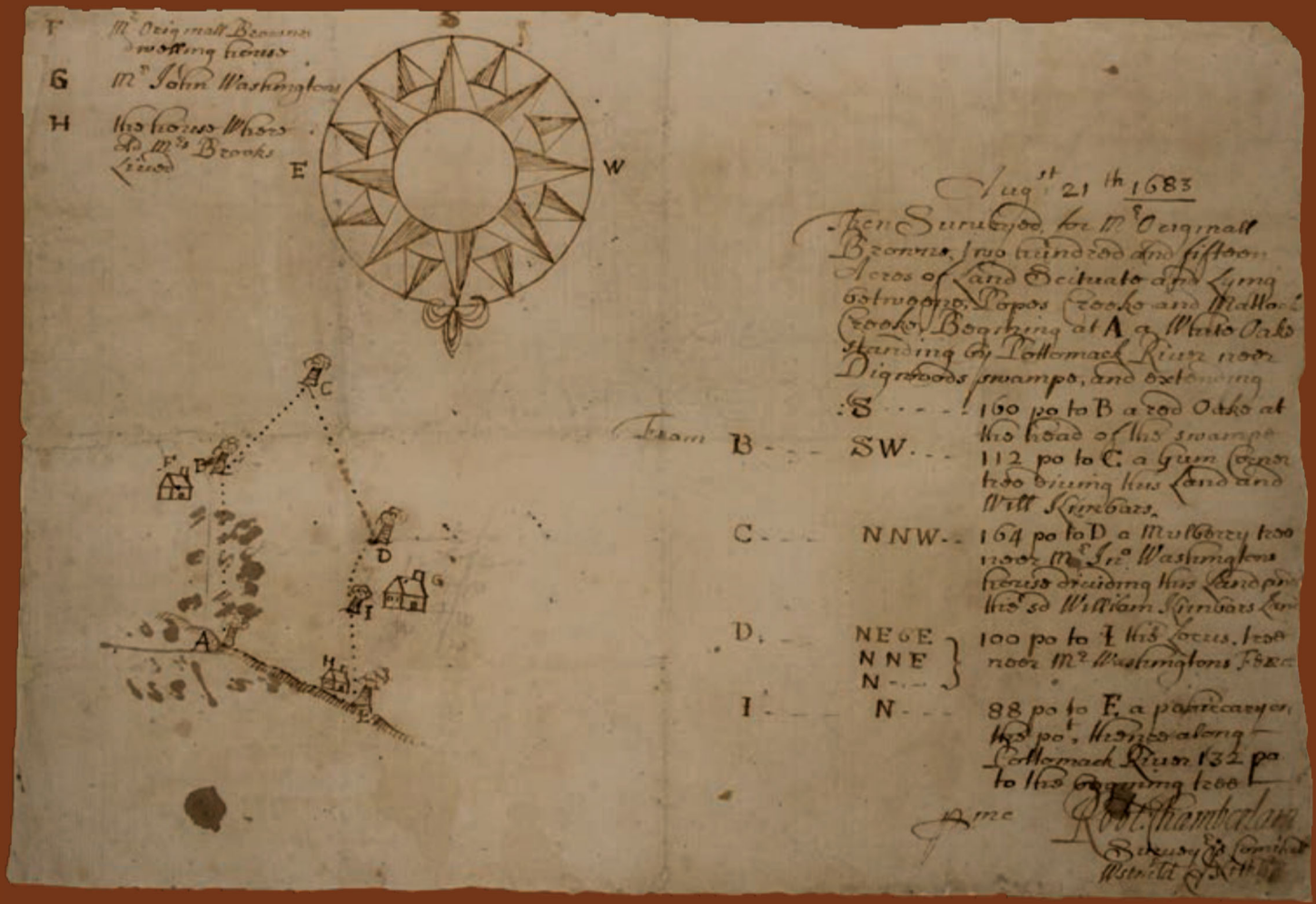
National Park Service
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Interior Region 1, North Atlantic - Appalachian

Upon This Land:

Seven Generations of the Washington Family and the Residents of Popes Creek and Mattox Neck

A Historic Resource Study for George Washington Birthplace National Monument



Philip Levy
Department of History
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George Washington Birthplace National Monument
Historic Resource Study

Philip Levy

Presented to George Washington Birthplace National Monument
Interior Region 1, North Atlantic—Appalachian

Prepared under a cooperative agreement between
the Organization of American Historians and the National Park Service

March 2023

Cover Image:
Originall Brown Survey Map, 1683, Collections of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument," Colonial Beach, VA

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March 2023

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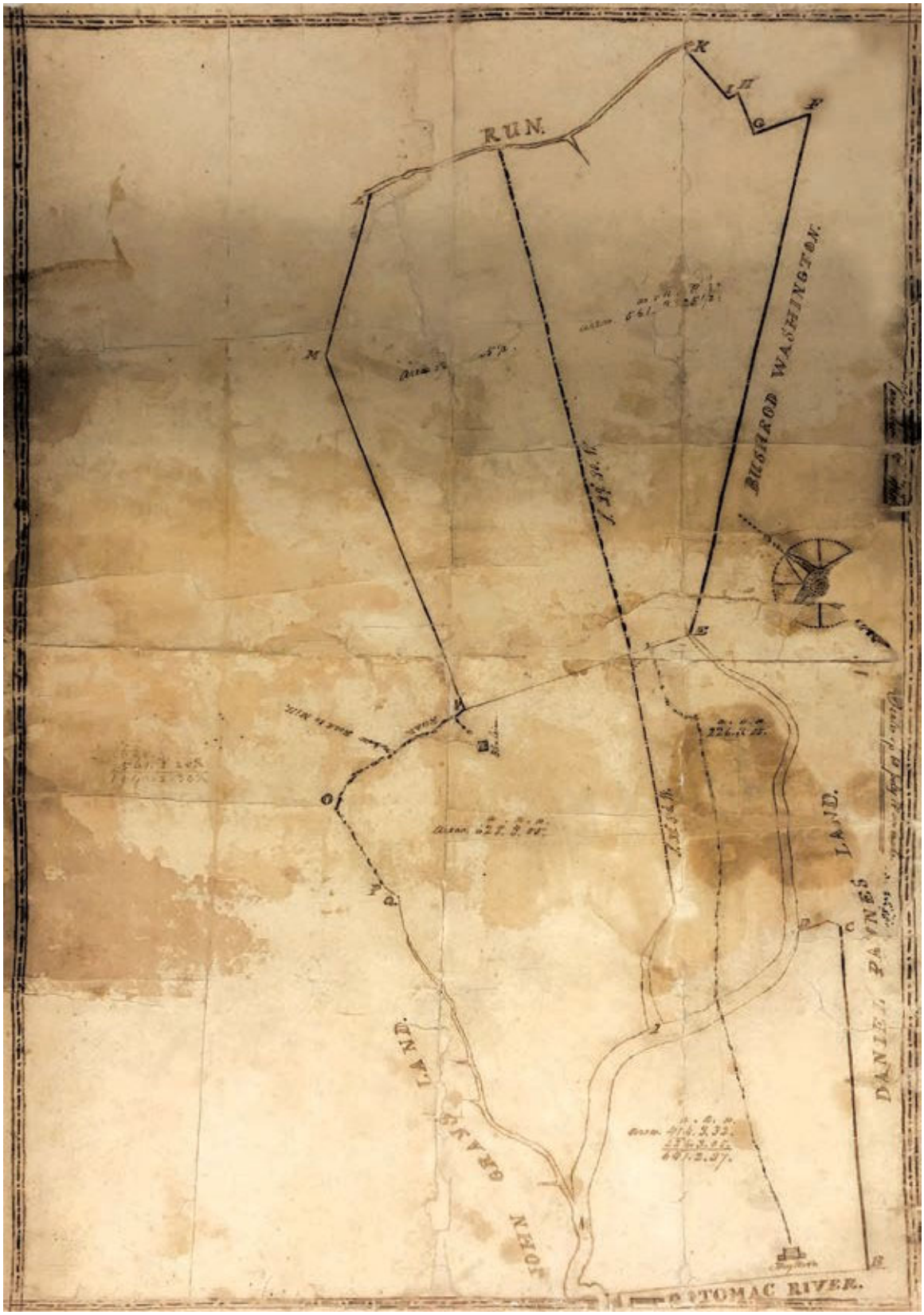
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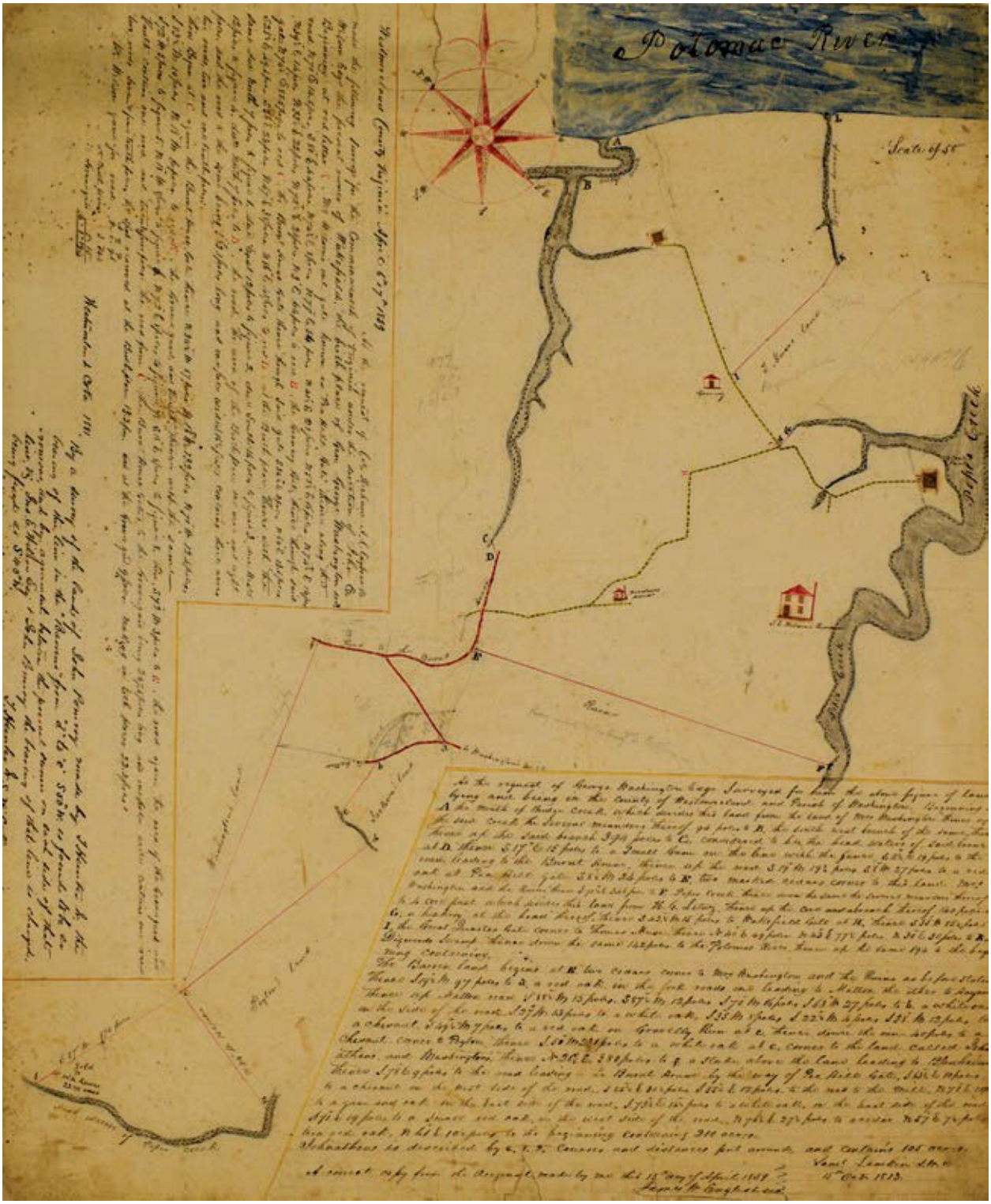
Maps



