic state of the mountain and environs in the late eighteenth century: "At that period . . . almost uninterrupted forest; and game of various descriptions. . . the frightful shrieks of the howling wolf were heard at night." But "a few years brought the woodman's axe in fearful conflict with the mighty oak that had withstood the blasts of many winter, and the majestic trees whose towering height almost pierced the clouds all were laid low." By the early nineteenth century, explained the author: "Now how changed the scene! The p'ough is seen gliding o'er the horizontal plain, attached to furious steeds, and the husbandman is heard merrily whistling, as the chargers fling the foam--now the clank of busy mechanic, and the rattling of chariot-wheels, and the hum of business are always heard." The once peaceable mountains, according to the writer, had changed forever. [1]

This chapter covers the evolution of the area, later to become Catoctin Mountain Park. It carries the story through a time of tumultuous change--from the time of the American Revolution through to the 1830s. While the region remained primarily agricultural, industry, in the form of the iron works, increasingly changed the face of the area both environmentally and socially. To the already diverse Catoctin population was added a new group--African slaves who worked in the furnace. Their work was often brutally hard. But industrial slavery at Catoctin appears to have been a fundamentally different experience from the plantation slavery also practiced at the time.

Forging a Revolution

In 1775, a band of western Marylanders, led by Michael Cresap, marched off to join their colonial brothers under siege in Boston. This was not unexpected. Most residents of the upper Monocacy and Catoctin region were strong supporters of the movement for American independence. The English-descended elites in the region had plenty of reason to resent their colonial overlords. Many were in debt. Others were angered by high taxes. Still others were beset by the mercantile regulations imposed by the British Parliament that circumscribed their businesses. Nor did the Germans in the area have any great allegiance to Great Britain. Many had come to America to escape religious persecution, and efforts to tighten imperial control did not sit well with a population that prized religious and political freedom. Rumors freely circulated that the British planned to impose Church of England practices on all dissenters. Likewise, the Germans--barred by colonial law from voting--felt alienated from the civic life of the region. [2]

Many in the Catoctin area contributed both materially and with their lives to the American cause. [3] Unlike the previous French and Indian War and the future Civil War, there was to be no fighting in the immediate Catoctin vicinity. Nevertheless, western Marylanders

volunteered in large numbers to aid the new nation's cause. With a estimated 130,000 colonists of German origin, the continental army organized special German regiments. Most members of the special force came from Maryland and Pennsylvania. German regiment officers were bilingual, but German was the spoken language among the ranks. These special regiments saw action in both the Trenton and Princeton campaigns and spent time at Valley Forge. [4]

Germans from Frederick County and newly-formed Washington County (created out of the Western portion of Frederick County in 1776) served in the German regiments. [5] A survey of the German regiment muster rolls, however, turns up none of the prominent family names from the Catoctin area. However, members of the Frederick County--Middle District regiment did include a few familiar family names including Vallentine Creager, Ludwick Moser, and Michael Fox. Members of the Frederick Company Third District organized out of Emmitsburg included Philip and John Weller, Lawrence Freagers, and Peter Shover (who owned a small farm on what would later become parkland). First Lieutenant Frederick Nicodemus (ancestor of a Nicodemus who owned the furnace property in the twentieth century), headed up the Flying Camp in Washington County. [6]

The paucity of Catoctin-area names among the ranks of Maryland's soldiers may have been due to incomplete records, but also may have related to religious strictures against war. For instance, despite their sympathy for the American cause, Moravian beliefs forbade the taking up of arms. Nevertheless, the Graceham Church recorded that patriotism led some members of the congregation to join the Continental army despite their pacifistic convictions. [7]

American officials viewed those Marylanders who did fight, including those in the German regiments, as among the best soldiers in the continental army. After fighting with distinction in the northern campaigns, the Maryland soldiers were redeployed. They passed through their home state on their way south to the Carolinas. This would be the next theater of the war. In the Southern campaigns, General Nathaniel Greene exalted that, "nothing could exceed the gallantry of the Maryland line." Others recalled the Maryland forces as having "the hottest blood in the union." [8]

Frederick County was not the scene of much fighting, but it made invaluable contributions to the war effort. With its rich wheat fields, the county, claimed one historian, became the "breadbasket of the Revolution," supplying hungry troops and making up for crops destroyed in the many military campaigns of the war. [9] The emerging industries of the region also provided for the military needs of the war. An important powder depository and gunlock factory was situated in Frederick City. There was also a prison camp in the city which held captured Hessian soldiers. [10] Other important powder mills could be found in Antietam and along the Monocacy River. [11]

Revolution and the Furnace

Frederick County's important role in the war could be credited in part to Thomas Johnson's increasingly central role in the government of the new nation. Johnson, along with his brothers, had numerous business interests in Western Maryland--including the brand new Catoctin iron furnace. Earlier he had helped draft many of the early colonial protests to the King's imperial policies. As a wealthy, well-connected patriot, Johnson was elected to the Continental Congress where, in turn, he nominated his friend George Washington to be commander-in-chief of the continental army. Johnson proved to be a well-respected and important member of congress. Fellow congressman John Adams commented that although not a great orator, "Johnson of Maryland, has a clear and cool head . . . He is a deliberating man." [12]

In January 1776, Johnson's home colony tapped his talents when its Provincial Convention elected him Brigadier General of the Militia. In this position Johnson had the challenging duty of raising supplies and money to arm the new army. The job kept him so occupied that he missed the debate and signing of the Declaration of Independence. His work was demanding and allowed Johnson to utilize his immense network of business interests and contacts. On February 13, 1777, the Maryland legislature elected Johnson the first governor of the state. He was inaugurated amid a lavish ceremony in Annapolis on March 13, 1777. [\[13\]](#)

By the time of the American Declaration of Independence, Johnson's long-planned furnace at the foot of the Catoctin mountains was nearly completed--just in time to meet the demands of war. Continuing uncertainty exists as to the exact contribution made by Johnson's Catoctin Furnace during the Revolution. With few surviving records of the operations of the furnace (even for the late nineteenth and early twentieth-century), current research can do little beyond pointing to probabilities. In the case of the Revolutionary War, it does appear that some war materials were produced from iron manufactured at Catoctin. On July 17, 1776, the colonial Council of Safety contacted Thomas Johnson and his brother, James, a colonel in the Continental Army and proprietor of the furnace about the possibility of producing cannon balls and shot from the furnace. The Council of Safety was the revolutionary body in charge of virtually all elements of war preparation and life in the new nation, and it needed the Johnson's help:

"Sir. We are in want of about 20 41b Cannon, 20 31b and 20 21b and 40 Swivels for the use of the Province and desire to know whether you will engage to furnish us with those quantities immediately--if you can, be pleased to favor us as soon as possible with your terms and the time by which you will have them made, the-it will be such more agreeable to us to see you upon the occasion. We shall likewise want 200 Iron Potts, some to contain 4 and other 2 Gallons, with Gales or Handles to supply the place of Camp Kettles, and should be glad you would advise us whether you could also cast them for us and by what time, likewise the price." [\[14\]](#)

On behalf of his brother, Thomas Johnson replied to the Council. He explained that "our furnace is not yet in blast," but there was on hand "a few potts of about the size you describe." Johnson promised an effort to meet the Council's needs. Meanwhile, he assured the council that his "brother is getting his furnace into Blast with all Diligence and hopes to effect it within a fortnight. You may then have any number of potts and kettles that you please within a short time." Johnson also promised "to cast such guns as are wanted but cannot contract for them in all Events because the metal may not suit, although we have every Reason to expect it will." [\[15\]](#)

Most interested in the guns, the council quickly replied: "If your Brother's Iron is suitable for casting Guns we could contract with you for fifty three pounders, fifty four-pounders, and seventy five Swivels to Carry one point Ball." [\[16\]](#) With the Council's offer to purchase guns, the paper trail ends. By September 1777, the Johnson furnace was fully functioning and the partners were advertising for the sale of "[s]alt pans, ten feet square and fifteen inches deep with crews ready to join an fit them up made at Catoctin Furnace about 10 miles from Frederick Town at 551 per ton." [\[17\]](#) Presumably the Johnson's Bush Creek Forge, built in the mid-1770s near the mouth of Bush Creek, three to five miles from Frederick City, forged the iron produced at Catoctin. The Johnson Forge included a rolling and slitting mill, although these might have been added later. [\[18\]](#)

Several years later, in 1780 James Johnson and his partners contracted with the Board of War to "prepare for casting ten inch shells . . . for the use of the United States." Johnson was to

ship the shells to Baltimore and be paid in continental dollars. The Board of War, however, seemed to have had reservations about Johnson's abilities to produce the shells. The contract required that the partners "use their best Endeavors" and instructed that "if they can succeed in Casting them" to follow specific instructions for the delivery of the shells. [19] The writers of the contract apparently had some doubt that the Johnson furnace could produce the shells. On the other hand, it was wartime and uncertainties abounded.

No specific evidence could be found that Catoctin Furnace contributed to the production of Revolutionary War munitions. There is ample evidence, however, of discussion relating to munitions manufacturing and the Johnson Furnace. One could surmise that given the Johnson family connections and the length of the war, which lasted seven years following the first blast of the furnace, the Catoctin Furnace did produce iron--either for shot, cannon balls, guns or swivels. At the very least, it appears almost certain that Catoctin iron produced "potts" and other products for the war effort. The Johnson works was a new, centrally-located furnace owned by a well-connected patriotic family. It would be difficult to believe that the Johnson enterprise did not contribute to the war effort.

The announcement of American victory brought tremendous celebration to Frederick County. Fireworks accented festivities in Frederick City, while residents of upper Frederick County enjoyed a victory celebration on Israel Creek. [20] The legacies of the Revolution were many, including the introduction and elevation of industry in the former frontier region. One of the most immediate impacts was the introduction of a new group of German immigrants to the area--Hessian soldiers, many of them former prisoners of war, who decided to stay in the New World. [21] Some apparently found employment in the furnace, eventually becoming key operators. [22]

Rumsey's Steamboat

One of the most interesting events in which the newly built Catoctin Iron Furnace played a role was the launching of James Rumsey's steam ship on the Potomac in 1787. The event grew out of the friendship and common interests of Governor Johnson and George Washington. Both owned land along the Potomac, and both eagerly sought to improve upon their investments. Along with other prominent figures, the two formed the Potomac Company to promote development along the river. Washington served as president of the organization, and Johnson was an active member of the board of directors. [23]

The company hired James Rumsey, an enterprising inventor from Cecil County, Maryland, as its superintendent. Rumsey used his position to generate interest in his plans to construct a steam-powered boat. When he submitted a preliminary proposal to the company, General Washington immediately saw the potential. The founding father declared "that the discovery is of vast importance . . . and if it succeeds (of which I have no doubt) that the value of it is greatly enhanced by the simplicity of the works which, when seen and explained, may be executed by the most common mechanic." [24]

In 1785, Rumsey and Washington visited Thomas Johnson in his Fredericktown home to discuss the manufacturing of needed parts at the Johnson iron works. [25] Over the next couple of months, Johnson's brother, James, attempted to forge and cast the necessary parts. The Catoctin Furnace, however, proved inadequate to the task. Thomas Johnson then arranged to have the cylinders made from copper in Frederick City. [26]

Two years later, Rumsey's ship was ready. On December 3, 1787, a large crowd gathered in Shepardsstown, Virginia on the Potomac to witness the first run of Rumsey's engine-powered ship. A vertical pump, seated in the middle of the vessel, driven by a steam engine powered the inventor's eighty-foot long boat. As the crowd looked on, Rumsey's boat struggled up to

about four-miles per hour before dying out. [27]

Rumsey was not alone in experimenting with steam engines in the 1780s. Others, including John Fitch of Connecticut were developing similar engines. A bitter debate broke out as to whose engine was actually the first. [28] Seeking to promote his case, Rumsey cited the experiments at Catoctin Furnace--which must have taken place in 1785 or 1786--to bolster his claim to have been first in inventing the steam technology. [29]

While Rumsey's engine was hardly ready for immediate commercial utilization and may not have been unique, his invention suggested a real future in steam travel. Robert Fulton's steam ship in 1807 and the rapid spread of the railroad, of course, later realized this. The Johnson enterprise did not produce any of the parts used in Rumsey's engine. But having played a role in the important experiments leading to the steam engine, the Catoctin area can claim a small part in the work of a man whom Thomas Jefferson called "the most original and greatest mechanical genius I have ever seen." [30]

Early Industry

Others in the Catoctin region soon followed the Johnson brothers in exploring the potential of industry. By the early nineteenth century, numerous small industries had sprung up east of the mountains, especially in the town soon incorporated as Mechanicstown. One of the first was a 1793 tannery constructed by Daniel Rouzer, a German immigrant who had first passed through New Jersey before coming to the Catoctin area (see Map 2). The tannery, set on Owens Creek, made use of the tanning agent found in the bark of abundant oak tree bark found in the area. Heavy stones crushed the bark and water from nearby creeks allowed for the soaking of animal hides. The business prospered and remained in family hand when Daniel Rouzer's son John took over the tannery in 1815. [31]

Other tanneries followed. The Wampler Tannery opened for business in 1810. Ten years later, Captain W.L. Jones of Baltimore built a two-story, stone-faced tannery, containing 200 vats for soaking, located on Hunting Creek. [32] The creek's flowing water propelled a large "grinding apparatus," and the tannery yearly consumed some 2,000 cords of bark, employed fifteen men, and produced 25,000 hides of leather per year. [33]

Other industries developed east of the mountains in the early national period including a snuff factory in Graceham, an extensive edge-tool manufactory erected in 1811, and a matchmaking factory begun by the Weller family. [34] Meanwhile, into the early nineteenth century, the Johnsons continued to expand their business enterprises. Alongside his furnace, James Johnson also owned a flour mill on Fishing Creek. [35]

Each of these early industries made ample use of one of the region's most abundant natural resources--timber. In fact, logging was a major mountain area industry. Sawmills, which were features of the mountain since the arrival of white settlers, continued to operate and expand. When Catoctin Furnace owner James Johnson sold 715 acres of mountain land roughly a half mile from his business, "abounding with chesnut, locust, poplar, and oaks of all kinds," he made sure to mention the additional presence of "a saw mill that would work four or six months in the year." [36] Ten years later Johnson put on the market "325 acres of heavily timbered Mountain land." Again the land was within a mile of his furnace. Johnson suggested that the land might be divided into four to six lots, and among the enticements, he trumpeted a "saw mill set and a seat for a distillery or tanyard." [37] No doubt dozens of other sawmills dotted the Catoctin area.

Small industry also proliferated along Hunting Creek as it flowed through the valley at the foot of the mountain. Soon locals began calling the area Mechanicstown for the large number of mechanics operating in the area. In 1882, Andrew Sefton, longtime resident of

Mechanicstown, recalled his arrival: "I came to this town, April 1st 1831. It then numbered about three hundred inhabitants and was a very business place for its size." Sefton married one of the daughters of Jacob Weller and settled down. In the 1830s, he recalled:

"seven tanners in town and vicinity, two blacksmith shops, a tilt hammer, grand stone, polishing wheel and turning lathe, all propelled by water power, one wool and cloth factory, two shoemaker shops three tailors, three weavers, one gunsmith, one silversmith, two wagon and coach shops, two mill-wrights, three cabinet maker and house carpenter shops, one saddler, one hatter, one doctor, three stone and brick masons, three hotels and a match factory." [38] In 1832, the thriving settlement was incorporated as the town of Mechanicstown.

Growing industry, of course, required transportation, a perennial problem in the mountainous Catoctin area. What roads existed as the new century began often were barely passable. Many were essentially dirt trails through dense forest, with tree stumps cut at 16 inches so axles could clear them. Frenchman Ferdinand M. Bayard, traveling through Frederick County in the early nineteenth century, found himself "confronted with abominable roads . . . where one runs the risk of being upset at any moment on sharp stones or of being thrown into mudholes." [39] Travel by stagecoach from Baltimore to Hagerstown in 1803 required one to board the coach in Baltimore at three in the morning, arriving in Frederick by evening. A second coach in Frederick, again departing at three in the morning, arrived in Hagerstown by early afternoon. Fare for the two-day journey was three dollars and an extra dollar and a half for additional luggage. [40] There does not appear to have been a coach that traveled north from Frederick during this period.

With Baltimore the largest growing city in the country by the 1790 pressure grew to create a network of useful, passable roads radiating out from the city. Turnpike companies were incorporated to build the necessary links. One of the first construction endeavors was a turnpike from Baltimore to Frederick, which, by 1807, was extended to Boonsborough, and later to Williamsport, where it could link up with routes along the Potomac River. [41] Construction of the famed National Road then followed. The road linked existing roads to a major turnpike that ran from Cumberland, Maryland, on the Potomac River to Wheeling, Virginia on the Ohio River.

In the Catoctin area, the first phase of the transportation revolution involved the Westminister-Hagerstown Turnpike completed in 1816, which connected to the National Road in Hagerstown (see Map 2). The Turnpike ran through Mechanicstown and Harmon's Gap (a portion of the pike that appeared to have been called Harmon's Gap Road) and what became Mechanicstown. [42] Within a few years, the Frederick-Emmitsburg Turnpike, passing through Creagerstown to the east of Mechanicstown was also completed. [43]

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter Three:

Civil War and Decline of Industry

Introduction

The Catoctin area had been fortunate not to have experienced fighting during the Revolutionary War. The region would not be so fortunate during the Civil War. Memories of the dislocations and fears wrought by the Civil War long lingered for generations in the mountain area. Following the war, the second half of the nineteenth century continued to bring change. A changing economy threatened and eventually subsumed the furnace. Meanwhile, the first signs emerged that the Catoctins might one day become a recreation and vacation area. For those farming in the mountains, however, such changes were hardly noticeable. And subsistence agriculture continued in many ways as it had since the arrival of the first settlers.

Catoctin's Civil War

"Maryland, by the mid-nineteenth century," wrote historian Robert Brugger, "had become a sectional netherland, a mix of free and slave economy, Northern and Southern cultures." [1] Throughout the 1840s and 1850s, tensions between North and South mounted. As a true border state in every sense of the term, Maryland (and more specifically Frederick and Washington Counties) sat geographically along an unenviable fault line. By the 1850s, there was little hope of delaying the inevitable conflict between North and South. Western Maryland suffered terribly during the war. While the upper areas of Frederick County were spared the worst of the fighting, the region still experienced the uncertainty, fear, dislocation, and occasional violence of the conflict.

In the fall of 1859, rumors swept across western Maryland of some sort of a riot or battle in Harper's Ferry. "Conspicuous among the rumors," reported the Frederick newspaper, "was the alarming statement, that the outbreak was a Negro insurrection." [2] The event was John Brown's raid on the Harper's Ferry arsenal, which the insurrectionist hoped would be the beginning of a revolution. When the local militia proved unable to handle the situation a company under Colonel Robert E. Lee, which included soldiers from Frederick County, quickly contributed a company to restore peace to Harper's Ferry. [3]

The next trauma came with the election of 1860. The newly formed Republican Party, and its nominee Abraham Lincoln, had its strength in the North and West. Meanwhile, the Democratic Party was badly split and nominated two candidates--Stephen Douglas, from the North and John Beckinridge, representing southern sentiments. A fourth candidate, John Bell of Tennessee, ran as a member of the Constitution Party, advocating some sort of eleventh-hour compromise. Beckinridge won Mechanicstown with 189 votes, followed closely by Bell with 182. Stephen Douglas, the Democratic candidate from the north, earned 7 votes and Lincoln only 6. Meanwhile in Hauvers District, west of Mechanicstown, Beckinridge won overwhelmingly with 154 votes, Bell won 46 votes, Douglas 27, and Lincoln only three. In the end, Lincoln won only 103 votes in all of Frederick County. [4] But the Republican

candidate, with the other parties deeply split, won enough votes nationwide to become the new president. The prospect of a Lincoln presidency sent chills through western Maryland. In mid-November, *The Frederick Herald* could offer only a prayer: "May God in his mercy avert the dangers so threateningly." [5]

Clearly significant sympathy for the southern cause existed in western Maryland. In December 1860, a countywide convention met in Frederick City in an attempt to establish a common approach to the coming troubles. But the convention split roughly in half between unionists and secessionists and no progress could be made. [6] Towns in southern Frederick County--such as Urbana, Buckeystown, and Petersville--all were particularly pro-South. In areas to the north, such as the upper-Catoctin region, opinions tended to be split. Bell's strong showing certainly suggests that many in Mechanicstown/Hauvers District areas hoped that conflict could be put off. But there was much pro-southern sentiment to be found even in the northern portions of Frederick County. In the growing town of Mechanicstown, in 1861 Isaiah Wolfersberger began the first newspaper, *The Family Visitor*, a weekly with a decidedly pro-southern orientation.

Among the strongest secessionists in the county were a member of the family that owned Catoctin furnace and a descendent of the family that had built the facility. Jacob Kunkle, the politically-savvy lawyer who had entered into a partnership with Fitzhugh and whose family later gained sole ownership of the furnace, actively promoted the southern cause. Fluent in German, Kunkle--often addressing audiences in German--campaigns aggressively for Beckinridge. [7] In addition, Bradley Tyler Johnson, grandson of former furnace owner Baker Johnson, and grand-nephew of Governor Thomas Johnson, was perhaps Frederick County's most outspoken southern sympathizer. Like Kunkle, Johnson campaigned for Beckinridge, and when Lincoln moved to invade Baltimore in the spring of 1861, attempted to mobilize local secessionists to block Union troops. [8]

Lincoln's invasion of Baltimore was certainly symbolic of the divisiveness and incendiary sentiments present in Maryland by the beginning of the Civil War. Bordering Virginia, Frederick and Washington Counties braced for a war close to home. Colonel Bradley Johnson, C.S.A. quickly moved to organize Marylanders for the new Confederate army. He refused all suggestions that he meld his recruits into the Virginia regiments, insisting instead that Maryland organize a rebel regiment of its own. [9] Johnson's recruits appear largely to have come from the southern portion of the state. A survey of names of those enlisted in the Maryland line of the Confederate army reveals none of the family names associated with the Catoctin area. [10]

Desperately needing to keep the state of Maryland in the Union camp--even if it would require force--Lincoln arrested secessionists and dispatched troops throughout Maryland. With Annapolis occupied by federal troops, the Maryland state legislature briefly moved operations to Frederick City. But in April 1861, Union soldiers surrounded the city, arrested key leaders of the legislature and forced members to take a loyalty oath. Those who refused quickly found themselves prisoners in Fort McHenry. [11] Eventually, Lincoln dispatched nearly 15,000 troops to Frederick County to insure that the pivotal region would remain within the union.