Pope's Creek Survey Map
Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC

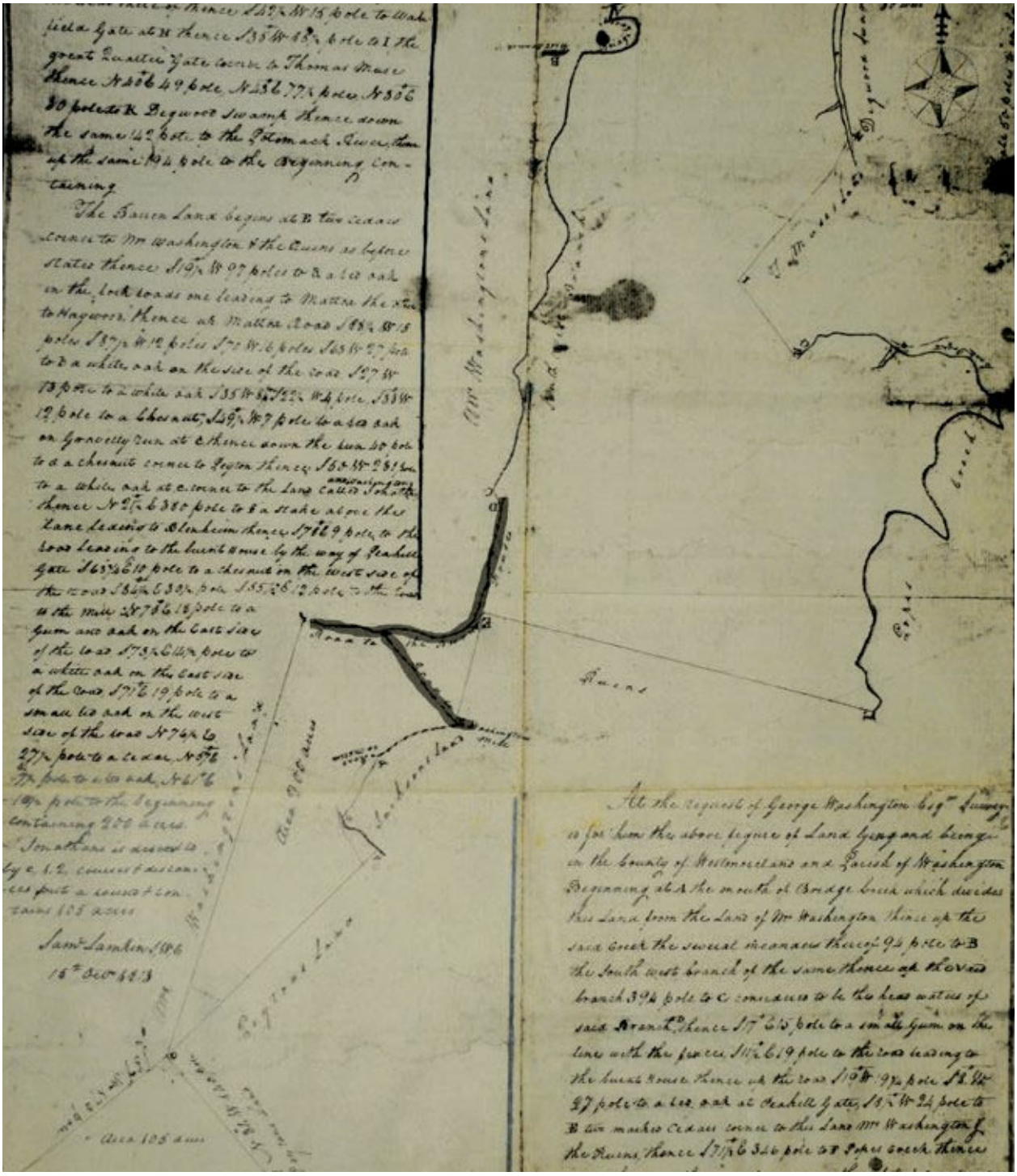


Post-1813 Survey Map
Collections of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Colonial Beach, Virginia



1859 Survey Map

Collections of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Colonial Beach, Virginia



Lamkin Survey Map, 1813

Collections of the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Colonial Beach, Virginia

Introduction

This is the story of the Washington family and their lives on Mattox Neck between Popes Creek on the east and Mattox Creek on the west. This roughly 7,000-acre patch of alluvial Potomac River valley land saw seven generations of the family work and live in an era that began in the 1650s and lasted until 1813. The family most famously lived on the northeastern-most portion of the land along Popes Creek. This is where the best-known member of the family—George Washington—was born, and it was his national significance that allowed a few hundred acres around that site to become the George Washington Birthplace National Monument (GEWA). From its inception, GEWA has been both a shrine to Washington and his birth and an interpretive historical park with the mission of teaching visitors about the Washingtons and their epoch. This report recounts the park's interesting and complex colonial-era history.

In the century since GEWA and its precursor private foundation, the Wakefield National Memorial Association (WNMA), took up the reins of commemorating the Washingtons, scholars have devoted an unprecedented amount of energy to the study of early America.[1] There also have been a few attempts to tell the Washington family story in the past. Nineteenth-century fabulists like Mason Locke "Parson" Weems and Benson Lossing gloried in making up the details they wanted in order to add color to their stories. Washington's own adopted grandson George Washington Parke Custis was himself no better, and more than a few of his stories have been given credence simply because of his name. Their work set in motion all manner of problems in subsequent Washington biographies.

The first few pages of every Washington biography take a stab at setting the early scene, and a few canonical moments appear repeatedly. "The immigrant" John Washington's arrival in Virginia in 1657 and his marriage to Anne Pope is one. His becoming rich, serving in the House of Burgesses, and participating in the beginning of Bacon's Rebellion are all staples of those first few pages. It is hard, though, to avoid the feeling that most authors have invoked these stories because they wish to (not so) subtly hint at John being a precursor to George. At times, that view is stated outright. Biographers will always mention George's father, Augustine, being schooled in England and then getting involved in mining operations in Virginia. They will note the passing of his first wife, Jane, and then turn to Mary, his second wife. Writers have treated her differently over time; 19th-century authors often portrayed Mary as a weepy, doting, and pious mother, which cast her in the mold of what was at the time an idealized national maternal model. In the early 20th century, though, the pendulum swung the other way as biographers described Mary as having been a shrew and nagging. Samuel Eliot Morison was perhaps the most vocal when he called

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[1] For the history of GEWA as a national park, see Seth Brugemann, *Here Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008).

Mary a "grasping, querulous, and vulgar" woman, who later in life "opposed almost everything that he [Washington] did for the public good."[2] Neither the saint nor the harpy were true, but both made for good reading. Rather, from the scant documentation of her life, we can see Mary as having been a fairly ordinary Virginia gentry woman who after a difficult childhood became a respected member of her community and a bit irascible in old age.[3]

Biographers all note that Augustine's death left George fatherless and having to find his way without English schooling or a father as a patron. These details have always played a central role in the way biographers have wanted to show Washington to have been a "self-made man," a concept so resonant in commercial and industrial America but largely meaningless in George's day. But since so much of George's story is about war and politics, most biographers have been eager to leave the mother and swaddling clothes behind and get on to the action.

The most thorough work on the early Washingtons is the first volume of Douglas Southall Freeman's 1948 *George Washington: A Life*.[4] Freeman worked with county records as well as Washington family papers and produced a well-informed, detailed, and still-influential version of the family story. But Freeman's work was also peppered with many small but notable errors, often stemming from limited access to sources. He misread some documents relating to Augustine Washington's political activities and missed others dealing with family matters. This led Freeman into some erroneous conclusions about the Washingtons. But given his prominence and his work still standing as the largest study of the early Washingtons, those errors have been repeated in works even recently published such as Martha Saxton's biography of Mary Washington. On top of that, Freeman was an ardent and outspoken segregationist and Confederate apologist, and as such preferred that the dynamics of slavery simply be overlooked. Consequently, Freeman's undeniably impressive work carries within it the seeds of its own marginalization.

GEWA itself has produced scholarship about the Washingtons of Popes Creek. The best of this writing was Charles E. Hatch's 1979 *Popes Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington*.[5] The strength of this report was its use of primary sources and the inclusion of archaeological findings. But it also suffered in a few important ways. First, it

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[2] Samuel Eliot Morison, *The Young Man Washington* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1932), 10–11.

[3] Philip Levy, *George Washington Written Upon the Land: Nature, Myth, Memory, and Landscape* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2015), 30–31. Although imperfect, Martha Saxton's *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019) is the best biography of Mary. Paula Felder pushed back against the negative view of Mary sometimes in ways that resuscitated some of the 19th century's pieties. See Paula Felder, "Discovering Mary Washington," *The Free Lance Star* (February 17, 2007), 5–6. Archaeology has offered a moderated view. See Laura J. Galke, "The Mother of the Father of Our Country: Mary Ball Washington's Genteel Domestic Habits," *Northeast Historical Archaeology*, 38 (2009), 29–48.

[4] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948).

[5] Charles E. Hatch Jr., *Pope's Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington* (Washington's Birthplace, VA: Wakefield National Memorial Association, and the National Park Service, 1979).

is disorganized and confusing. Second, it stays too rigidly focused on land ownership records. Hatch devoted significant effort to tracing the details of land sales and acquisition. The land records are a considerable portion of the surviving colonial records, and generations of historians have been seduced by the quest to recreate the colonial landscape from words and sketches. But due to the vagaries of the records' descriptive language and the ambiguity of surveyors' markers, achieving any real precision in property lines not linked to identifiable landscape features (creeks, rivers, and so on) is ultimately only informed illusiveness. Hatch's focus on land ownership is understandable, but it also unfortunately missed the chance to discuss many important issues also in the records.[6] This largely stems from its third and biggest weakness. It is almost entirely based on the Wakefield Memorial Association historian Charles Arthur Hoppin's work and a collection of 1930s transcribed court records in the GEWA archive.[7] This latter work is a stunning collection of well-transcribed (although poorly ordered) selections from the Westmoreland County Court records. But it is only a selection and, as such, reflects the choices made by unnamed transcribers in the 1930s. That means that anyone working from this record set exclusively will be constrained by artificially imposed limitations. Hatch also was largely unaware of the then-current scholarship on early America and of course was writing before the large boom in colonial-era history had even taken place. All of this means that even though that report was written in the 1970s, it does not substantively move beyond what was being said about the park and its people in the 1930s. That is what this new report seeks to correct, by creating a new resource that rests heavily on primary sources relating to the site and region and filling in gaps with current scholarship. This allows a fuller picture of the site, its landscape, and its people than has yet been written.