The Union army showed little concern with civil rights. They set up check points and led raids on the homes of suspected Confederate sympathizers. The army staged a surprise search of Jacob Kunkle's Frederick City home, but found only a Confederate flag and a picture of Jefferson Davis. To the north, pressure also grew on those with pro-northern sentiments. In Mechanicstown, "the union men of the town" forced the inflammatory *Family Visitor* out of business. [12]

Like those with southern leanings, unionists in western Maryland also mobilized for the war effort. In August 1862, Company D of the Sixth Maryland Regiment Maryland Volunteers formed under Captain Martin Rouzer. The company included fifty men from Mechanicstown and twenty-five from Hauvers' District. It would not be long before these soldiers would see action.

Despite the Union's advantages in numbers, equipment, and industrial power, the rebels scored several early victories. Frederick City became an enormous hospital, caring for the ever-increasing number of Union casualties. Following the Confederate victory at the second battle of Bull Run, in early September 1862, an estimated 80,000 southern troops poured across the Potomac into Frederick County, in hope of prying Maryland from the North and staging an invasion of Washington DC. As they forded the river, Lee's men broke into a rousing rendition of "Maryland, My Maryland." Badly outnumbered, the Union army hurried to evacuate the area. Soldiers burnt supplies and loaded patients on trains, headed for safety.

On September 6, led by Bradley T. Johnson, between 10,000 and 15,000 troops invaded Frederick City. News of the invasion rippled northward, causing great alarm. The Graceham Moravian Church recorded: "Yesterday morning we received the intelligence that the Confederates had invaded Maryland and were marching on to Frederick City. During the day the sick and the wounded quartered there were moved to Pennsylvania through Mechanicstown. All are in great excitement, fearing that they will impress union men into the service. We here at Graceham became very uneasy, and towards evening a party of eighteen men concluded to leave for Pennsylvania." The Graceham unionists mounted horses and buggies and dashed to Taneytown, where they stayed for three days. Then, when word came from the Confederates that no one would be impressed, the men finally felt confident enough to return home. [13] As the caravan of "ambulances" moved through town, local residents scrambled to find food for the refugees. One resident remembered her mother baking short cakes on top of her ten-plate stove for the wounded. Fearing that the Confederates might move northward, some drove their horses to Pennsylvania, where they would be safe from theft. Some even packed so as to be ready to quickly flee into the mountains should the need arise. [14]

The Confederates, in fact, had hoped that the citizens of Frederick County would rally to the southern cause. But they were sorely disappointed. "We were received with neither cheers nor songs or other evidence of approbation," wrote one soldier, "but instead they looked on us in self-evident pity." [15] The rebels, in fact, were a motley, impoverished crew. Many arrived hungry, without shoes, wearing dirty and torn uniforms. But the troops were polite and did not plunder, despite their need.

As the Confederates occupied Frederick, northern troops massed to the east and prepared to press the invaders out of the border state. On September 10, Union troops retook the city. Some rebels headed northward. The Graceham church recorded 300 Confederate Cavalry passing through town on September 1861. The next day more rebels came through, and seven soldiers stopped and enjoyed breakfast in the church's parsonage. That evening 2,000 troops passed through Mechanicstown. [16]

Most Confederate troops, however, headed west from Frederick toward Hagerstown (along the National Road) and Antietam. On September 14, 1862, fleeing rebel troops attempted to make a stand outside Middletown, near Catoctin Creek on South Mountain. There, they suffered a decisive defeat--leading to the first Union victory of the war. Following the Battle of South Mountain, the Confederates further retreated to Antietam, where Lee assembled his tired troops behind Antietam Creek. On September 17, 1862, the Battle of Antietam proved the single costliest day in American military history. The combined dead numbered 4,800 and wounded 18,500. Worse, the battle proved indecisive. Lee simply slipped back across the

Potomac and the war went on.

Western Maryland had witnessed the full anxiety and tumult of a new kind of total warfare. In the aftermath of the battle, the Graceham Church recorded, "A Time of war, and all minds are filled with apprehension and alarm. Persons who have visited the battle field describe the scenes as heart-rending." [17] The invasion and battles thoroughly disrupted life in the area. Rebels destroyed the Baltimore and Ohio railroad bridge over the Monocacy and tore up miles of train track. Thousands of acres of valuable farm land had also been ravished. Remaining was a profound sense of fear of what might still be to come.

Again, crisis was not far off. In the fall of 1862, J.E.B. Stuart crossed the Potomac at Williamsport intent on stirring up trouble in Maryland and Pennsylvania. Leading a cavalry unit of roughly 1,600 men, Stuart raided Chambersburg, Pennsylvania, then turned south to Emmitsburg. On October 12, 1862, Stuart entered Emmitsburg where he was "hailed by the inhabitants with the most enthusiastic demonstrations of joy." But Stuart's men wore blue overcoats covering their gray uniforms, and locals may have thought they were greeting union men. The real Union army soon got word of the raiding party and dispatched troops from Hagerstown to oust the invaders. Union cavalry charged from Hagerstown along the Westminster-Hagerstown Pike (passing through Harman's Gap) and massed in Mechanicstown. But, by the time they arrived, they learned that Stuart had already slipped back to Virginia, probably via Libertytown. [18]

For several months an uneasy calm settled across the region. Then, in late June 1863, the calm broke. "Considerable excitement during the day," reported the Graceham Church. "The Confederates are reported massing themselves about Boonsboro, etc. A number of horses were taken." The county braced for another invasion. The free black population of western Maryland, fearing that invaders might ship them south, was the first to flee. General Robert E. Lee, in fact, had invaded Maryland apparently with the intent of bringing the war to the north, where he might win a determining battle. The bulk of the invaders moved northward from points west of the Catoctins, but fighting did break out near Frederick City, and the rebels briefly held Westminster before moving northward toward Pennsylvania.

First massing in Frederick City, Union troops took several routes in pursuit of the rebels. On June 29, 1863, the First Corps of the Army of the Potomac left Frederick and marched through the rain northward, along a series of roads paralleling today's Route 15 (see Map 3). The corps moved through Harmony Grove, Lewistown, Catoctin Furnace, Mechanicstown, Franklinville, and then onto Emmitsburg, where they spent the night. As they passed through Mechanicstown and Catoctin Furnace, the soldiers found a reception "overflowing with patriotism and hospitality." [19] In many cases food was freely passed out to the hungry soldiers. Elsewhere soldiers could buy pies, a loaf of bread for 50 cents, a canteen of milk for 25. Despite prohibitions, soldiers also bought whiskey along the way. In Catoctin Furnace, soldiers actually tried to stop and buy food at the local general store, but their superiors ordered them on. [20] At the end of the day, the soldiers passed through Emmitsburg, which only weeks earlier had suffered a calamitous fire, and set up camp just north of the burned-out town. [21] Meanwhile the Eleventh Corps moved along one of the region's major arteries, the Frederick-Emmitsburg Turnpike, passing through Creagerstown, to the east of Mechanicstown and Catoctin Furnace (see Map 3). The Eleventh Corps found the trip to be a smooth one, along a good stone road, and was able to travel thirty-seven miles in twenty-four hours. [22]

On July 1, the soldiers who marched north along the eastern border of the Catoctins met the Confederates at Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. The next day, the Graceham Church reported: "The community kept in great suspense and anxiety." [23] Both armies suffered casualties of well over 20,000. But for Lee, the cost was higher; he lost one third of his army. In the

confusing aftermath of the battle, the Confederates managed to escape south, robbing the North of an opportunity to end the war.

With the defeated rebels retreating through the area, anxiety again rippled through northern Frederick and Washington Counties. On a rainy Sunday, July 5, the day after the battle, J.E.B. Stuart--seeking to protect the rebel retreat--moved his unit south along the Emmitsburg-Frederick Turnpike. He stopped in Graceham long enough to frighten locals, then moved to Creagerstown (which he called Cooperstown). From Creagerstown, Stuart and his men planned to move west, along the Westminster-Hagerstown road (today's Route 77), with the eventual aim of joining up with General Lee (see Map 3). But Stuart received intelligence that Union soldiers had blocked Harman's Gap. Instead of taking the established road, Stuart thus shuttled northwest to the small hamlet of Franklinville (just north of present-day Catoctin High School) where he may have encamped. From there Stuart continued to move westward, probably through Harbaugh Valley then onto the Deerfield area. At some point, probably in Washington County, he emerged back on the road to Hagerstown. Very quickly, probably at Harman's Gap, Stuart came under fire from Union troops. After a standoff, however, the northerners backed off, allowing Stuart to pass through. [24]

Some Union troops also moved through the area on their return from Gettysburg. The First Corps, which had advanced up through Mechanicstown, retreated along the same road, as did the Sixth corps. According to one report, along the way, young girls serenaded the soldiers with "Battle Cry of the Republic." [25] After a few days the Graceham Church could finally give "thanks for our deliverance from the calamity of Confederate invasion." [26]

The ongoing war was the cause of endless anxiety and tension in the area. Fifty years later, one Mechanicstown resident vividly recalled the trauma of being woken by a soldier loudly banging at her family's front door. In the darkness, it was some time before the unionist family could determine that the soldier was not a rebel, and the family could direct the midnight visitor to Chimney Rock, from where he apparently sent signals to Sugar Loaf Mountain. [27]

By 1863, the war had caused serious economic and social disruption throughout western Maryland. Fighting in the region had destroyed much valuable farmland. Likewise the draft caused serious labor shortages. *The Frederick Examiner*, in the fall of 1863, noted that "serious apprehensions are beginning to be expressed least the agriculturists of Maryland shall experience loss and inconveniences for the want of labor to till the earth." [28] Likewise the hard work, dislocation, and anxiety of the war, resulted in numerous social problems. A resident of Catoctin Furnace later recalled the war as a time of "a-working and a-scotching (working and drinking)." [29] It could also be a time of lawlessness. In "a deep vastness of the Catoctin Mountains" roughly eight to ten miles from Frederick City, "seven or more guerilla horse thieves" kept an encampment. Angry victims of the thieves finally raided the hide-away and captured four of the "guerillas," whom they suspected to be "rebel recruits on their way to Dixie." [30]

While law enforcement could be loose in some places, elsewhere it remained tight. Travelers had to pass through check-points all over western Maryland. In 1863, when Jacob Kunkle told a union officer, inquiring after his destination, that it was "none of his business," the secessionist found himself under arrest for disrespecting military authority. [31]

A year after the Battle of Gettysburg, in the summer of 1864, with the war entering its fourth miserable year, the Confederates--as they had the two previous years--again invaded western Maryland. "Rumors in town that the Confederates are again in Maryland" interrupted Independence Day around Catoctin Mountain. The reports turned out to be true. The rebels

again took Frederick City, holding it for ransom. Meanwhile, Confederates led raids as far north as Lewistown and Creagerstown, where the rebels "robbed store-keepers and took horses." [32] The looting panicked locals. Soon, even Bradley Johnson was complaining about the plundering by rebel troops. [33] Finally, after the Battle of Monocacy, the Confederates again left Maryland--for the last time.

By early 1865, the Civil War--the most difficult time in the history of western Maryland--had come to an end. But there was one last casualty--President Lincoln. News of the president's assassination reached the Catoctin area, "mournful intelligence," according to the Graceham Church, just in time for Easter prayers. [34]

For generations, the Civil War, which had caused so much upheaval in the Catoctin area, remained a monumental event about which stories were told and retold. One longstanding claim about the area had the Catoctin Furnace playing a part in the manufacturing of the U.S.S. Monitor, a 172 foot long, turreted war ship. The vessel, designed by John Ericsson, a Swedish-American engineer and inventor, was first launched at Greenpoint, Long Island, on January 30, 1862. Because we have such limited records for the Catoctin Furnace, claims are difficult to substantiate or refute. But it does not appear that the furnace produced the sort of bar iron capable of being molded into the rolled plate that surrounded the ship.

As part of its maritime history initiative, the National Park Service and other organizations sponsored a study of the manufacturing firms contributing to the U.S.S. Monitor. Of the ironworks employed in the making of the ship, all but one was from New York. The sole non-New York contributor was Horace Abbott and Sons, a Baltimore firm very involved in producing iron for railroad construction. The large Abbott iron works does not appear to have made iron, but rather focused on rolling iron at its several rolling mills. Historian William N. Still deemed it "more than likely these [Abbott's rolled iron] were the rolls used to make the plates for Monitor and other armored vessels during the Civil War." [35] Tradition does have the Catoctin Furnace producing iron that became part of the armored plating on the ship. [36] There are, however, no surviving records for the Abbott firm, thus the names of the firm's iron suppliers are lost to us. Nevertheless, it seems unlikely that the Catoctin Furnace, which was already using outdated technology by the 1860s, was capable of producing the sort of bar iron required by rolling mills. Throughout its existence, Catoctin produced pig iron, unsuitable for such rolling. [37] Nevertheless, the Monitor myth has persisted, and there is much we do not know about the workings of Catoctin Furnace.

Whatever its role in constructing the Monitor, the Civil War long remained a presence in the lives of area residents. The Jason Damuth Post, G.A.R. (Grand Army of the Republic veterans organization), made up of veterans of the Sixth Maryland Regiment, in particular, remained an important and influential local force. [38] Every Memorial Day in Mechanicstown, veterans marched behind the Graceham Cornet Band to the Town Hall where the Gettysburg Address was read. [39] The death of Henry Fleagle, the last surviving member of the Damuth Post at the age of 95 in 1937, received heavy coverage in the local media. Fleagle, who had met Lincoln and been present at Lee's surrender at Appomattox, lived well beyond those tumultuous days to see the founding of a park in an area once so threatened by war. [40]

"The Sound of the Steam Whistle Twice a Day"

The railroad had been transforming western Maryland since the 1830s. The Baltimore and Ohio connected Frederick City and points west to Baltimore, creating tremendous economic opportunity. But the area north of Frederick City had to wait over forty years to connect with the railroad. Plans long had been in the works to build a railroad from Baltimore to the northern portions of Frederick and Washington Counties. In 1852, the Maryland General

Assembly chartered the Baltimore, Carroll and Frederick County Railroad, which later evolved into the Western Maryland Railroad (see Map 3). Within a year of its chartering, construction began. But the challenges of building in mountainous areas slowed progress. On May 17, 1862 the builders of the Western Maryland Railroad caused "quite a stir" in Graceham by laying track near the outskirts of town. [41] But then the war slowed all progress. It was not until later in the decade that the railroad pushed into Graceham. And not until March 1871 did the railroad finally arrive in Mechanicstown and press through the rest of Frederick County (see Appendix 5). Its arrival brought monumental changes according to the local newspaper:

The sound of steam whistle twice a day in the suburbs of our hitherto quiet little town has awakened everything up to newness of life and a spirit of "go-aheadativeness" which is quite refreshing. We begin to put on city airs and learn city fashions; Baltimore is brought close to our doors, and oysters and cavs-back ducks and fresh fish can be produced and eaten daily as at one of the largest restaurants in the Monumental City. [42]

After its expansion to Mechanicstown, railroad workers began laying tracks westward to Sabillasville. The brand new Mechanicstown newspaper, *The Catoctin Clarion*, predicted that the new railroad would "whistle the inhabitants of Sabillasville from the Rip Van Winkle sleep into a new and creative existence" (see Appendix 7). [43] Once completed, the railroad took a leisurely semi-circular route around Sabillasville, a ride that quickly became known as "horseshoe curve" (see Appendix 6). [44] A strike by workers demanding a \$1.75 per day and a ten-hour day temporarily halted plans to extend the railroad to Smithburg in the spring of 1871. [45] But soon labor and management settled the strike, and the new railroad was pressing onward toward Hagerstown.

In the aftermath of the Civil War, the rapid expansion of the railroad into the northern part of Western Maryland offered new excitement and pointed to a brighter future. Throughout the country--as was the case in the Catoctin--the railroad reached and transformed formerly remote areas. In northern Frederick and Washington counties, the railroad opened tourism to the mountain area and revived agriculture and industry in the region.

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter Four: The Eve of Acquisition

Introduction

In the Catoctin Mountain area, the first three decades of the twentieth century witnessed a continuing shift away from an emphasis on industry and farming toward recreation and tourism. The village of Catoctin Furnace, for instance, once a bustling center of industry, increasingly became a quaint tourist stop. By the 1920s, thanks in part to frequent visits to the area by President Herbert Hoover, the Catoctins were gaining a national reputation as a desirable vacation site. The number of local boarding houses steadily grew. Outdoor enthusiasts purchased land, especially along Hunting Creek, for recreational use. On the eve of acquisition, mountain landowners were a diverse lot. But traditional subsistence farms continued to operate, even as pressure gathered for change.

The End of Industry on the Mountain

Following the worker-initiated shutdown in 1903, the formerly bustling village of Catoctin Furnace sat vacant for two years. Many residents of the village, without steady income, descended into poverty. Some turned to looting the roughly 10,677 acres associated with the furnace. In the absence of real furnace ownership, locals viewed the area as a "no-man's land." [1] Looters destroyed fences, took timber for firewood, even stripped the brass from an idle steam shovel. [2]

On February 19, 1906, at noon, a small crowd gathered in Catoctin Furnace to witness the U.S. District Court-ordered auction of the holdings of Blue Mountain Iron and Steel Company. The auction included over 10,000 acres of land, the furnace, office buildings, the company store, the manor house, and the roughly sixty tenement houses in Catoctin Furnace. That day, Joseph E. Thropp, a former congressman and owner of an iron works in Everett, Pennsylvania, stepped forth and purchased the enterprise for \$51,135. Following the bidding, Thropp briefly addressed the gathering. First, he threatened any looters, proclaiming that he "would prosecute to the full extent of the law anyone taking or destroying any property even if its value be but 15 cents." Then he promised to rebuild the enterprise, and vowed "to pay 100 cents on the dollar for every dollar I contract." The small crowd applauded in appreciation. [3]

Whether Thropp ever intended to act on his promise to reopen the furnace is unclear; but iron was never again produced at the site. Thropp, however, did reopen the iron ore mines, located to the south of furnace, along present-day Route 15. He shipped ore mined from the Catoctin grounds to his still-operating iron furnace in western Pennsylvania. Local residents were disappointed as it slowly became clear that the iron industry would not be revived. *The Catoctin Clarion* lamented, "Mr. Thropp . . . does not seem to be going to do anything toward engaging in active work." [4] In 1912, Thropp shut down his operations entirely. Those living in the former company houses continued to pay rents of two dollars a month to Thropp and continued to view the furnace land as a "no-man's land" from which firewood and booty

could freely be extracted. Most of the former employees either went to work in the quarries or in the timber industry. For many in the town of Catoctin Furnace, life was hard, and survival required ingenuity. Residents made handkerchiefs from the large sugar bags sold at Henry Farley's Catoctin Furnace General Store. And many families sold chestnuts to pay for winter cloths. [5] Some relief came in 1915 when a Pennsylvania company started a stove mill near the Catoctin Furnace trolley station, which made use of local timber reserves. [6]

"Pleasure Seekers": Growth of Tourism

While the large-scale iron furnace was no longer a presence on the mountain, tourism continued to expand. Hundreds of "pleasure seekers" flocked each summer and fall to the Catoctin Mountains. By the early twentieth century the popularity of larger resort hotels, often owned by railroad companies began to wane. In a movement one historian called "private pastoralism," an increasingly urbanized population began to look for more remote, less expensive lodging. [7] Positioned along a major railroad line, with good scenery, and flowing creeks of fresh water, the Catoctin area was well situated to appeal to the ever-growing herds of excursionists and vacationers.

To make ends meet, a farm wife, on a well-situated plot of land, might open up her house to summer boarders. Attractions would include healthy water and air, trails for hiking, and good cooking. Often a wife and children from Baltimore or Washington DC would arrive for several weeks during the summer and be joined by the husband and father on weekends. The boarding houses assumed fancy names, such as "The Milburn," "The Catoctin," "Idlewhile," and "Aurora Cottage." At one point in the summer of 1906, Aurora Cottage, operate by Miss Florence Geesey, entertained 18 boarders, including one from Brooklyn, New York. That same summer, the boarding house operated by Mrs. W.W. Zimmerman lodged a visitor from Indianapolis. [8] According to a 1913 account, "the favorite point in the mountains for excursionists is Hunting Creek Falls (Cunningham Falls)" as well as Chimney Rock and neighboring Table Rock. [9]

Transportation remained a concern in the mountain area. Tourists, of course, could arrive via the Western Maryland Railroad, which published a yearly guide entitled "Summering on the Western Maryland Railroad," listing boarding house locations and prices. In hopes of helping out farmers and "developing excursion resorts and summer boarding businesses," local politicians and businessmen began exploring the possibility of an electric railroad or trolley to run from Frederick north to Thurmont. [10] No doubt the success of a similar trolley line from Frederick to Braddock Heights built in 1898 encouraged the Catoctin version. [11] Over the years, the Monocacy Valley Railroad, connecting Catoctin Furnace to Thurmont's Western Maryland Railroad Depot, had expanded to connect with the Northern Railroad Company's line between Frederick and Lewistown (built in 1898). This created a direct line between Thurmont and Frederick. After a few years of negotiations, the Potomac Edison Company purchased and electrified the line, and in 1909, the Potomac Edison Railroad enjoyed its maiden voyage. [12] The new electric railroad handled both people and freight, making it, according to some sources, the first railroad line in the country to handle freight. [13]

Facilitated by the new trolley system, ten boarding houses operated in Thurmont by 1913 and eleven took boarders in Sabillasville. Among the houses was the Crow's Nest, located just to the east of the present-day park and operated by Joseph Gernand. The Crow's Nest took on weekly boarders at a weekly rate of six to eight dollars. [14]

These such boarding houses offered the women of the area a rare opportunity to operate businesses. One such women was Bessie Darling, a Baltimore resident who owned and ran a summer boarding house and who later became the area's most famous murder victim. Darling

had served as a personal secretary to a well-known professor at the prestigious Peabody Institute in Baltimore. In 1917, following a failed marriage that produced a son, Darling purchased from Mary E. Lent a tract of steep land on the north side of the mountain near Deerfield. A large house, built in 1907, sat on the land. There, Darling set up a summer hotel called the Valley View Manor (see Map 4). She generally managed the hotel in the summer and returned to Baltimore in winter, where she used her considerable social contacts to drum up summer business for her hotel. Her skill at cooking and baking, as well as the scenic site helped build her a solid clientele. [15]