The sources that inform this work come from a few streams. The most important are the court records of Westmoreland County, supplemented with records from neighboring Northern Neck counties. Many of these records have been transcribed and published, but these volumes, immensely valuable as they are, are sometimes incomplete. They also do not include every year and every book that has survived. Therefore, this report also rests on considerable use of the original records in their manuscript form. This report rep- resents the first effort to systematically go through those records to follow leads and con- nect the dots in order to arrive at the fullest picture possible. We are fortunate that the Westmoreland records are so intact; many important and venerable Virginia counties were not so lucky. The records generally fall into two categories. There are "orders" that are actions of the court and cover crimes, lawsuits, official actions, and government reports. There are "deeds and wills," which, as the name suggests, focus on property

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[6] Charles E. Hatch Jr., *Pope's Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington* (Washington's Birthplace, VA: Wakefield National Memorial Association, and the National Park Service, 1979).

[7] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932).

disputes and transfers. The lines between these two categories of records, though, are not hard and fast, and any attempt to understand life in the area requires a full review of both sets of records. There also are other collections of records, all stored in the Westmoreland County Courthouse in Montross, Virginia. These include the earliest records of the county as well as several books of the county court's financial dealings in the mid-18th century. Genealogists have done excellent work in creating large and complex databases that bring together data as never before. A nearly complete archive of these records is included in digital form with this report. Rangers and other park friends will thus have access to individual JPG photographs of several thousand pages of original and transcribed documents, enabling them to conduct their own substantive primary source research.

The ability to untangle complex genealogies has been made vastly greater thanks to database software. The Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties database has been invaluable in revealing connections between 17th- and 18th-century families.[8] The scale of this work is remarkable, and its insights about marriage and descent connections are used throughout this report. Almost every reference to marriages and kinship, whether specifically cited or not, is informed by this remarkable digital humanities project. This report would not have been possible without this database's many insights.

Similar work on enslaved people as found in the Database of Mount Vernon's Enslaved Community as well as the Slave Voyages database of the Atlantic slave trade allows work once thought all but impossible.[9] These sites were less informative about GEWA and its enslaved people specifically, but they are of great value to those studying enslaved people. This report rests on an extensive study of all of these records in order to make sense of GEWA, the Washingtons, and their world. The early sections reflect secondary scholarship on Virginia colonization, but almost everything dealing with the people of Mattox Neck is based on primary source research. The result is not only a more detailed picture than was previously available but also the recovery of valuable details, and even entire stories, that have not yet seen the light of day.

In some cases, there are personal correspondences that offer insights. The records of the Principio Company housed both in England and in the United States contain information about Augustine Washington and his business dealings. Decades of collecting, transcribing, and publishing George Washington's papers have created a vast treasury of information, and in recent years, the University of Virginia has been making the searchable

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[8] Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[9] Database of Mount Vernon's Enslaved Community, Mount Vernon, https://www.mountvernon.org/george-washington/slavery/slavery-database, accessed 5/21/22. Slave Voyages, https://www.slavevoyages.org, accessed 5/21/22.

text of these letters available online.[10] The National Library for the Study of George Washington at Mount Vernon has a large collection of unpublished manuscripts and letters that deal with some of the less well-known members of the extended Washington family. William Augustine Washington's ledger from 1776 to 1798, housed at the Library of Congress, is an invaluable source of information that no one studying the GEWA acres has yet accessed. The Henry Woodhouse Collection, also at the Library of Congress, has many materials dealing with William Augustine Washington as well as the Archive Center at the Smithsonian Institution. There also is a small collection of historical survey maps that are both study-worthy objects in their own right but also are useful streams of information. The scope of time and topics that this report covers is the result of a wide array of historical literature that informs the analyses and background information. Many of these resources are included in the digital archive supplied with this report.

The chapters that follow are organized chronologically and gradually dive deeper and deeper into the Washington family story as the people themselves and as the documentation about their lives increased. The chapters begin with what site and regional archaeology have taught us about the landscape's first inhabitants—the woodland and late-woodland period proto-Algonquians and Algonquians. We move next to how this world was disrupted by the first Spanish and English colonial efforts. These chapters offer some background on many of the issues that emerged in the early 17th century but continued to recur in later Virginia history. These range from the challenges of labor to conflicts over religion. We move from there to the conflicts that engulfed Maryland in the 1640s. The settlement of the south side of the Potomac was a direct result of that chaos, and without it, the Washingtons would have inhabited a very different world. Next we look at the global commercial context that brought John Washington from the Baltic Sea to the Potomac. The role of Anne Pope Washington was central as well to his rise in colonial affairs. We then look at John Washington's Virginia career, paying special attention to the role he played in bringing on the genocidal wars of the 1670s and his important involvement in the early slave trade. It was elite planters like Washington who led the way into the use of enslaved African labor forces, and Washington was among the first people in the area to enslave Africans. GEWA was a site for several important moments in these stories. John Washington also served as a member of the House of Burgesses when that body passed some important early laws governing slavery. We also look at Washington's marriages to the two Gerrard sisters to see how gentry women of the period used the law to control their fates and property. Land records are one of the most numerous and important streams of information for this period. But as we will see, these records reveal much about the

[10] George Washington's papers can be accessed in three principal forms. One is the extensive *Papers of George Washington* project of the University of Virginia Press. Copies of the originals can be found at the Library of Congress's George Washington Papers Collections, https://www.loc.gov/collections/george-washington-papers/about-this-collection, accessed on 5/21/22. A collaborative digital project has put the published and transcribed papers online at Founders Online, https://founders.archives.gov, accessed 5/21/22.

community and tell us more than just who owned what. We will see the development of the Anglican Church on Mattox Neck—the contemporary name for the land between Mattox and Popes Creeks—while also seeing how English conflicts over religion had faint echoes even on the shores of Popes Creek.

After John Washington's death, the story moves to that of his two sons, Lawrence and John Jr. These two very different men pursued very different goals in life. Lawrence carried on as the man of affairs, as was his father, by being active in the local courts, local offices, and the House of Burgesses. John Jr., on the other hand, was content to live his life on the ancestral Bridge's Creek acres. We will see how slavery took shape here in the 1690s and how a series of lawsuits over the ownership of one particular woman revealed how quickly the intimacies of this cruel institution took shape. We will also see how "Black" Betty and her family of mixed-race children—some of them the likely siblings of John Jr.'s wife, Anne—were significant persons on the GEWA acres, although enslaved.

Partly due to the nature of colonial records and partly due to the linked importance early free Virginians put on landownership, land disputes were a common occurrence, and their records are a revealing source of information. We will see how Mattox Neck residents took each other to court repeatedly over disputed property boundaries, and we will see how British law shaped these moments. One of the most significant of these cases was Lawrence Washington's long legal battle to control the land just west of Bridge's Creek, land he would eventually leave to his son Augustine.

We will recount Augustine Washington's life story ranging from his childhood in England to his adulthood and county service. Thanks to his and his father Lawrence's estate records, we are able to outline the enslaved community and understand something of their lives on Mattox Neck. We will also see some of the conflicts Augustine faced in his time as county sheriff and how accusations of his rigging an election in favor of his patron, George Eskridge, created an interesting case eventually heard and decided in Williamsburg. After the death of his first wife, Jane Butler, we will explore Mary Ball Washington's life and, through her, better understand the world of Virginia's early-18th-century free white women. Her first pregnancy and childbirth—the one that produced her son George—provides us with an opportunity to explore how procreation was understood at the time, the cultural and social dynamics of childbirth, and the workings of midwifery.

We will see how the Washington family moved away from Popes Creek, and although most of George's life was elsewhere, the land itself continued to have a story. Later chapters look at how Augustine Jr. managed the land and how his health affected his activities. We will see how his wife, Anne Aylett, gave the home the name of Wakefield, but it did not really stick during the 18th century yet was resuscitated by later 19th-century residents. We will also explore the unusual sale of her property—despite her son William Augustine waiting in the wings to take over. Next we will look at William Augustine's extensive account book to understand how he used his land, and his extensive economy

built on leasing out his enslaved labor for local projects, eventually even including the new capital in Washington, DC. We will look at how the Royal Navy's gunboat the HMS *Savage* floated up the Potomac in 1781 and along the way fought local militias, burned homes, and freed enslaved people. This was the great trauma of the American Revolution for Popes Creek residents and probably factored into William Augustine's moving his family a mile or so inland.

We will conclude with William Augustine leaving the land for Georgetown, Maryland. By that time he owned virtually the entirety of Mattox Neck. He made a few attempts to sell his holdings but in the end willed the land to his sons, who in 1813 finally ended Washington's ownership of the park's land. At that point the story shifts from being one of Washington family history to being one of memory and commemoration. At that point, too, our narration ends.

What follows covers a long stretch of time but is humble in its goal. It is not intended as a complete history of Virginia in the Atlantic world, nor is it meant to be a thorough review of the existing literature on this large topic. Instead, it builds the story of the Washingtons and the people of Mattox Neck from the ground up, working extensively from the court records of the relevant Virginia counties. It is the first attempt of its kind and also the first to work to integrate the stories of women, servants, Indigenous people, and the enslaved, and where possible contextualize them. The goal is to understand all of these people as central actors in both their own stories and those of the area. This absence has meant that GEWA's interpretation has not yet been able to relate the site's nuanced and interesting characters and stories to the fullest of the staff's abilities. The bulk of this text was written during the COVID-19 shutdown, which unfortunately meant that some avenues of inquiry remain unfollowed and await future research and researchers.

Mattox Neck, Bridge's Creek, and Popes Creek were in most respects Tidewater locales much like any other. The fact of an important family living on the land and the best-known scion of that family hailing from here, though, has made this place an object of curiosity and a preserved historical site. In exploring the Washington family story here, we also see the experiences of so many other people whose lives were far less well documented. Like visitors to GEWA, we are drawn by an interest in George Washington. But that interest opens the door to the complicated and fascinating world that created him.