World War I, no doubt, interrupted the development of the tourist trade in the Catoctins. The 1920s, however, brought yet another form of tourism to the mountains, based on a new form of transportation--the automobile. In 1910, there existed roughly 500,000 cars in America, but by 1920, eight million automobiles packed American roads. The proliferation gave rise to a new form of tourism--autotouring. Independent of the railroads, with their set timetables and routes, millions of Americans, camping out as they traveled, took to the roads. Of the new "motor gypsies," one journalist waxed: "A tourist automobile is like a little yacht on wheels. You have your provisions and equipment, your maps and compass, your eager consultation with other mariners, your dangerous Cape Horns, your snug, cozy harbors." [16]

Often seeking out "picturesque villages" and, when not camping, staying at quaint inns and boarding houses, autotourists sought areas off the beaten track. Catoctin Furnace, now largely idle, became a favorite destination of the autotouring crowd. *The Baltimore Sun* in 1925 reported that motorists in "increasing numbers are visiting the old Catoctin Iron Works." Many, according to the story, then went on to visit Chimney Rock. [17] Reports in 1927, spread by a booster of local tourism, of a silver mine shaft high in the mountains, supposedly dug by Jonathan Hager in the eighteenth century, added to interest in the area. In 1930, *American Motorist* ran a piece on Catoctin Furnace extolling its historical past and picturesque present. Spurred, no doubt, by locals ready to tell a good story, the article described at length the apocryphal stories of Jonathan Hager's silver mine, the furnace's contributions to Rumsey's steam ship, and to the U.S.S. Monitor. [18]

Not every auto excursion proved enjoyable, however. On July 20, 1920, a group of "pleasure seekers" arrived in the mountains to enjoy a Sunday afternoon. The "auto party" consisting of three women and two men, drove a "big Buick." West of Thurmont, along Hunting Creek, the car got stuck in a dip in the creek called "Little Sandy Hole." Unable to extract the car, the group sought the aid of farmer George Bussard, who chained the car to his team of horses. Still unable to pull the Buick out, Bussard sought out another team from postmaster and boarding house keeper Joseph Gernand. Eventually, the group turned to a tractor, and finally, after midnight, the car was freed. [19]

As autotourists began to tire of camping in open fields, a new sort of lodging establishment emerged aimed at motorists--the motel. In 1929, Wilbur Freeze erected three simple cabins and opened the Cozy Inn in Thurmont (see Map 4.5). Advertising a "home for night for a tourist," within two years, the camp grew to fifteen cabins and a store to serve lodgers. An aggressive promoter, Freeze painted his cabins bright colors and made sure that flowers were always in bloom in the gardens. He also built sea-saws, and other playground equipment for children. The largest cabin, named "Betty Lou," featured two bedrooms and a kitchen. [20]

Alongside the autotouring phenomenon, some Americans sought more vigorous recreation. Inspired by Theodore Roosevelt and other advocates of a return to the "rugged life" enjoyed by American pioneers, recreational hiking clubs sprang up around the country. In 1910, Maryland hikers formed the Wanderluster Hiking Club. Later a group of Washington outdoors fanatics organized the Red Triangle Club. A key member of the early outdoor movement was Benton Mackaye, a forester, regional planner, and philosopher, who joined

the U.S. Forest Service in 1905. Envisioning a mammoth trail running north to south through the eastern United States, Mackaye devised a plan for the Appalachian Trail in 1921 (see Map 4). Construction began in 1923 on the first stretch of the trail, which ran through New York state. In the Middle Atlantic states, the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club, founded by Myron Avery in 1927, raised money and chartered the course of the trail. While Mackayne provided the grand vision, Avery did much of the grass roots work for the trail. Endlessly committed, Avery raised both money and publicity for the trail project. During the New Deal period, Avery arranged to obtain some public sponsorship for trail construction and improvement. [21] The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) for instance, constructed two road shelters on the Appalachian Trail near the park. [22]

A major component of the "rugged life" movement aimed to rescue children from unhealthy city living, even if it was for only a few weeks during the summer. In 1924, a Jewish youth organization purchased land at the foothills of Catoctin mountain and established Camp Airy, still in existence today. The camp represented the beginning of organized youth recreational use of the area. A few years later in 1931, the Boy Scouts established a camp north of Catoctin Manor on Hunting Creek. The scout camp, set on 258 acres, featured a number of halls, and a 2000 square feet dammed-up swimming area on the creek, featuring a 35-foot waterfall. [23] The camp operated for roughly two years, then closed due to low enrollment and the washing out of the pool's dam. [24]

In the 1923, Lancelot Jacques, whose ancestor had been among the original investors in the Catoctin Furnace, purchased the furnace manor house and a large amount of surrounding land. [25] Jacques apparently planned to develop the land as a deer park, complete with a scenic pond constructed from the former iron ore pits. Apparently inspired by the Florida land boom at the time, Jacques hoped to attract hunters to his preserve and hired local resident William Renner as custodian. [26] The extent to which Jacques actually developed the full "deer park" he envisioned is unclear. In 1929, Jacques set up the "Potomac Development Corporation" with himself as president. His apparent aim was to develop the area between Catoctin Furnace and Hunting Creek into a vacation resort. The same year he formed his corporation, however, the stock market crashed, setting in motion the Great Depression.

In 1927, Jacques sold roughly 1,800 acres of his holdings to a wealthy Washingtonian named Lawrence Richey. Richey hoped to establish fishing camp on Hunting Creek for his and the use of his guests (see Map 4.5). [27] Among his friends was Secretary of Commerce Herbert Hoover. When, two years later, Hoover became president, he appointed Richey as his secretary. A fishing enthusiast, whose ancestors had been among the settlers of the area, Hoover became a frequent guest at the Richey Camp. At first, the president and his entourage would stay in tents, but eventually the proprietor constructed cabins for his guests. Richey hired Charles Anders, a Catoctin Furnace local, to prepare fishing equipment and food for the guests. In contrast to the president's aloof public image, Anders found a relaxed man of good humor. He called the president "chief," and Hoover nicknamed Anders "Jack." Mrs. Hoover occasionally accompanied her husband and was also warmly remembered by Anders. [28]

After several visits to the Richey camp, Hoover, by 1930, began frequenting another camp on the Rapidan River near Madison, Virginia. The large crowds and media that frequently joined him in the Catoctins may have bothered the president. Whatever the reason for the Hoover move, his visits to the area helped bring notice to the region as an outdoor recreational oasis, and established the area in some minds as a presidential retreat.

By the early 1930s, the upper Catoctin region was known throughout the middle Atlantic states and beyond as a desirable vacation and leisure spot, featuring boarding houses, fishing camps, and mountain scenery fit for a president.

The Wreck of the Blue Mountain Express

On June 25, 1915, the Western Maryland Railroad's Blue Mountain Express, Number 15, heading west, arrived late for its scheduled 5:10 PM stop in Thurmont. The express consisted of a Pullman Parlor Car, three coaches, and a baggage car. [29] In Thurmont, the train stopped briefly to take on water and drop off Baltimore's afternoon newspapers for delivery. The express then pulled out from Thurmont toward Sabillasville, where it entered onto the roughly 2.2 miles of the line which became one track--the portion of the railroad that conductors considered to be the most dangerous. With roughly twenty passenger trains passing through the area each day, local residents could keep time by the train whistles. At roughly 5:30 PM, the Blue Mountain Express let out the expected whistle, but then--to the alarm of all within earshot--the whistling continued. Locals knew something was wrong. [30]

As the express crossed over the scenic high bridge above Owens Creek, it had crashed head-on with engine number 203, an eastbound mail train (see Appendix 9 and Map 4.5). The impact of the crash tossed the westbound wooden baggage car a hundred feet to the creek below. A handicapped woman on a stretcher and her son, both of whom were riding in the baggage car, died in the plunge. Remarkably, the two engines involved in the head-on crash locked together, appearing as almost one engine to the horrified rescuers who quickly gathered on the scene. Had the engines ricocheted off of one another, there undoubtedly would have been more casualties. Roughly one hundred people convened on the scene to aid frightened survivors, care for the injured, and insure that no further disasters occurred. Among the first to arrive was Dr. Morris Birely, who worked into the night with the aid of gas lanterns. The Western Maryland Railroad sent two special trains, one from each direction to aid in the calamity.

In the end, six died in the crash of the Blue Mountain Express and twelve suffered serious injuries. An investigation revealed that a mix-up in the all-important right-of-way orders issued from Hagerstown had caused the crash. No doubt, troubles keeping scheduling that day contributed to the tragedy. [31]

Fire and Fire Control

The train wreck was certainly the greatest tragedy that ever beset the mountain area, but the threat of forest fires remained a perennial concern. In the summer of 1914, fire destroyed half the town of Creagerstown. [32] In April 1920, efforts to clear land for huckleberry growth resulted in a forest fire that destroyed ten mountain acres near the old saw mill once owned by John Rouzer. [33] The next month, a much worse fire began in the Phillips Delight area, west of Catoctin Furnace (see Map 4.5). According to the local paper, the initial destruction was confined to an area that "has been burned over many times and at this time contains very little timber of any value." [34] This area, known as Salamander Hill, had belonged to the furnace and locals apparently had cut most of its best timber. High winds fanned the fire that quickly spread and threatened more valuable land to the north. Under the direction of fire wardens, between 75 and 100 men set up a thirteen-mile fire line to control the burning. Finally after two days, fire fighters had the blaze under control. [35]

The presence of the fire wardens on the scene at the Salamander Hill fire was symptomatic of the increasing organization and effort devoted to controlling the forest fire threat. By the early-twentieth century, the state of Maryland had organized a state Board of Forestry, under State Forester F.W. Besley. [36] Besley began a statewide program of fire prevention and forest conservation. The advent of the chestnut blight, beginning roughly in 1910, complicated his work. The blight, which attacked and destroyed the bark of the chestnut, began on Long Island and quickly spread. The once-abundant chestnut trees of western Maryland quickly fell victim. By the early 1920s, nearly all the chestnut trees in Frederick

County were gone. [37] The chestnuts blight represented a major loss for the mountain area. The trees had provided valuable timber, and nuts from the trees were an important food for hogs and wildlife. [38] To rebuild the forests, Besley distributed seedlings and ran programs encouraging reforestation. [39]

Alongside the chestnut blight, Besley identified and attempted to address other forest-related problems. He saw his mission as reversing "destructive agencies, which for 150 years have been operating in the forests. Chief among them are forests fires, destructive cutting practices, excessive grazing, and the ravages of insects and fungus diseases." Successful conservation meant changing longstanding attitudes and practices. Of particular concern in Frederick County was the custom of "repeated cutting." For "generations," complained Besley, mountaineers "cut over their woodlands at frequent intervals, taking out the best and most saleable products, with little or no thought to succeeding growth and future productiveness." "Repeated cutting," he warned, inevitably led to an "inferior species." [40]

Besley issued pamphlets and gave frequent talks promoting new conservation measures. When it came to forest fires, advances in technology allowed for real progress. Phone lines, airplanes, and watchtowers allowed for early detection. In Foxville, Karl Brown (tract 156) and H.L. Hauver served as fire wardens for the district, while G.A. Willard served in Catoctin Furnace (see Appendix 10 and Map 4.5). [41] The advent of the automobile allowed for improved response time. Soon the local Thurmont newspaper could report that, with the arrival of new initiatives, forest fires henceforth would "lose much of their horror." [42]

[<<< Previous](#) [<<< Contents >>>](#) [Next >>>](#)

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter Five:

A New Deal for the Mountain

Introduction

A debate among historians continues to rage as to whether Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal (1933-1940) represented revolutionary change or simply evolutionary reform. While the debate will go on, from the standpoint of the Catoctin Mountain area, the changes brought during the New Deal were revolutionary. The government--once playing only a distant role--became a central player in the lives of the people in the region. Older conceptions of self reliance and independence died along the way. The process of change, however, was hardly smooth. Indeed, the confusing and frequently chaotic nature of the New Deal often poisoned the transition and created problems where none need have existed. This is particularly evident in the case of relations between the government and land holders in the area under development. Chapter 5 traces these revolutionary changes, from the economic collapse beginning in 1930, through to the planning and early development of Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area.