CHAPTER ONE

Popes Creek's First Farmers in an Era of Change, 1000 BCE to 1610 CE

1300 CE and the Big Change

Around 1300, life began to change for the few thousand people then living up and down the shores of the Potomac River. Before then, the hunting and gathering of food was the driving force of existence. The region's boundless supply of animals and seasonal nuts, berries, and fruit had sustained human life for millennia. Quartz and other stone was ideal for making all sorts of tools, and animal skins and bones perfectly complemented wood for everything from spears to axe hafts to shelter. The river itself, with its fishes and crustaceans, added seasonal diversity to diets, so living close to the river enabled the most sustainable, diverse, and nutritive food supplies. Farming was also part of this mix, but it was small-scale—nothing required extensive clearing. Despite staying alive and well for generations beyond memory, while Western Europeans were enduring the trials of the great Black Death, the Potomac's people were having their own upheavals.[1]

Change came in the form of agricultural developments—specifically, the growing of maize. The seeds and the knowledge for growing this innovative, carefully engineered, high-calorie food came from elsewhere. The large societies of Mexico and Central America had already pioneered the practice and transformed humble grasses into maize through generations of careful selection and cultivation. By about 700 CE—when Viking raiders were first looking longingly at the English coast and the armies of the Prophet were sweeping across the Middle East—the Mississippian societies of the south and central United States were planting corn and gathering in large settlements around the best fields. At that time, there were farmers living along the Potomac, but their agriculture was small-scale and

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[1] Virginia archaeologists have long used a rough time sequence to categorize precontact Native societies. These are the following:

- Archaic period: 8500 BCE to 1000 BCE
- Early Woodland period: 1000 BCE to 400 BCE
- Middle Woodland period: 400 BCE to 900 CE
- Late Woodland period: 900 CE to 1650 CE

The two principal changes, though, were the adoption of agriculture and the arrival of Europeans. See Bernard Means, "Late Woodland Period," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Late_Woodland_Period_AD_900–1650, accessed 5/22/22.

supplemental—part of a panoply of other equally weighted sustaining activities. This pattern remained constant for much of what anthropologists have called the Early and Middle Woodland periods (1000 BCE to 1600 CE). Eventually, though, maize seeds made their way to the Potomac, and wherever the corn went, things changed dramatically.[2]

More and more, regular crops made for surpluses, and these facilitated trade between the now quite large farming communities. Settled villagers amassed possessions and kept their surplus food in special storage buildings. All of this led to a new sense of ownership for the farmers now living more settled lives than their ancestors and surrounded by more material goods and surplus output. But this also made these farmers' villages targets for others from near and far. With agricultural bounty came new forms of conflict and a need to protect what had been accumulated. Farmers formed alliances with neighboring villages to enhance their security as well as for reasons of trade and social interaction.[3]

These changes happened little by little, but between about 900 CE and 1300 CE—during what anthropologists call the Late Woodland period—the people of the Potomac River began to remake their world into one focused on farming maize. The dawn of the 14th century also saw significant climate change. A centuries-long period of relatively warm weather across the Northern Hemisphere facilitated the spread of farming and the growth of populations. But around 1300 CE, what has come to be called the Medieval Optimum gave way to the Little Ice Age.[4] For the next four centuries, average temperatures were as much as several degrees cooler than they had previously been. This drop shortened growing seasons and put stress on the farming societies that had blossomed during the warmer epoch. Shorter growing seasons meant smaller harvests and surpluses. Some farming communities farther north found their way of life disrupted. One result was an increase in migration and raiding. This, of course, put new pressure on those living along the Potomac—a place where even a somewhat shortened growing season was still long compared to that closer to the Great Lakes. All of this climate and social change

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[2] Bernard Means, "Late Woodland Period," *Encyclopedia Virginia*, The Virginia Foundation for the Humanities, https://www.encyclopediavirginia.org/Late_Woodland_Period_AD_900–1650, accessed 5/22/22; Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 73; Martin Gallivan, "The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19, no. 3 (2011): 281–325.

[3] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 20–25.

[4] Neville Brown, "Approaching the Medieval Optimum, 212–1000 AD," in *Water, Environment and Society in Times of Climatic Change*, Neville Brown and Arie S. Issar, eds. (Dordrecht: Springer, 1998), 69–74. This should not be confused with the concept of the little ice age and its effects on American colonization. See Sam White, "The Real Little Ice Age," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History*, 44, no. 3 (2014): 327–52.

exacerbated tensions between farming societies now more and more in competition for somewhat more limited resources.[5] By 1300 CE, patterns were set that would shape life between Popes Creek and Bridge's Creek for the next few centuries.

The Potomac's Early Residents

Although bands of people had been living in the Northern Neck since the Ice Age, the people who would eventually come to dominate the Potomac River and the Northern Neck first came into the area around 200 CE. As people slowly migrated south along the Atlantic seaboard, they brought with them their distinctive pot-making styles. People need to be able to speak to one another to teach and learn often quite specialized and unique styles of making ceramic vessels. This means that the fragments of pots that archaeologists find are signs of more than just use and manufacture; each distinct style also reflects there having been shared language and customs—in short, community.[6]

The lives of these people focused on gathering seasonal plants, hunting game, and harvesting the river as well as planting some crops. The reasons for their migration are unclear; it may simply be that centuries of moving from oyster field to oyster field eventually led them to the Potomac. It also may be that some long-lost conflict or environmental challenge set them on the move. Most of what we know of them comes from a few types of archaeological finds, mostly stone tools, ceramics (including tobacco pipes), and shell middens.

These middens were essentially refuse piles where years, even centuries of broken ceramics, stone tool fragments, and many discarded oyster shells piled up. Because so much of the content was not biodegradable, these middens could develop quite a size as people returned to the same fishing and camping spots year after year for centuries. Middens are of endless value to archaeologists since they are such rich sources of information.

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[5] Martin Gallivan, "The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19, no. 3 (2011): 281–325. George W. Fisher and Jerry R. Schubel, "The Chesapeake Ecosystem," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 28–36. John E. Kutzbach and Thompson Webb III, "Climate and Climate History in the Chesapeake Bay Region,"' in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 33–34.

[6] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 70–73. Much of the information on precontact Algonquian life herein is drawn from Gallivan's impressive study of this challenging topic.

Native Stone Tools and Ceramic Vessels

Stone tools are some of the most common forms of artifacts these earliest people left behind. Most of the stone that archaeologists find, though, comes not in the form of fully made tools but rather in the hundreds of flakes chipped off in the making of a tool. Flaked stone is notoriously hard to date, and styles of knapping (the art of chipping stone and turning it into sharp-edged tools) remained constant for centuries. That means that a given flake could be 500 years old or it could be 5,000 years old. Tool variation, however, reveals how Native lives changed over time. Large spear points, for example, like those associated with what anthropologists call Paleo-Indians (the people before the warming of the Archaic period of roughly 8500 BCE to 1000 BCE), were the tools of choice for killing large game of the Ice Age. But shifts in the climate and, with them, the animal and human populations changed hunting practices. The adaptation of smaller, more nimble hunting tools, such as atlatls (sophisticated throwing sticks) and bows and arrows of the Woodland period, called for smaller and lighter points. All of this means that complete points provide excellent date ranges. The problem is that they are rare finds compared to the hundreds of broken bits of chipped stone that were the side effect of crafting a single point. Most of the recovered stone from park grounds was not in the form of tools at all but rather flakes that resulted from knapping. These "discards" were not tools in their own right, but they are absolute evidence of local toolmakers using the resources on hand to fashion stone knives, hide scrapers, arrowheads, and spear points. Flakes like this, though, are almost impossible to date on their own and would have been familiar (if potentially dangerous) sights in Archaic hunting camps and Woodland-period farming communities alike.[7]

Excavations in the historic area have not unearthed any tobacco pipes, but the site has produced a small but significant number of pot fragments, mostly dating to the years after 200 CE. Small-form ceramic pots had long been part of Native life along the Potomac. Local clays were plentiful and always useful. Pots from the earliest periods, though, were generally small and simple, ideal for people in the habit of moving around the land in seasonal circuits. But as people settled into farming communities, larger, more diverse, and more elaborately decorated ceramic pots became the norm. Native pot makers generally employed what is called "coil construction," whereby clay is rolled into long cords and then coiled, snakelike, to build up the sides of a vessel.[8] Once this was completed, the maker would smooth the sides, both in and out, using a wooden paddle or similar implement. Unlike Asian and European ceramics, Native wares were not glazed. It was only the careful smoothing of the surfaces before a low-temperature firing that made these vessels

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[7] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 70–73.

[8] Keith T. Egloff and Stephen R. Potter, "Indian Ceramics from Coastal Plain Virginia," *Archaeology of Eastern North America*, 10 (1982): 95–117.

dry and relatively waterproof. In order to give the clay pot walls some rigidity, pot makers would add crushed gravel or shell to the clay mix. The elements of these tempering mixtures varied somewhat over time and region, helping identify the cultural groups and periods of the makers. The most visible and dramatic changes, though, came in the form of exterior decorations. These designs and patterns are the best clues to a fragment's age and who its maker might have been.[9]

The earliest ceramics were simple in design, having flat bottoms and smooth sides. But over time, pot form and decoration changed. Potters moved to making larger vessels that often had conical bottoms. Pots like this were used for cooking, and their distinctive bottoms allowed them to be pushed deep into the ash and dirt in a cooking fire so that they could stand upright while water boiled. To create textured patterns, their makers also used cords and nets pressed into the exterior of their pots while they were still soft. Cords left little hashmarks on the surface, while netting left little checks. These styles were common in the Middle and Late Woodland periods (400 BCE to 1600 CE), with a preference for net-patterned styles moving gradually northward from the James River and inland from the Atlantic Coast. The technique of adding crushed shell into the clay itself to strengthen the sides of taller vessels was another practice that people brought with them as they moved along the Atlantic Coast.[10]

Mockley-type ceramics was one of the earliest wares in which the potters used crushed shell to stiffen the sides of pots. Mockley entered the Potomac region around 200 CE, and its presence is an indication that new and culturally distinct populations were entering the area. Although there are some decoration variations, many pots had net- or string-decorated external surfaces. Excavations in the historic area have unearthed a total of 555 fragments of prehistorical Native-made ceramics. Of these, 11 resemble Mockley type. In total, though, 85 fragments had the net-impressed decoration of the outside of the vessels typical of Late Woodland ceramics (900 CE to 1600 CE).[11]

Another common but similar Potomac River ceramic variety is called Popes Creek; in this case, though, the name refers to a place on the Maryland side of the river and not the Virginia Popes Creek. In the Late Woodland period (900 CE to 1600 CE), pressed-fabric designs became another way of patterning vessels. Some of the most elaborate ceramic decorations combined design media and featured pressed patterns as well as carefully made patterned incisions and scratched designs. Whereas today's oystermen can get to beds in quite deep waters to do their work, Native oyster harvesters could only access

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[9] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 70–73.

[10] Joseph M. Herbert, "The History and Practice of Shell Tempering in the Middle Atlantic: A Useful Balance," *Southeastern Archaeology* 27, no. 2 (2008): 265–85.

[11] This count came from a PDF entitled "GEW Prehistoric Ceramics," being a selected version of the GEWA artifact catalogue available on-site. Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 69–73.

the beds that sat in shallow water close to shore. That meant that a group of Woodland oysterers would harvest a bed and then proceed to the next one, moving along in familiar recurring annual cycles. As people gathered, roasted, and ate the harvest, they piled the shells up in mounds that grew over time, creating middens, or collection areas, often of considerable size as literally hundreds of years of oyster consumption's refuse piled up. These were satisfying reminders of good harvests that also served as unmistakable place markers on the landscape. If anyone was ever unsure as to where to find the most and largest oysters, all they had to do was follow the middens that dotted the riverfront. It is easy to imagine a group of people having sated themselves at one midden site—like Colonial Beach, Virginia's Gouldman Oyster Shell Midden site, for example—then moving along to repeat the process at another well-known and cherished spot, perhaps one near where the Memorial House now stands.[12]

Like all shell middens, the Gouldman Midden also contained broken ceramics, flaked stone, and stone tools; these were the indicators that revealed the age of the midden and provided clues as to just which people were regular visitors. The harvesting, roasting, and shell piling that was common for centuries did not end once maize agriculture became a prevailing local economy. The Gouldman Midden contained quantities of fragments of Popes Creek ceramic. This is a net-designed ceramic that is slightly older than the Mockley type but also was in use at the same time. All of this suggests that the Gouldman Midden was in active use in the centuries just before 1300 CE and the big change to maize-intensive farming.[13]

Changing Land Use and Popes Creek's First Farmers

Archaeologists have located and dated what appear to be among the first intensive-maize-farming settlements on the river. One of the oldest is at a site called Potomac Creek (44St2) in Stafford County, which dates to that crucial period of around 1300 CE. As populations grew, villages faced a pair of related dilemmas. One was an increased need for stable and reliable calorie sources to feed more mouths. Maize might have been in the farming mix as far back as 900 CE or earlier, but it became more vital as populations grew. Farmers also simplified the ecosystem they farmed. Focus on maize, along with squashes and beans, created a sort of specialization in certain crops. More land that had once been

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[12] Elizabeth J. Monroe and Kevin Goodrich, "'They Live Much Upon Oysters Getting Vast Quantities of 'Em and So Roast 'Em in a Fire': Archaeological Data Recovery at the Gouldman Oyster Shell Midden Site (44WM0304) in Westmoreland County, Virginia" (Williamsburg: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, 2012), 1–7.

[13] Elizabeth J. Monroe and Kevin Goodrich, "'They Live Much Upon Oysters Getting Vast Quantities of 'Em and So Roast 'Em in a Fire': Archaeological Data Recovery at the Gouldman Oyster Shell Midden Site (44WM0304) in Westmoreland County, Virginia" (Williamsburg: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, 2012), 1–7.

home to a wide variety of wild plants became devoted to these three mutually supportive domesticated crops. This represented a significant change in how the land itself functioned as people turned more to settled farming.[14]

Stafford County's Potomac Creek site is distinctive both for how the village was laid out and for a type of ceramic associated with that settlement. There is little evidence of previous settlements in its immediate area. The people who built the village at Potomac Creek around 1300 CE, therefore, were migrants of sorts—new settlers selecting a new site upon which to build. Whether they came from other parts of the region or farther afield is not clear. What is clear, though, is that they were concerned with protecting their homes and surpluses from strangers. They ringed their village with sets of palisades of a type found in the region even when the English first arrived. These palisades were circles of poles set in the ground and arrayed in sets of enclosing concentric rings. Large spaces between poles allowed archers and stone throwers to pass through the palisades to fire, but row after row of poles ensured that arrows fired from outside would not make it past the carefully set walls. Other sites on both sides of the river dating to the same period show the same style of fortification. Archaeologists have located at least six palisaded villages like Potomac Creek across the region, and all date to the same time period.[15]

The GEWA park's historic area shows no evidence of a permanent Potomac Creek–style settlement. But farmers living on or near Popes Creek in 1300 CE would have known these villages quite well. As the Little Ice Age settled in, the people living in this area would have been inhabiting villages that looked very much like those up and down the river. They shared language, kinship relations, and material culture with friends, family, and neighbors living on both sides of the Potomac. Historic-area excavations have produced considerable evidence of Native use and life on the land before and during the Woodland period (broadly 1000 BCE to 1600 CE). Features such as shell middens, like Colonial Beach, Virginia's Gouldman Oyster Shell Midden site, which dot the land, all point to hundreds of years of seasonal oyster harvesting and feasting in the historic area. Remains of campfires here also show that Native peoples had been putting this land to good use as a source both of hunted animals and seasonal wild edible vegetation.[16] The oyster harvesters' countless

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[14] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 33–35; Henry Miller, "Living Along the 'Great Shellfish Bay': The Relationship between Prehistoric Peoples and the Chesapeake," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 109–25.

[15] Stephen Potter, *Commoners. Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 28.

[16] Elizabeth J. Monroe and David W. Lewes, *An Archaeological Assessment of the George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia* (Williamsburg: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, 2008), 12–13. This report also offers a full review of how Virginia archaeologists have divided the epoch of Native precontact culture periods. See pp. 15–22.

small seasonal camps, though, never matured into being a full-scale settled village. Those were farther afield, even though their residents continued to come to Popes Creek to fish and harvest, as had countless generations before them.

One of the most recent landscape surveys dug a total of 312 small excavation units across the whole of the historic area and reported finding precontact Native artifacts in each of their units.[17] This total far exceeded that of historical-era materials. Excavations have found evidence of four principal activity zones in the historic area. The largest of these extended from what is now called Burned House Point across the whole of the creek frontage. The other activity areas stretch landward from the creek front and run all the way to the current park entrance. This, though, is a reflection of what has been studied. It is a safe bet that similar shell middens and campfires formed across the whole site over its thousands of years of use.[18]

Algonquians

By around 1500 CE, centuries of change and movement had created a way of life that was in place for English observers to describe in writing for the first time—even as their very presence disrupted that way of life. We identify these Native societies by their language group, Algonquian, a family of at least 17 related languages with speakers covering the bulk of the Atlantic Seaboard from North Carolina to Nova Scotia.[19] Speakers of an early form of these languages might have been in the area as early as 500 BCE, but a recognizable version of proto-Algonquian was the language family of the people who came into the region around 200 CE.[20] Anthropologists link ceramics to language. The logic is simple: a complicated or specific form of pot or design elements had to be taught directly, one person to another. Such teaching would require a shared language since it can be assumed that the potter teacher and the potter student were in a social relationship larger and more enduring than the making of a single pot. In this way, shared pot designs are signs of far larger connections between the people making the pots. In the case of the Potomac River, wherever Mockley went, versions of Algonquian languages went with it.[21]

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[17] R. Grant Gilmore, Paul Moyer, and Carrie Albinger, *An Archaeological Assessment of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2001), 46.

[18] Elizabeth J. Monroe and David W. Lewes, *An Archaeological Assessment of the George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia* (Williamsburg: William and Mary Center for Archaeological Research, 2008), 32.

[19] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 98.

[20] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 73.

[21] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 73.

Village Life and Locations

The village was the center of Algonquian speakers' lives. These were social and economic units organized around extended kinship networks. A tribal group might live in several villages all fairly close to one another. The Chickahominy people, for example, lived in as many as 16 separate towns lining both sides of the river that still recalls their name.[22] Individuals from these towns would have friends and family members all up and down the river, making tribes themselves essentially extended kinship networks.

Decisions in these communities were usually made through various forms of consensus, but elders and people with special skills held positions of influence. Typically, Algonquians would see one person as being the main leader of the tribe, although each town would have its own principal leader. This meant that the village housing an overall tribal leader was a place of special import and prestige, often larger than outliers and containing special buildings to serve assemblies and various gatherings associated with leadership. Villages could have as few as 50 people and as many as 1,000 or more. They were river facing, and every villager would have friends and kinfolk in other villages up- and downriver. The waterway was a unifier and not an obstacle—it was the highway of daily life. Farming and fishing were the prime activities, with cultivated fields always being close to home and with the entire village (name and all) moving to a slightly different location should the soils become worn out. Winter hunting parties saw men leaving the villages to go hunt game, and when called for, raiding and war parties took very much the same form as these hunting expeditions.[23]

Northern Neck Algonquian settlements were concentrated on the north bank of the Rappahannock, where there were more than three times as many towns as along the Potomac. Scholars have forwarded several reasons for this clustering. Many scholars have assumed that this was a response to the concentration of political and military power farther south in what has come to be called the Powhatan Paramount Chiefdom, albeit one based on influence and not outright authority.[24] Some have seen the clustering of settlements on the north side of the Rappahannock as a way for Northern Neck people to maintain autonomy. But for Algonquians, these rivers were not barriers at all but rather were connectors.

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[22] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 110.

[23] Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 43–54.

[24] Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 30–33. See Ethan A. Schmidt, "Cockacoeske, Weroansqua of the Pamunkeys, and Indian Resistance in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *American Indian Quarterly* 36, no. 3 (2012): 288–317. Walter Briscoe Norris Jr., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, 1653–1983* (Montross, VA: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), 19.

Recent comparative-site analysis has offered another explanation for the settlement clusters. Native peoples set up major long-term towns in places that best met a small set of criteria. Proximity to marshes and freshwater springs was a priority, but farmland productivity was far and away the most important variable. The region's Native peoples had centuries of small-scale farming experience through which to learn which parts of the Northern Neck were the most productive and best suited to their needs. The advent of intensive maize farming around 1300 CE supercharged that knowledge. It happens that the Rappahannock side of the Northern Neck provided more sites that met all of the Native criteria, making that river's northern shore more viable for a growing population than the Potomac shore.[25] Soil composition was another factor in the location of Native villages. Soils along Popes Creek contained on average 40 percent or more clay, whereas soils on the Rappahannock contained 30 percent clay and even less. This soil composition might have been enough to make the area less than ideal for the type of maize-centered farming that Algonquians adopted after 1300 CE.[26] There were certainly small and large villages along the Potomac shore, as well as seasonal fishing and gathering camps from time immemorial. But the center of Algonquian life in the Popes Creek area was along the Rappahannock.

Algonquian Peoples' Buildings

Excavations have revealed the archaeological footprint of more than 25 Algonquian speakers' buildings at sites all across the region. Algonquian peoples generally preferred two styles of building. One was round and fairly small, often between 5 and 10 feet long. The other was the larger "longhouse," which could be quite long. One example from the Great Neck site in Virginia Beach (44VB7) measured 39 feet long and 21 feet wide.[27] Perhaps coincidently, those dimensions are very close to the most common size of English Virginian homes in the 17th century. These larger buildings had rounded ends, meaning that their footprints looked like large ovals. Such a building would have been a home to a few related family units. The central passageway of a longhouse would be dotted with firepits with openings for smoke just above them. The sides would be lined with shelves for sleeping and

[25] Scott Strickland, Julia A. King, G. Anne Richardson, et al., *Defining the Rappahannock Indigenous Cultural Landscape* (St. Mary's City: St Mary's College of Maryland, 2016), 60, 98–112.

[26] Scott Strickland, Julia A. King, G. Anne Richardson, et al., *Defining the Rappahannock Indigenous Cultural Landscape* (St. Mary's City: St. Mary's College of Maryland, 2016), 60, 98–112.

[27] Stephen Potter, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 26.

storing items. In good times, the upper reaches of the longhouse would be hung with fish and meat, all drying and passively getting smoked by the cook fires. In lean times, the emptiness would have been noticeable.[28]

Excavators found a similar rounded longhouse-style building at the Werowocomoco site on the York River in Gloucester County. This building was larger than others, measuring roughly 60 feet by 20 feet, and may have been a home for a significant leader.[29] In general, though, whether large or small, these buildings were made from light-weight and readily available materials. This made them easy to build and repair without very specialized skills. The most common technique was to erect a frame of puncheons—smallish sticks driven or placed into the ground in the shape of the intended building's footprint. Algonquian builders used sapling trees as their main framing members. Cut while still green, these saplings could easily be bent over so that they could be lashed to an opposite number, making a sturdy arch. Lines of these became both walls and roofs once they were covered with water-shedding overlapping reed mats and large sheets of peeled tree bark.