The Depression in Washington and Frederick Counties

While the nation experienced great prosperity during the 1920s, farming areas, such as those in Frederick and Washington counties, lagged behind the rest of the county. But the flourishing industries of the 1920s were the first to feel the sting of the economic collapse that began with the stock market crash. Western Marylanders initially hoped that, by virtue of having few industries (except in Hagerstown), they might escape the worst ravages of the Depression. Such hopes, however, failed to survive even the first year of the Depression. [1]

The first signs of trouble came with an unusually hot and dry spring in 1930. On May 4, 1930, a fire broke out near Fishing Creek and quickly spread northward. Stoked by dry conditions and shift winds, the blaze quickly spiraled out of control and threatened the school and homes at Phillips Delight as well as the Richey fishing camp near Catoctin Furnace. Some 125 volunteers labored for more than three days to control the fire. The *Frederick News* declared the blaze "the most disastrous in the history of Frederick County." Within four days, fire fighters had conquered the flames, but they destroyed several thousand acres, along with 15,000 young trees recently planted by the Isaak Walton League. [2]

Natural disaster, however, did not stop there. The dry heat only worsened with the coming of summer. Soon a terrible drought overtook the region. Day after day followed of one hundred degree temperatures and no rain. By late summer, few could deny that the drought was the worst in recent memory. In August, the *Frederick News* recalled that only a few months before there was "every indication that we would go through the slump with very little trouble. But along comes the drought, which cripples our major industry, agriculture." Describing the "short term outlook" as "depressing," the newspaper forecasted "visions of hard times . . . with winter approaching." [3] Weeks later, Professor T.B. Symons, of the University of Maryland Agricultural Extension Service, a state agency mandated by the

federal government to "assist the farmer and his family . . . in every phase of agricultural and rural home life," declared that Maryland farmers were suffering their worst setback in history. Meanwhile, losses continued to mount. [4] Into September, temperatures continued to peak in the hundred-degree range. In October, Smithburg High School in Washington County temporarily shut its doors as the reservoir on South Mountain, upon which the school depended for drinking water, went dry. [5] Ultimately, state officials estimated Frederick County drought losses at more than four million dollars. [6]

Coming as it did, on the heels of the industrial and banking collapse, the drought had far reaching consequences. Farmers--in desperate need of credit to make up for drought losses--had nowhere to turn. The chair of a state committee on drought relief regretted that "there seems no legal way of getting money to aid the farm laborers and some farmers who have no credit." [7] Without access to the meager dollars that supported the local farm economy, a downward spiral began. Many farmers both hired and worked as temporary farm laborers, usually at a scale of roughly a dollar a day for a ten-hour day. [8] But with few spare dollars, this fragile system collapsed. [9]

Farmers could only cling to the hope that the drought and declining productivity eventually would give food prices a much needed boost. Yet with farmers elsewhere in the country continuing to increase their production, the price of wheat and other farm products continued to decline. The drought in fact meant that Catoctin-area farmers had less to sell at lower prices. [10]

Fears grew as colder weather approached. The condition of the poor, warned the *Frederick News*, "will be very difficult this winter." The paper called upon local charities to gear up for a daunting task. [11] Even before the worst of winter arrived, appeals for food and clothing from those in need overwhelmed the Frederick County Children's Aid Association. [12] County officials--seeking to coordinate relief efforts--created the Frederick County Drought Emergency Association in November, 1930.

Neither Washington County nor Frederick County could look much beyond private charities to deal with the growing need for relief. There was little tradition of using government--certainly not the federal government--to address such problems. As the Depression set in, recalled the Maryland Board of State Aid and Charities in 1935, "the opinion was held generally that the way to meet relief needs was through private agencies and voluntary relief." [13]

In Frederick County, for instance, the only real program for the poor remained the old almshouse--a decidedly nineteenth-century (or even eighteenth-century) institution. Located outside Frederick City, the Montevue almshouse, a "rather pretentious looking five story building," on a 96-acre farm, housed roughly 150 "inmates," many of whom were elderly or "suffering some chronic physical or mental disability." But Montevue also housed persons simply down on their luck, including "inmates" as young as three. [14] The onset of the Depression quickly overwhelmed the almshouse. By February of 1931, the number of "transients" seeking help at Montevue was "breaking all records." And those seeking relief were hardly the traditional poor. These new poor were "well dressed," most claiming that they never before asked for charity. [15] Most of the county's poor, however, never saw the inside of Montevue. Instead, they continued to rely on a loose network of local charities. But these such organizations also quickly found themselves stretched to their limits.

Pressed by the growing need, the Frederick County Drought Emergency Association struggled to provide whatever relief possible. The association coordinated the efforts of local charitable organizations, such as the Red Cross and Salvation Army. Over the difficult winter of 1930-1931, the association managed to distribute 7,000 loaves of bread, 1,200 loads of

wood, and 3,000 quarts of milk. [16] Recognizing the continuing need, county officials, in 1931, reorganized the Drought Emergency Association as the permanent County Emergency Relief Association. [17]

Meanwhile local communities strove to coordinate and streamline their own charitable efforts. In Thurmont, representatives of relief associations gathered at the local high school, and, under the direction of Rev. J.S. Weybright, chairman of the Ministerial Association, planned relief efforts for the upcoming winter of 1931-1932. [18] The collapse of the Citizen's Trust Company of Frederick, along with its branches in Smithburg, Thurmont, and Emmitsburg, in which investors saw their savings suddenly disappear, lent urgency to Weybright's work. [19]

Amid growing despair, there was some sense that "the government should take more active measures to keep people at work." [20] The county, in fact, did initiate a series of road building projects in an effort to put people back to work. The public road crews for the Catoctin and Thurmont districts included such familiar local names as Bussard, Harbaugh, Hauver, Eyler, and Wilhide. [21]

But for most in western Maryland, especially in the early days of the Depression, there remained an intense suspicion of such government aid--as well as an insistence that traditional values of self-reliance could see the area through the crisis. As the *Catoctin Clarion* newspaper declared: "Let us cease to whine about depression and devote ourselves to the diligent performance of our daily duties." [22]

A reliance on optimism and private charity, however, could not have provided much solace as county relief cases grew in number. Private charities simply could not keep up with the growing need. Facing another depression winter, the Frederick County Emergency Relief Association in 1932, called upon all employed workers to donate one day's pay a month to relief efforts. [23]

With little in the way of public or private relief, the individual often was left to cope any way possible. For most this meant tightening belts, raising a few more chickens, and perhaps cutting more timber from mountain lots to supplement coal furnaces over the winter. [24] Likewise, the cooperative traditions of mountain life took on renewed importance. Annual "butcherings," in which several families would gather to butcher livestock, continued, as did other cooperative practices. [25] Talk increased of the need to establish more formal farmer cooperatives to ease the increasing burden on the individual farmer. [26]

Faced with fewer and fewer opportunities to make money, moonshining remained a fixture of mountain life, especially before the repeal of Prohibition. Despite the recent tragedy at Blue Blazes, moonshiners continued to man their stills. In 1930, authorities raided a 1,000 gallon still west of Thurmont and seized 13,000 gallons of mash. One of those arrested had been a witness at the Hauver (Blue Blazes) murder trial. Two years later, police staged a similar raid on a 75-gallon still near Wolfsville. [27]

Those not engaged in illegal activity often sought escape in any form from the relentlessly troubled times. While children continued to find diversion at the popular swimming hole at Owen's Creek, adults might enjoy a twenty-five cent double feature at the State Theater on Water Street in Thurmont or visit the increasingly splashy spectacles put on by Wilbur Freeze at his Cozy Inn. On weekends, Freeze would fly hot air balloons or bury a man alive in a wooden box. Freeze's tireless efforts gave the Cozy an increasingly central role in Catoctin area social life. [28] One also could go dancing every evening at the Mountainside Inn in Sabillasville. [29] Later, perhaps to compete, Freeze opened his own Camp Cozy Nite Club, urging patrons to "Meet Your Friends at Camp Cozy." [30]

Faced with a struggling town, the enterprising leaders of Thurmont were eager to strike a blow against the collapsing economy. [31] In meetings and discussions among themselves, they pondered ways to bring economic recovery to their town. As increasingly is the case today when regions face economic difficulty, Thurmont's town leaders concluded that the answer lay in tourism. As an editorial in the local newspaper explained: "In a nutshell, the idea is to make a drive for the summer tourist trade in an effort to bring more people to Thurmont who in turn would put more dollars in the cash registers of every business in town." But despite the presence of "good hotels, excellent drinking water, cool summer days, good roads, fine transportation facilities and a variety of stores," Thurmont, the city leaders declared, needed more--in particular a swimming pool and tennis courts. [32] No doubt the city fathers recalled that swimming pools at Braddock Heights had attracted more than 11,000 paying swimmers the previous summer of 1932. [33] "Make Thurmont Attractive to Folks, and Folks will be Attracted to Thurmont," declared the proponents of tourism, who then initiated a poll of town citizens on the question of a municipal swimming pool and tennis courts. [34] Despite the eagerness of the town fathers, little support for sacrifice could be mustered in the midst of hard economic times. Undaunted and still eager to lighten the depression mood and attract visitors, town businessmen initiated a series of summer band concerts in the corner square of town in 1932. [35]

Yet it was a less harmonious event that summer that lingered in the minds of local citizens. In Washington, DC, veterans of World War I had gathered from around the country to press Congress for early payment of bonuses promised to every veteran. When Congress failed to pass the bonus bill, and the veterans, or Bonus Marchers, failed to leave the city, President Herbert Hoover--a frequent guest at Lawrence Richey's Catoctin Furnace fishing camp--ordered General Douglas MacArthur to corral the remaining marchers out of the city. The violent spectacle that followed upset the nation and did much to dash Hoover's hopes for reelection. Once out of the city, authorities hustled 2,000-3,000 marchers, including some women and African-Americans, north through Frederick County. Many spent the night at the Frederick County Fair Grounds, where the Maryland National Guard fed them 1,500 loaves of bread and 150 gallons of coffee. [36] Residents of the Catoctin area also remember seeing Bonus marchers camping in one of Hooker Lewis's fruit fields just south of Thurmont (current site of Bogley's Chevrolet). [37]

The horrific spectacle of the Bonus Marchers and continuing economic difficulties no doubt contributed to a growing sense of depression in the area. Soon the local newspaper in Thurmont was worrying that the "amazing decline in property values" have caused "many owners to allow home and places of business to fall into extremely poor condition." [38] Despite the traditional Republican conservatism of the area, residents were ready for change. On November 8, 1932, area voters overwhelmingly supported New York Governor Franklin D. Roosevelt for president. [39]

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



Chapter Six:

War and Politics Shape the Park

Introduction

World War II forever changed the destiny of Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area. The establishment of the presidential retreat known as Shangri-La turned the park into an area of international significance. Few having lived in the area before the war could have ever imagined the important developments that consumed the park during the war years. Not only was it a meeting place for Churchill and Roosevelt, but it was also a training ground for soldiers and secret agents. After the war, despite the protests of the state of Maryland, it was clear that Catoctin would never again be just another park. Still, local protests and lobbying shaped the destiny of the area as well—and resulted in the division of park in the early 1950s.

The Winds of War

By 1941, the growing international crisis was having an unmistakable impact on the nascent park. In the summer before the attack on Pearl Harbor, the army established a temporary training camp at the Catoctin RDA. Soldiers put up tents next to the CCC barracks and trained as part of America's response to the crisis in Europe. [1] Alongside their other work, Company 1374 of the CCC began practicing military drills. In September 1941 company members began attending a "national defense training program" in Hagerstown, which included courses in electric and acetylene welding. [2]

As the war in Europe heated up and the United States developed a closer relationship with Great Britain, over 21,000 British sailors enjoyed brief respites in the U.S., many at the recently constructed Recreational Demonstration Areas, which offered "the play and active recreation" facilities desirable for exhausted crewmen. [3] In the summer of 1941, the Catoctin RDA hosted 74 British sailors, who arrived in mid-June. At first, Superintendent Williams hoped to house the group at Mount Lent, Bessie Darling's former boarding house now converted into a lodge. But when word arrived that the group could include over 100 sailors, Williams hastily arranged to shift the British to Greentop, where they would be near swimming and other sport facilities. [4] In the end, seventy-four sailors arrived. The seamen, who stayed through August, appear to have enjoyed their brief stay on land, which included visits from CCC company members and a Fourth of July celebration. [5]

While the British sailors enjoyed a Catoctin summer, the National Park Service was discovering that the improving economy (the result of war mobilization) had dried up the once large labor pool that had constructed the park. Once scarce, good jobs now were readily available in the defense industry. Before it closed down in November 1941, several members of the Catoctin Company 1374 corps members left for jobs in the burgeoning airplane plants of Hagerstown. Apparently informed that the Catoctin CCC company would soon be disbanded, Williams searched for new sources of labor. In the summer of 1941, the NPS applied to the Maryland WPA requesting workers for projects yet to be complete. These

projects probably included a long-planned fourth camp for the park (see Map 6). At one point, the NPS regional director considered seeking out military funding for several of the Catoctin projects. [6] Despite the growing labor scarcity, WPA officials approved a new project at Catoctin "to continue work of the type previously carried on" by the CCC. [7] When Company 1374 disbanded in November 1941, 30 WPA workers continued at the park. Whereas the new labor contingency was a far cry from the large numbers who had contributed to the early construction of the park, the new workers did allow Williams to continue work on park roads and some smaller construction projects. [8]

War

The attack on Pearl Harbor launched the already significant American military mobilization into hyper speed. The war took precedent over everything. In desperate need of training facilities, the branches of the armed forces turned to the National Park Service. The Recreation Demonstration Areas, constructed near large urban areas, generally featuring organized camp sites, and containing, "within them little that can be permanently damaged by heavy visitation and intensive use" clearly lent themselves to military use. [9] In the spring of 1942, the NPS announced that henceforth the Catoctin Recreational Demonstration Area would be closed to civilian use and "taken over for use in the present war effort." The NPS extended permits to the War Department, and in the spring of 1942, the military surveyed the park to plan their use of the grounds. [10]

With the military takeover, the NPS summarily informed groups that had enjoyed use of the organized camp sites that "the war program of the nation has rendered impossible the normal utilization of organized camp facilities." [11] In order to facilitate the new park occupants, the NPS also asked the Maryland League for Crippled Children (MLCC) and the Salvation Army to remove all special equipment that had been stored at the camps. [12] The MLCC then moved its operations temporarily to the French Creek Recreational Demonstration Area at the Hopewell Village National Historic Site. [13] For the next several years recreational use of the park area was limited to a few picnickers using what was known as the West Picnic Area and a few fishermen

making use of Hunting Creek (see Appendix 20). [14]

By the summer of 1942, the army had established a temporary camp at the former CCC camp (Round Meadow). Meanwhile, a short distance away from the army campsite, a group of spies-in-training was learning the rudimentaries of espionage. President Roosevelt had authorized the formation of the Office of Strategic Services (OSS) in 1942 as an independent agency to coordinate overseas intelligence and espionage. In the fall of 1942, the OSS took over Camp Greentop, the former home of the camp for handicapped children (see Map 6). Recruits, both men and women, came from all over the country and all over the world (the largest non-American group was the French contingent) to be trained by the OSS. After preliminary training at Prince William Forest Park in Virginia, they shuttled between several sites including Greentop, which was known in OSS parlance as Area B. The Catoctin site specialized in hand-to-hand combat, infiltration training, marksmanship, and setting charges. At any given time, OSS instructors trained roughly one hundred recruits in groups of ten. Each recruiting class spent roughly two weeks in the Catoctin Mountains. During training, none of the recruits used their real names—even to those in their group. Instead alias allowed for a cloak of secrecy. Among the expert training staff was a colorful English colonel, formerly employed by the Shanghai police. The colonel was remembered as a particularly "notorious character in the OSS." [15]

Impressed by German expertise in unconventional warfare, OSS Director William "Wild Bill" Donovan sought to train operatives capable of working behind enemy lines. One of the

more unique features of the OSS training camp was the so-called "mystery" or "spook" house. Armed with a .45 caliber pistol with two clips of six rounds, agents would enter the darkened house, apparently built somewhere around the camp. Inside the house, Nazi cardboard cutouts would suddenly pop out, requiring the trainees to think fast. [16] Wild Bill Donovan, himself, came to the camp on several occasions to oversee the training. [17]

The military presence at Catoctin required a host of changes to the park. The camp later known as Misty Mount was winterized to facilitate year-round training. [18] And a number of new parcels of land (totaling nearly 275 acres) were added to the park. The family of Victor Brown on Foxville Road, who had long resisted selling to the government finally relented. By the spring of 1942, the War Department had acquired the Brown farm in addition to a number of other properties. [19]

While the military provided for much of the labor and materials needed to turn the park into a training ground, much work was still left for Williams and his skeleton crew who remained the official custodians of the park. For Williams, lack of labor hampered even routine maintenance efforts. Maryland State WPA Director Dryden, once awash in labor, now scrambled to find even a few workers for Catoctin. In the summer of 1942, the WPA could only assign twelve workers to Catoctin. [20] By the winter, the number had risen to thirty-five workers, but Williams worried that the WPA's "goodwill" would soon run out. [21] Of particular concern to the Catoctin project supervisor was the condition of park roads--all of which remained stone surfaced and susceptible to serious problems in bad weather conditions. Williams hoped to pave over the main Thurmont-Foxville Road, but fears that it would damage Hunting Creek kept the project on hold. [22] He hoped that the war emergency might create the pressure needed to encourage serious work on the park roads. [23]

Shangri-La

The story of the founding and early years of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Shangri-La retreat in the Catoctin mountains has been told in depth by Kathie Hogan, Barbara Kirkconnell, and most recently by W. Dale Nelson. [24] While little can be added their accounts, the story briefly can be recounted with some new information.

The mountains of central western Maryland had offered a retreat to government officials for over a half century by 1942. Diplomats from Washington DC's many foreign embassies vacationed at Pen Mar. Washington officials such as Lawrence Richey and attorney Kingman Brewster, later president of Yale University, kept vacation homes in the area. [25] President Hoover was a frequent guest at the Richey camp, and his visits continued even after his presidency. Hoover, Theodore Roosevelt Jr., and leaders of the Maryland Republican party, for instance, enjoyed the opening of the 1935 fishing season at the Richey camp in April 1935. [26] Franklin Roosevelt, himself, appreciated the area's recreational potential. As assistant secretary of the Navy, he had vacationed at Braddock Heights during World War I. [27]

As president, Roosevelt had enjoyed escapes from the pressures of the White House at Warm Springs, Georgia and on the presidential yacht. In 1942 with the world war raging and U boats patrolling the Atlantic, the yacht was deemed too dangerous and Warm Springs deemed too far from Washington. Instead, White House officials sought a new retreat and assigned the National Park Service to find a suitable location near Washington, DC. The park service submitted potential locations, two of which were at the Catoctin RDA. One site was Camp Hi-Catoctin. The Federal Camp Council, which organized retreats for government employees, was among the prime users of the camp and had sponsored numerous outings to the scenic site (see Map 6). The Girl and Boy Scouts also made extensive use of Hi-Catoctin.

The second site was the area slated for the construction of the fourth Catoctin Camp, a project which had been temporarily shelved. On April 15, 1942 Conrad Wirth of the NPS took White House officials on a tour of the Catoctin RDA. The group was particularly impressed by Hi-Catoctin and asked Williams to clear brush for automobiles should the president wish to visit. [28]

A week later, FDR did visit. Reports had the president "very much pleased with the area." [29] One story had him exclaiming upon seeing the site, "This is Shangri-La," a reference to James Hilton's famed novel *The Lost Horizon*. [30] The appeal of the site was clear. At an elevation of 1,800 feet, Hi-Catoctin offered seclusion and a spectacular view that included the Monocacy River. It offered cool breezes and temperatures five to ten degrees below steamy conditions in Washington DC. Best of all, the site already contained a number of cabins and other structures, including a swimming pool (see Appendix 21). The site could be reconstructed as a presidential retreat at a fraction of a brand new retreat. With Americans making enormous sacrifices for the war effort, the president could ill afford to appear extravagant. The revamping of existing buildings also could be done quickly, allowing the president use of his new retreat that summer. The overall location offered the appeal of a two hour drive from Washington, DC "over first-class roads" (until one arrived at the park where there existed only dirt roads). [31]

From there the project moved quickly. President Roosevelt returned to Catoctin on April 30 to give final approval to "preliminary sketches of the expanded lodge buildings (see Appendix 22). Within days the building had begun. WPA labor at various local projects was diverted to Catoctin to aid in reconverting the camp. Construction proceeded very much along the lines of Roosevelt's plan that the camp lodge, a structure roughly 17 by 28 feet, with a kitchen and open porch, be converted into the retreat's main building, with four bedrooms, two baths, a living room/dinning room, a screened-in porch, and a paved terrace. Builders then combined two cabins on the camp grounds to serve as guest quarters, while the camp craft shop became the servant's quarters. Crews also added a gate house, a communications building, three latrines, and an access drive, 1,060 feet in length." [32] In front of the lodge, workers built a cistern and fountain. Special features inside the lodge included French doors, crafted by a local Thurmont carpenter, that dropped down to allow Roosevelt's wheel chair easy access. [33] As Winston Churchill described Shangri-La, it was "in principle a log cabin with all modern improvements." [34]

With the presidential yacht out-of-commission during the war, the navy dispatched to Shangri-La a team of twelve Filipino stewards formerly assigned to the yacht. The crew, overseen by Sotero Abida, who remained in the Thurmont area long after his service to FDR, worked to put final touches on the retreat. [35]

By early July, Shangri-La was ready, and, on the weekend of July 18-20, Roosevelt and entourage arrived for their first weekend in the Catoctins (see Appendix 23 for listing of FDR visits to Shangri-La). The furnishings, courtesy of a naval warehouse, were austere: simple metal beds, a chair, and a dresser in each room. The floor covered by a worn rug. [36] Nevertheless, Roosevelt seemed to delight in the surroundings which offered him a needed respite from the pressures of the war. Among the president's favorite Catoctin diversions was tending to his stamp collection. [37]

But war frequently intruded on Roosevelt's hide-away. On his second trip to Shangri-La, the president spent much of his time in deep conversations with his military advisors over the situation at the battle of Guadalcanal in the Pacific. Later, it was at Shangri-La where Roosevelt first heard of the successful invasion of North Africa on November 7, 1942. The next year, on June 25, 1943, Roosevelt was again at Shangri-La when he received word of Mussolini's resignation. [38] Over the next three years, the president made numerous trips to

the retreat. Guests included Supreme Justice William O. Douglas, OSS Director William Donovan, and poet and Librarian of Congress Archibald MacLeish. Royal visitors, including Princess Martha of Norway and Princess Juliana of the Netherlands, also made their way to the retreat.