Homes and dependencies built in this fashion clustered to make up a village. Some of our best information about the layout of these villages came from John White, who was one of the English settlers at Roanoke. White's renderings of the Algonquian people and places he saw in North Carolina in 1585 are some of the most reliable ethnographic sources British colonists ever produced.[30]

White painted watercolors of two very different kinds of towns. One village, Pomeiooc, conforms to what we know of Potomac Creek–type towns—and high-prestige ones at that. Pomeiooc had 18 buildings, most of which appear to have been residential longhouses covered in bark or mats. A few smaller, presumably storage buildings are interlaced among the longhouses. White noted that the largest of them was the residence of the village leader and also that there was a separate structure dedicated to religious and social functions. White called this leader a "king," suggesting that Pomeiooc was a political center for local people; this would account for the large residence and the specially built gathering place. Pomeiooc's buildings were arrayed in a rough circle, making for an open

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[28] The chapter "The Place of the Antler Weaver" in Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), offers information on Werowocomoco and what it shows of Virginia Algonquian architecture. See also Martin D. Gallivan, "Powhatan's Werowocomoco: Constructing Place, Polity, and Personhood in the Chesapeake, C.E. 1200–C.E. 1609," *American Anthropologist* 109, no. 1 (2007): 85–100.

[29] Martin Gallivan, *The Powhatan Landscape: An Archaeological History of the Algonquian Chesapeake* (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2016), 160–62.

[30] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, "Before 1607," *William and Mary Quarterly* 72, no. 1 (2015): 3–24; Michael Leroy Oberg, "Gods and Men: The Meeting of Indian and White Worlds on the Carolina Outer Banks, 1584–1586," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 76, no. 4 (1999): 367–90.

common area in the center. A second line of five longhouses formed a partial concentric circle just beyond the main ring of buildings. The whole was enclosed by the same sort of partially open palisade of upright logs typical of Potomac Creek villages.[31]

White's second watercolor was of Secoton. This was an open-plan village whose 13 smallish buildings were arrayed along a central path. No wall enclosed the town, and crops grew close to and around the handful of small homes. Secoton lacked the larger prestige buildings of Pomeiooc. Instead, it sat surrounded by cornfields and a well-manicured ceremonial ground.[32] Both of these towns—the formal, permanently enclosed Pomeiooc and the farming-focused Secoton—would have been perfectly at home on the Potomac River from 1300 CE on into the colonial period. Excavations on park grounds, though, have not located remains of Native American–built structures or towns.[33] Excavations have, as noted, located concentrations of precontact ceramics and stone tools and flakes across the park. Such concentrations may be evidence of camps, small hamlets, or something larger. Without more extensive excavation, it is hard to determine. What we do know is that excavations have yielded ample evidence that Algonquians made full and productive use of the park's acres for centuries.

Powhatan and His Dominion

During the 16th century, the Algonquian people of Virginia's rivers came together into the form of an interlinked political entity. The name Tsenacommacah applied to both the land and the alliance of its people. This network is most closely associated with Powhatan (an odd, anglicized version of Wahunsenacawh), who was the central figure and principal leader, or *werowance*, at the time the English arrived in Virginia.[34]

The region's various Algonquian groups each had their own reasons for becoming a part of something larger than themselves. The people on the Potomac, for example, were increasingly facing raiding parties from Susquehannock (themselves feeling pressure from fellow Iroquoians farther north) and Massawomeck villages from upriver. The Algonquian Piscataways on the Maryland shore also found themselves in frequent conflict with their

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[31] Kim Sloan, *A New World: England's First View of America* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2007), 1080130, 138–45; Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007), 41–67.

[32] Stephen Potter, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 30–31.

[33] R. Grant Gilmore, Paul Moyer, and Carrie Albinger, *An Archaeological Assessment of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2001).

[34] April Lee Hatfield, "Spanish Colonization Literature, Powhatan Geographies, and English Perceptions of Tsenacommacah/Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 69, no. 2 (2003): 245–82.

fellow Algonquian Patawomecks living upriver from Popes Creek. Although the numerous Patawomecks retained their independence for a time, they eventually joined the other people living downriver and found it in their interest to pay regular tributes to Powhatan.[35]

In the middle of the 16th century, the largest group of people living near Popes Creek were the Rappahannocks, who inhabited those numerous villages a few miles from the park's grounds on the north bank of the river that bears their name. There also were Machodoc people living on the Potomac's south bank but not in the immediate area of Popes Creek. Both groups were part of a larger network of regional Algonquian speakers.[36]

The Arrival of the First Europeans

The second half of the 16th century saw the greatest changes in the region since the advent of maize farming. Algonquian speakers were among the first mainlanders to learn that a new and very different group of people was taking an interest in their homeland. In 1524, Giovanni da Verrazzano, Florentine mariner in French employ, sailed along the Algonquians' ocean coast. Other French mariners probed what are now the Canadian coasts, and Spanish sailors and slave traders visited and raided North America's southern Atlantic and Gulf of Mexico coasts.[37]

Settlements of Europeans soon followed. The French in South Carolina, the Spanish in Florida in response, and English efforts on Roanoke Island in what is now North Carolina's Albemarle Sound all came and went between the 1560s and 1580s. These settlements were all short-lived projects, but they whetted European colonial appetites and

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[35] Martin Gallivan, "The Archaeology of Native Societies in the Chesapeake: New Investigations and Interpretations," *Journal of Archaeological Research* 19, no. 3 (2011): 282, 294.

[36] Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 30–33. See also Helen Rountree's three major books on Powhatan and his world: *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1990); *The Powhatan Indians of Virginia: Their Traditional Culture* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1992); and *Powhatan Foreign Relations, 1500–1722* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1993). See also Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005).

[37] Lawrence Wroth, *The Voyages of Giovanni da Verrazzano, 1524–1528* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1970), 136; John L. Allen, "From Cabot to Cartier: The Early Exploration of Eastern North America, 1497–1543," *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 82, no. 3 (1992): 500–21; April Lee Hatfield, "Spanish Colonization Literature, Powhatan Geographies, and English Perceptions of Tsenacommacah/Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 69, no. 2 (2003): 245–82.

set the tone for what would come. Apart from a short-lived Spanish Jesuit mission on the upper Chickahominy River, Virginia's Algonquians were largely spared these first attempts at European settlement.[38]

All of that changed in 1606 when King James signed permits for two new colonial enterprises organized as commercial venture joint stock companies. The London Company (sometimes called the Virginia Company of London), which, recalling the 1580s, had its eye farther south, hoping to return to the area of Raleigh's failure to make a new go of it.[39] The company's ships arrived in the Chesapeake Bay in the spring of 1607, and the party's leaders chose to settle on an island well up the bay's southernmost river. They named the river and the fort they set out to build after their King James. The fort and Jamestown—which developed in and around it—were the site of many firsts. Not only was this the first British mainland colony to make it out of infancy, but it was the location of the first British-style elected assembly in America as well. In contrast, Jamestown was also the site of the first sale of enslaved Africans in British America and the start of colonial Virginia's long involvement in that trade. Another related first was the start of tobacco growing, the first successful export crop in British America. All of these firsts would eventually come to shape life in the park's historic area.[40]

John Smith's Explorations

As had been the case with the earlier venture, the Jamestown settlers planned to get a significant part of their food from the local Algonquians. Given the already long and troubled history between these people and uninvited European immigrants, this was never going to be a simple process. Making matters worse was the fact that the region had already been in the middle of a sustained drought, a climatological reality that further strained the already challenging conditions of the Little Ice Age.[41] Near-constant hostilities made food supply a highly politicized and difficult issue.

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[38] James Horn, *A Brave and Cunning Prince: The Great Chief Opechancanough and the War for America* (New York: Basic Books, 2021), 43–45. Charlotte M. Gradie, "Spanish Jesuits in Virginia: The Mission That Failed," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 96, no. 2 (1988): 131–56. The Roanoke colony story is always popular. For recent studies, see Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Roanoke: The Abandoned Colony* (New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 2007); James Horn, *A Kingdom Strange: The Brief and Tragic History of the Lost Colony of Roanoke* (New York: Basic Books, 2010).

[39] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

[40] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *The Jamestown Project* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); James Horn, *A Land as God Made It: Jamestown and the Birth of America* (New York: Basic Books, 2006).

[41] Dennis B. Blanton, "Drought as a Factor in the Jamestown Colony, 1607–1612," *Historical Archaeology* 34, no. 4 (2000): 74–81. See also Dennis B. Blanton, "The Climate Factor in Late Prehistoric and Post-Contact Human Affairs," in *Indian and European Contact in Context: The Mid-Atlantic Region*, Dennis B. Blanton and Julia King, eds. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2004), 7–21.

In part to find the Pacific Ocean, which Englishmen still thought was near at hand, and in part to seek out new supplies of food and new Algonquian communities willing to provide them, John Smith led a set of expeditions up the region's rivers. Smith himself was one of early Virginia's best-known and most colorful characters. He was trouble from the start, having been accused of mutiny on the voyage over. Lowborn and well-traveled before he joined the venture, Smith was experienced and confident (perhaps obnoxiously so) of his own abilities. There was some basis to his confidence, though, and it was shared by the London Company financiers who saw to it that he would be named one of the colony's leaders. His strong leadership was a vital force during the colony's difficult opening years.[42]

Smith led three trips along the region's waterways during 1607 and 1608. The first was a reconnaissance up the James River. During this trip, he was captured by Powhatan's warriors, and this was when he would have been saved by the werowance's daughter Pocahontas—at least if Smith's account is to be believed.

The second and longest trip took place between June 2 and July 21, 1608. The route was essentially a circumnavigation of the Chesapeake Bay, during which he and 14 other colonists created the first English record of the region's waterways, landscapes, and peoples. Their travels took the Englishmen up as far as the falls of the Potomac River. Smith recorded the first glimpse of the park in the following passage:

> The fourth river is called Patawomeke and is 6 or 7 miles in breadth. It is navigable 140 miles, and fed as the rest with many sweet rivers and springs, which fall from the bordering hils. These hils many of them are planted, and yeelde no lesse plenty and variety of fruit then the river exceedeth with abundance of fish. This river is inhabited on both sides. First on the South side at the very entrance is Wighcocomoco and hath some 130 men, beyond them Sekacawone with 30. The Onawmanient with 100. Then Patawomeke with 1603 able men. Here doth the river divide it selfe into 3 or 4 convenient rivers; The greatest of the last is called Quiyough treadeth north west, but the river it selfe turneth North east and is stil a navigable streame. On the westerne side of this bought is Tauxenent with 40 men. On the north of this river is Secowocomoco with 40 men. Some what further Potapaco with 20. In the East part of the bought of the river, is Pamacacack with 60 men, After Moyowances with 100. And lastly Nacotchtanke with 80 able men. The river 10 miles above this place maketh his passage downe a low pleasant vally over-shaddowed in manie places with high rocky mountaines; from whence distill innumerable sweet and pleasant springs.[43]

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[42] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Captain John Smith: A Select Edition of His Writings* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 1–23.

[43] John Smith, *The Complete Works of John Smith*, Philip L. Barbour, ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1986).

The park area's first mention is notable for its near absence. Using the large map that Smith later drafted as a guide, we can conclude that the town of Onawmanient was in the vicinity of Nomini Creek. Smith claimed that the town could boast a comparatively small complement of 100 adult men but nevertheless listed it as home to a "king." This was Smith's way of designating this as a primary village, perhaps even one palisaded in the Potomac Creek style. Although he did not note them, Onawmanient would have been surrounded by smaller hamlets and even stray houses here and there. The next town Smith recorded was the much larger town of Patawomeke, which was considerably farther upriver. With 1,603 "able men," this village—long known as a powerful force—was also home to a "king."[44]

All of this means that during his 1608 Potomac navigation, Smith saw no town and no gathering spot he thought worth noting for much of the river's southern shore, including the area between Popes Creek and Bridge's Creek. This aligns well with the historic area's existing archaeological record, suggesting it was mostly a site only for small-scale temporary camps or perhaps hamlets. We must keep in mind, however, that Smith's records are good guides to presence, but absence on the map does not mean a total absence of Native activity. Also, Smith traveled during summer, which is less-than-ideal oyster-harvesting time, so Smith's silence regarding the southern shore might have had more to do with Algonquians' seasonal gathering patterns than with its actual population. The map that Smith published back in England in 1612, though, offered some more detail of the area. It showed a small settlement named Ozaiawomen at the headwaters of what is now Upper Machodoc Creek near Dahlgren, Virginia. This adds some detail but still leaves us to conclude that even as late as 1608, the region's Algonquians valued this part of the Potomac's south shore more for the food it could supply than as a place to settle for long periods of time. Certainly in 1608, there was no significant principal town or tribal center on the park's land.[45]

The "Indian Town" Problem

Late in the 17th century, John Washington's estate inventoried a small parcel sitting between the forks of Bridge's Creek, which was then locally known as Indian Town. This is an interesting problem—and a curious landscape memory. Smith's voyages made it pretty clear that there was no major town in the area, and records of the English habitation that began in the area a few decades later, in the 1650s, made no mention of a Native settlement—something that they certainly would have noted. For example, one early deed in the Westmoreland County records from this period recorded an agreement between one

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[44] See James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 80–85.

[45] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 80–85.

Gerrard Fowke (sometimes spelled "Hawke") and an Algonquian leader listed as the "King of the Pottomacs," in which the former agreed to pay a rental fee to the latter and hire workers from the latter's people.[46] This agreement was for land far upriver at Potomac Creek. What this shows, though, is that even as English men and women were using arcane and alien land-ownership rules and systems to claim Algonquian land, Native leaders were still quite willing to assert their rights to the land as owners of long standing. In the end, though, this was the first step toward the Potawomecks' dispossession.[47] Another common occurrence in this period was raiding as Algonquians pushed back against the changes being visited upon them. It seems hard to believe that even a small settlement on Bridge's Creek—be it resigned or defiant—would have escaped notice or not made its presence known in one form or another in the county records.

From the 1650s on, though, the land was fully enmeshed in English property laws, patterns, and records. That means that we in effect can, through the records, keep a very close eye on what happened there. These records are rich and complete enough so as to preclude the possibility of there being a Native village, or even a hamlet, in that area after the 1650s.

So how do we account for such a resonant name? The Virginia landscape is full of places named Indian Field, usually a straightforward reference to Native farming sometime in the past. The claim of a town is rather more dramatic. One simple explanation for the name may simply be an error, a rendering of some misremembered anecdote or a misread map read back into the records along the way. Another might be that farmers' discoveries of Native-made points and pottery as they worked their fields led someone to conclude that this was once the site of a town. If that were the case, this would be a species of early site archaeology.

Another possibility, though, is that there might have been a small Algonquian settlement there for a time during the years between Smith's passing by and the arrival of the first deed-holding English settlers. It would be a mystery as to why the recollection took so long to register in the land records, but the possibility is worth some consideration.

The period between 1608 and the 1650s saw three wars between the Algonquians and their new English neighbors. Each of these wars unfolded with ever-greater near-genocidal intensity from the English, who sought to "wholie exterpat [extirpate]" all the Natives living near them.[48] Although they were not successful in that goal, armed Englishmen did

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[46] Westmoreland County, Manuscripts, 56; James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 134–35.

[47] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 134–35.

[48] "Wyatt to Privy Council," Millie G. Cook, ed., "Sir Thomas Wyatt, Governor, Documents, 1624–26," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 2nd ser., 3 (July 1928), 165; Philip Levy, "Middle Plantation's Changing Landscape: Persistence, Continuity, and the Building of Community," in Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs, eds., *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 185–206.

effectively end an autonomous Algonquian presence along most of the James River and some of its tributaries. During this time, Native people were moving away from the area in any direction they could. The treaty of 1646, which ended the last of the wars, forced the Algonquians to live only above the York River. For people like the Rappahannocks, this was not a challenge. Living along the north shore of their river, they had pursued a strategy of appeasement with the English, and for the time being, that had allowed them to avoid the wars that hit so hard along the James.[49]

But all across the Algonquians' river world, people were moving and learning how to get by amid the dramatic and ongoing changes to their lives. It is perfectly plausible that a group of people seeking shelter from colonization's storm and wanting nothing more than to live the lives they always had on these creeks and rivers might have for a time found some peace along the creek soon to be renamed for yet another English colonist. Such things were happening all over the region during this period of war and upheaval, so why not here too? The name Indian Town shows a faint memory in the English mind of past Native settlements in the area.

[49] Edward DuBois Ragan, "'Scatter'd Upon the English Seats': Indian Identity and Land Occupancy in the Rappahannock River Valley," in Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs, eds., *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 215.

CHAPTER TWO

Early Virginia, 1607–1646

After John Smith's trip up the Potomac, things remained fairly quiet along Popes Creek. Algonquian people continued to hunt, fish, farm, and harvest as they had for centuries. But the sporadic visits and settlement attempts by Europeans were the early warnings that things would soon change in the area. The first waves of that change came in the form of ripples from events taking place farther south along the James River. During these decades, Virginia was a small colony distant from the Potomac shores. During the second half of the 17th century, systems and precedents established along the James would become part of life along Popes Creek as the area became part of the growing Virginia colony. Popes Creek's British Virginians would join a story already in progress and fold their own concerns and lives into that story. But at first, wheels were set in motion by others; these included colony-defining issues of economy, Native American relations, servitude and slavery, government, and the church.

The first three decades of the 17th century were trying times for the English colony of Virginia. Its primary struggles were about how to become profitable and surviving ventures. Neither question had easy answers, and both issues were in doubt for some considerable time. After failed attempts at producing glass and growing grapevines and indigo, colonists finally found that the Tidewater's soil was ideal for producing a highly marketable variety of tobacco. The leaf was a new exotic commodity formerly only available through Spanish markets, so the possibility of an English-controlled source was very enticing to the private backers who funded colonial enterprises with an eye toward turning a profit. Tobacco use had its critics, King James I himself being one as he made clear in a pamphlet condemning "this vile custome of tobacco taking."[1] But its fashionability proved hard to stem, and very quickly tobacco use became a fad, with English people preferring the use of a pipe over the Native American cigar style that the Spanish had described or the powdered snuff form that would soon be immensely popular on the continent.

Tobacco Boom

In 1612, Virginia colonist John Rolfe planted Spanish-acquired Oronoco-variety tobacco seeds, and a defining agricultural way of life began to take shape. There was a high demand in Britain for this exotic commodity, and prices reflected that. A single pound of dried

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[1] James I, "A Counterblaste to Tobacco," https://www.laits.utexas.edu/poltheory/james/blaste/blaste.html.

tobacco could fetch up to six shillings in Britain, a price equivalent to roughly five days' wages for a skilled craftsperson—about 60 dollars in current money.[2] By the end of the decade, the colony was shipping out 50,000 pounds of dried leaf each year at a value of close to 3 million dollars today. The small number of settler colonists used every available patch of land they could find to grow the plant—early on, even planting in Jamestown's dirt streets. This first tobacco boom changed everything for what had begun as a small—and largely failed—colony huddled in and around a wooden fort. The boom meant new wealth. Many were inclined to see that as a good thing. It also was disruptive, though, as it put money in the hands of people of lower station. This gave them unprecedented buying power and caused trouble for a legal system that still restricted the kinds of clothing people were allowed to wear.[3]

Tobacco boom wealth came not only to the great and good but to whomever could grow a marketable crop. This challenged the established order, and British observers were troubled by seeing common folk parading around Jamestown in clothes and finery that were well beyond their station.[4] This is more than a trivial event because it heralds two important long-term trends in the colony's history. One is the way America itself tested British hierarchies, and the other is the way that through slavery, the categories of race would come to mark differing statuses and rights, much as clothing had. The tobacco boom also increased the English need for land labor, and this, in turn, exacerbated conflicts with Algonquian neighbors.

Algonquians and War with the English, 1607–1644

English settlement ambitions set them in conflict with the people already living on this now-contested land. The Native figure at the center of these early conflicts was a paramount chief, or *werowance*, named Wahunsenacawh, but whom the English called Powhatan.[5] He held influence over a large number of Algonquian towns, and villages were filled with people bound together by an array of kinship and close familial connections. Traditionally, these self-governing communities chose leaders as needed to confront

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[2] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 101.

[3] Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618 to 1630," *William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1971): 170–98; Russell R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10; Jacob M. Price, "The Beginnings of Tobacco Manufacture in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 64, no. 1 (1956): 3–29. See also Alan Hunt, *Governance of the Consuming Passions: A History of Sumptuary Law* (New York: St. Martin's, 1996).

[4] Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618 to 1630," *William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1971): 179.

[5] Martin D. Gallivan, "Powhatan's Werowocomoco: Constructing Place, Polity, and Personhood in the Chesapeake, C.E. 1200–C.E. 1609," *American Anthropologist* 109, no. 1 (2007): 85–100.

various situations. The skills for war could be quite different from those of spiritual or civil rule, so different people would play different roles depending on their skills and the current need. Alliance between villages—and the linked sets of villages often called tribes—was a commonplace of Native life. In that way, there is ample precedent for a figure like Powhatan serving as a leader for a multitribal entity. But even so, scholars see Powhatan's paramount chiefdom as being a new polity for these Algonquians and most likely something that emerged in response to the trickling arrival of Europeans, itself an unprecedented challenge to the Algonquians' world order.[6]

Powhatan's influence extended as far north as the Potomac, but the people there were hardly vassals. The area around Popes Creek was considerably far from the York River center of Powhatan's influence, and while the Rappahannock and Potomac peoples might have been willing to aid Powhatan in some cases, they were not a subject people. They would have watched the arrival of the Jamestown English with interest and been fully aware of what was happening to the south, even though at first they were still quite removed from the action.