The most famous visitor to Shangri-La (and the one still talked about in the local area) was Winston Churchill. The English prime minister had been a frequent visitor at the White House during the war years. One May 15, 1943 Churchill set out with the President, Mrs. Roosevelt, and Harry Hopkins bound for Shangri-La. Passing through the town of Frederick on their way to the retreat, Churchill impressed his guests by reciting John Greenleaf Whittier's famous poem "Barbara Fritchie." Roosevelt and Churchill later talked of the impact of the Civil War in the area. During their stay in the mountains, the president and prime minister took some time to tour the general area. According to Churchill, the two fished in Hunting Creek. Locals remember the entourage arriving at Catoctin Furnace to observe Fred Tresselt's gold fish ponds. Churchill, who kept a similar pond at his home in England, particularly admired the fish and talked at length with Tresselt. The Secret Service then swore Tresselt to secrecy about the meeting. [39] On their way home, while Roosevelt waited in the car, Churchill surprised Camp Cozy proprietor Wilbur Freeze by stopping into the Cozy Tavern for a beer and to play the jukebox. In fact, the prime minister had never seen a jukebox and Freeze had to explain its function. [40] On Monday, Churchill left the mountains, but left a lasting impression on all those who came into contact with him.

With such famed visitors, security was a major concern at Shangri-La. A barbed-wire fence surrounded the compound, and marines, stationed at Camp Misty Mount, patrolled the area (see Map 6). Likewise the very existence of the retreat was to be kept a secret. The most Roosevelt would say as he departed the White House was that he was on his way to "Shangri-La." Of course, local residents knew fully well when the president was coming. As Camp Cozy owner Wilbur Freeze explained the president "was proceeded by about three or four hours by secret service men, who sent ahead inspecting bridges and roads." One several occasions, Thurmont locals lined the streets to greet Roosevelt. [41] When Churchill arrived with the president, a traffic light on Church and Main brought their entourage to a dead stop. Secret Service men jumped from the car and stood on the running boards. To the delight of onlookers Churchill and Roosevelt flashed victory signs from their car windows. [42]

Although local residents certainly figured out the location of the secret retreat, the White House remained officially silent on the issue. Reporters likewise, even if they knew or suspected the location were expected to remain silent about the retreat. On October 15, 1943, the *Chicago Daily News* broke the silence on the presidential hide-away. The newspaper reported the location of Shangri-La in the Catoctin RDA and claimed that the National Park Service had "confirmed the fact that the President used Catoctin on several occasions in the past" (see Appendix 24). NPS officials quickly denied being the source of the leak. [43] The floodgates having been opened in Chicago, the local *Catoctin Enterprise* then reported the story of Churchill and the Cozy Tavern juke box. Other newspapers printed similar stories. [44] Louise McPherson, a descendent of the McPherson-furnace owning family then living in Auburn house, also wrote to Roosevelt to deny any local involvement in the disclosures. She also recounted some of the history of the area and welcomed the president to the area. [45]

The most serious threat to the president, however, came from the most unlikely of places. In planning his retreat, Roosevelt had made a special request for "an old wheel with lights coming out of it for the dining room." Wagon wheel chandeliers were fixtures of many rustic camps at the time. Conrad Wirth of the NPS Branch of Planning arranged to have such a chandelier made. To Wirth's horror, later, when Roosevelt was not at the camp, the wheel fell onto the maghongany table below. [46] Wirth could only be grateful that neither Roosevelt nor Churchill had been present.

After making seventeen pilgrimages to Shangri-La in 1942 and 1943, Roosevelt found time for only four trips in 1944, a tough election year. There was also talk that with security broken the president might be safer elsewhere. His last trip to the Catoctin hideaway was on July 9, 1944 accompanied by his friend Lucy Mercer Rutherford. [47]

With Roosevelt's death in April 1945 and the end of the war that summer, the press began pushing for more information about the mountain retreat. In late September 1945, the White House finally decided to "take the lid off" Shangri-La. Reporters were allowed a tour of the facilities that included a special doghouse for Fala, the first dog. [48] As FDR had feared, the unveiling of the retreat immediately became a political issue. The decidedly-Republican *Chicago Tribune*, asserted that the costs of Shangri-La early ran over \$100,000, with the lodge alone costing \$60,000. The article also complained about a "swimming pool, which was built especially for the late president . . . quite pretentious." [49]

A few weeks after the revelations about Roosevelt's camp, on a Sunday morning, Catoctin superintendent, Mike Williams, rose and lit the fireplace in the Custodian's house, built by the CCC several years earlier, where he and his family lived. As he prepared breakfast, he smelled smoke and ran to the second story of the house. There he found the "entire overhead ceiling in flames." He immediately notified Camp One (Misty-Mount), where the Marines protecting Shangri-La remained stationed. They quickly arrived at the scene as did the Smithburg and Thurmont fire departments. The combined forces showered the residence with water and chemicals, but the house could not be saved. An official investigation revealed that structural timbers had been placed too close to the flue lining. [50]

[<<< Previous](#) [<<< Contents >>>](#) [Next >>>](#)

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



PROSPECTS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

A study such as this--limited to one year's research and writing--by definition leaves many questions unanswered. Local history is particularly time consuming and frustrating. In some cases, even the smallest fact or generalization can require hours of painstaking research. And important records, such as county records which in this study might have illuminated significant parts of the story, often have been either lost or thrown out. As such, this report should be seen as only a preliminary guide or inquiry into the history of the mountain area. As future research endeavors are considered--and there are a number of exciting and potentially fruitful avenues that might be taken--I would urge that the following areas be given attention.

Park visitors, my own experience has suggested, are particularly interested in the role that Native Americans might have played in the area. As my study suggests, their role was certainly minimal. However, issues such as rhyolite procurement and hunting in and around the present-day park deserve more consideration. One hopes that Catoctin Mountain Park will continue to work with both amateur and professional archeologists to seek out whatever evidence may still exist. A coordinated effort, in which each new initiative follows up and consciously adds to previously collected information might help to yield a fuller picture of the Native American presence around the park. In this endeavor a strong relationship with the Maryland Historic Trust, in particular State Archeologist Tyler Bastian, and the Archeological Society of Maryland is encouraged.

We still know little about those who made their homes on what has become parkland. Land records do provide names of homesteaders from the eighteenth through to the early twentieth century. Discovering information about these settlers inevitably will be hard and time-consuming work. One way to approach the problem would be to establish a data-base of landholders. Gradually over time, using the censuses, tax records, and other sources, information on the landholders could be gathered and put into the data base. Oral interviews could supplement our knowledge of twentieth-century land owners.

A similar project would involve pinpointing the location of old roads, farms, boarding houses, and other sites of historic interest. The historic base maps prepared for this study might offer a starting point. One would hope that over the years more and more relevant sites will be added to the map.

Questions about the Revolutionary War and Civil War contributions of the Catoctin Iron Furnace also require further research--again with the understanding that absolute answers may never be found. Government records and the correspondence and papers of prominent figures could be combed for further information. However, such research would resemble the proverbial needle in a haystack search, and, again, definitive answers may never be found.

Finally future research projects might aim at a more comprehensive understanding of the activities of the military and Office of Strategic Services during World War II. The National Archives currently is opening OSS records for research and military records related to WWII training also exist. While my preliminary efforts to get at relevant records did not yield

results, a sustained effort might well help us fill this void. Important questions include: What did these military and intelligence groups do at Catoctin, how they changed the landscape, and during what precise dates were they there?

One would also hope that the park will make efforts to work cooperatively with many of the excellent organizations that proved so helpful in the preparation of this study. Among these groups are the Thurmont Historical Society, under its director Ann W. Cissel, the Frederick County Historical Society, the Fredrick County Planning Commission, the National Civilian Conservation Corps Alumni Association in Saint Louis, and the Maryland Hall of Records. One particularly promising partner might be the Catoctin Center for Regional Studies at Frederick Community College, under the direction of Bruce Thompson and Dean Herrin. While the organization was still in its planning stages as this study got underway, it has since blossomed. Recently the center was the recipient of a grant from the Department of Transportation to study the history of local transportation networks. One hopes that Catoctin Mountain Park might cooperate with such a project to the mutual benefit of all parties. Future joint projects, involving local college students, might also be a part of these exciting new developments. Indeed, there is reason to believe that, despite obstacles, the future of the study of the past of Catoctin Mountain may be bright.

[<<< Previous](#) [<<< Contents >>>](#) [Next >>>](#)

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



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Catoctin Mountain Park

- Vertical Files

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Happy Days

The Mountaineer

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>

Catoctin Mountain Park

Historic Resource Study



MAPS AND APPENDICES

[Maps](#)

- [Appendix 1](#): Catoctin Furnace Machinery Foundation
- [Appendix 2](#): Catoctin Furnace Village House
- [Appendix 3](#): Iron Master's House and Workers' Cottages
- [Appendix 4](#): *Catoctin Clarion* Ad for Amos Lucas, barber
- [Appendix 5](#): The Western Maryland Railroad
- [Appendix 6](#): Western Maryland Railroad scenery
- [Appendix 7](#): Post Offices
- [Appendix 8](#): Late Nineteenth-Century Tourism in the Catoctin Region
- [Appendix 9](#): Newspaper Photos of Crash of Blue Mountain Express
- [Appendix 10](#): Foxville Watch Tower
- [Appendix 11](#): Maryland State Planning Commission Maps
- [Appendix 12](#): Letter Protesting Catoctin Land Acquisition
- [Appendix 13](#): Promotional Material for Recreational Demonstration Areas
- [Appendix 14](#): Letter from Catoctin WPA workers
- [Appendix 15](#): Wood produced by Catoctin RDA Saw Mill
- [Appendix 16](#): WPA Workers at Catoctin Furnace School
- [Appendix 17](#): Boy Scout, Girl Scout, Maryland League for Crippled Children, and Federal Camp Council Use of Catoctin RDA
- [Appendix 18](#): Proposed African-American Use of Recreational Demonstration Areas
- [Appendix 19](#): Aerial View of Catoctin CCC Camp
- [Appendix 20](#): Narrative Report for Month of October, 1942
- [Appendix 21](#): President's Pool at Shangri-La
- [Appendix 22](#): Sketch of Main Lodge at Shangri-La
- [Appendix 23](#): FDR's Visit to Shangri-La
- [Appendix 24](#): *Chicago Daily News* Reveals Presidential "Hideway"
- [Appendix 25](#): Bituminous Resurfacing of Roads
- [Appendix 26](#): Shangri-La Pass

<<< [Previous](#)

<<< [Contents](#) >>>

[Next](#) >>>