As English planters encroached evermore on Native-held land, a violent conflict took shape. Three distinct wars before 1644 established a new balance and new set of attitudes. Despite some remarkable successes, the Algonquians lost these conflicts. English attitudes towards Native people hardened and became even genocidal. Amid the Second Anglo–Powhatan War of 1632, colonial leaders laid out plans for the complete annihilation of local Native people. Governor George Wyatt wrote that it would be "infinitely better to have no heathen among us" and made plans to outfit a special force to "wholie extirpat [wholly extirpate]" the Native people of the region.[7] Those who could be captured should be "compelled to servitude and drudgery" for standing against the English colonial project.[8] The result was that English colonists and colonial law saw Algonquians as either subjugated people or enemies with some exceptions for distant trading partners. For their part, Algonquians now knew exactly who these new arrivals were and what their plans looked like. Those not killed or subjugated in the wars fled to the outreaches of their homelands,

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[6] Martin D. Gallivan, "Powhatan's Werowocomoco: Constructing Place, Polity, and Personhood in the Chesapeake, C.E. 1200–C.E. 1609," *American Anthropologist* 109, no. 1 (2007): 85–100; Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005); Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996).

[7] Philip Levy, "A New Look at an Old Wall: Indians, Englishmen, Landscape, and the 1634 Palisade at Middle Plantation," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 112, no. 3 (2004): 226–65.

[8] Owen Stanwood, "Captives and Slaves: Indian Labor, Cultural Conversion, and the Plantation Revolution in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 114, no. 4 (2006): 439.

forming new communities that were, for now, out of reach of the Jamestown-centered colony.[9] The Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers saw an influx of people, as did those towns along the rivers' western fall lines where the tidewater ends and the piedmont begins.

The Early Tobacco Economy

The growing demand for tobacco acres drove the conflict with the Algonquians, and the killing and expulsion of Algonquian peoples opened up more land for tobacco. It was an ugly self-perpetuating cycle. Tobacco also was always a time-consuming and laborious crop. Every step of the growing process required constant, careful attention. From caring for tender seedlings to forcing leaf growth by removing flowers to keeping a daily eye out for leaf-eating bugs, tobacco farming was all-consuming. In the early days of the tobacco economy, though, British colonists were still learning the ins and outs of the demanding crop's cultivation while developing the market networks and infrastructure to regulate and tax the commodity. We will discuss that system in detail in a later chapter, but at first, tobacco was a catch-as-catch-can enterprise. Planters would grow their crop and ship it back to England primarily under the agency of the Virginia Company.[10] Agricultural cycles governed when those shipments would go out, but very quickly, an informal fleet system took shape whereby London-bound vessels would wait at anchor until their holds were filled with casks and then set sail for Britain. Nature's cycles, the importance of Jamestown as the colonial hub, the involvement of the Virginia Company as coordinator, and the still relatively small-scale nature of the tobacco economy made the whole enterprise manageable.

Each new acre under cultivation increased the demand for people to do the work, and after much of the original population had been killed or driven off, there was a rapid increase in the spread of tobacco agriculture. At first, British tobacco growers sought out land near James Fort. Before the 1640s, these plantations and settlements spread out along the James River and its wider tributaries, but most clustered on the river's northern shore.

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[9] J. Frederick Fausz, "An 'Abundance of Blood Shed on Both Sides': England's First Indian War, 1609–1614," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 98, no. 1 (1990): 3–56; Martin H. Quitt, "Trade and Acculturation at Jamestown, 1607–1609: The Limits of Understanding," *William and Mary Quarterly* 52, no. 2 (1995): 227–58; J. Frederick Fausz, "Opechancanough: Indian Resistance Leader," in *Struggle and Survival in Colonial America,* David G. Sweet and Gary Nash, eds. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1981), 21–37; Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); James Horn, *A Brave and Cunning Prince: The Great Chief Opechancanough and the War for America* (New York: Basic Books, 2021); James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 87. See also Michael Guasco, "To 'doe some good upon their countrymen': The Paradox of Indian Slavery in Early Anglo-America," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 2 (2007): 389–411.

[10] Edmund S. Morgan, "The First American Boom: Virginia 1618 to 1630," *William and Mary Quarterly* 28, no. 2 (1971): 170–98; Russell R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10; Jacob M. Price, "The Beginnings of Tobacco Manufacture in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 64, no. 1 (1956): 3–29. See also Lorena S. Walsh, "Boom-and-Bust Cycles in Chesapeake History," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (2011): 387–92.

Although technically allied to the Virginia Company and its Jamestown center, many of these smaller settlements were almost autonomous fiefdoms in their own right. Others were simply the farmsteads of people who split their time between Jamestown and the immediate hinterland. Still others were small individual enterprises of only a few acres. Virginia was at its most fluid—some would say almost chaotic—phase in its first few decades.[11]

Labor was a problem from the start. Tobacco growing, harvesting, and packing required many hands, and the more land that was under cultivation, more hands were needed. Servitude was the dominant way that English workers parted with their labor. Servitude took a few forms. One was through an indenture whereby a master (the term for anyone controlling the labor of another person) and the laborer agreed on a contract that stipulated both obligations and rewards. Following biblical precedents, the terms of service were customarily seven years. These contracts were legally binding, and on both sides of the Atlantic, servants could take masters to court for not honoring the agreement. Virginia quickly acquired a bad reputation in England, though, when labor-starved tobacco planters took the liberty of selling a servant's contract to another master, adding on a few more years in the process. Nevertheless, Virginia planters could offer a reward that few English masters could: the promise of land at the end of a term of service. For thousands of Englishmen, that offer silenced other worries about the unfamiliar climate and the possibility of war with the Indigenous population.[12]

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[11] The quality of Virginia's first half century has been a topic of contention. On the one hand there are those who see Virginia in a constant state of flux. The premise is reviewed and challenged in Jon Kukla, "Order and Chaos in Early America: Political and Social Stability in Pre-Restoration Virginia," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 2 (1985): 275–98. See also Cary Carson, Joanne Bowen, Willie Graham, Martha McCartney, and Lorena Walsh, "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 1 (2008): 31–88.

[12] James Horn, "Servant Emigration to the Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 51–95; James Horn, *Adapting to a New World: English Society in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); David R. Ransome, "'Shipt for Virginia': The Beginnings in 1619–1622 of the Great Migration to the Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 103, no. 4 (1995): 443–58; Russell R. Menard, "From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1973): 37–64; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 131–41.

English county courts also had the legal right to round up the children of the landless poor and sell their labor until the age of 21. Likewise, criminals of all kinds could be handed off to masters as servants. Virginia's and Maryland's tobacco fields were filled with people who had arrived in America under one of these servitude regimes.[13]

1619 and Early Slavery

Something significant happened in the short hiatus between the First and Second Anglo-Powhatan Wars while tobacco was still a new crop. John Rolfe himself recorded that in late August of 1619, a ship arrived at Point Comfort at the mouth of the James. It had come from the West Indies, where it had been raiding Spanish shipping for its owner, the resolutely anti-Spanish and anti-Catholic Earl of Warwick, Robert Rich. Its arrival in Virginia was an echo of the old Roanoke plan to use the Atlantic Coast as a way station for British raiders of Spanish shipping. In this case, though, the haul was not gold or silver. Instead, Rolfe described the cargo as being "20. and Odd Negroes," who were quickly purchased by a nearby merchant and the governor, George Yeardley, in exchange for resupplying the ship.[14] The fate of these just-over-20 people remains obscure, but historian John Thornton determined that these people most likely would have been captured in the war then raging between the Kingdom of Ndongo and Portuguese colonizers, and then shipped from the Angolan coastal city of Luanda, where the Portuguese ran a slave-trading fort.[15]

These were not the first documented African captives to come to North America. There were Africans in the Spanish fort city of St. Augustine by at least the 1570s, although their status is unclear. In 1586, Sir Francis Drake raided Havana and came away with a hold filled with Spanish and African prisoners. His plan was to take them back to Britain. But his plans changed due to a devastating storm and a stop by Roanoke, where he

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[13] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 131–40. See also Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947); Richard S, Dunn, "Servants and Slaves: Recruitment and Employment of Labor," in *Colonial British America: Essays in the New History of the Modern Era*, Jack P. Greene and J. R. Pole, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1983), 157–94; Farley Grubb, "The Transatlantic Market for British Convict Labor," *Journal of Economic History* 60, no. 1 (2000): 94–122; A. Roger Ekrich, "Bound for America: A Profile of British Convicts Transported to the Colonies, 1718–1775," *William and Mary Quarterly* 42, no. 2 (1985): 184–200; Emerson Smith, *Colonists in Bondage: White Servitude and Convict Labor in America, 1607–1776* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1947).

[14] Records of the Virginia Company, vol. 3, 243, https://www.loc.gov/resource/mtj8.vc03/?sp=267.

[15] John Thornton, "The African Experience of the '20. and Odd Negroes' Arriving in Virginia in 1619," *William and Mary Quarterly* 55, no. 3 (July 1998): 421–34.

seems to have simply abandoned these people to fend for themselves.[16] The arrival at the "20. and Odd" Africans at Point Comfort is nevertheless significant because it represents Virginia's and British America's entrance into the slave trade—something that would soon come to define labor in the colony.

For the next two or three decades, small numbers of Africans came into the colony. By the 1630s, there were about 200 enslaved Africans living in the colony within a larger British population of about 3,000.[17] The status of Africans was confused from the start. Some found themselves folded into the prevailing British servitude system. In a few cases, African men completed terms of service and became landowners. But this became increasingly rare and was even no longer legally possible by the middle of the 17th century.[18] Most Africans coming to Virginia were simply enslaved, a status that in most respects in practice at first looked a lot like servitude but without the benefit of an indenture or end date to the time of service. Conditions for enslaved people would be set by masters and the courts, and the enslaved would be subjected to the same rules and disciplinary regimes as the British servants alongside whom they labored in tobacco fields. The principal difference lay in the term of service. While even the most disadvantaged white British servant could look forward to freedom and even some sort of reward at the end of his or her term, enslaved people remained in their subordinate state for life. For them, there was no release from laboring for a master except death.[19]

Over the next few decades, Virginia law gradually began to clarify and limit the status of African labor by marking hard lines between the rights and conditions of increasingly white servants and enslaved Africans. That process began in 1640 with the case of John Punch, an African servant who ran away from his master with several white servants. Once caught, the white men were sentenced to extended terms of service, but Punch was sentenced to lifetime servitude. This was the first time a servant was forced into

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[16] Linda M. Heywood and John K. Thornton, "In Search of the 1619 African Arrivals: Enslavement and Middle Passage," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 127, no. 3 (2019): 200–11; Andrew Lawler, "Did Francis Drake Bring Enslaved Africans to North America Decades Before Jamestown?" *Smithsonian Magazine* (August 20, 2018), https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/did-francis-drake-bring-enslaved-africans-north-america-decades-jamestown-180970075.

[17] John C. Coombs, "Building 'the Machine': The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia," PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2003, 38; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 138.

[18] One count showed that between 1664 and 1677, 10 out of 53 Northampton County African men became householders. T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1649–1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 69–68. The Eastern Shore, though, lagged behind the more well-to-do counties in the building of an enslaved African workforce that soon typified the colony. See John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011), 333.

[19] Anthony Parent Jr., *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2003), 105–34; John Coombs, "Building 'the Machine': The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia," PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2003, 138–78.

slavery—exactly the sort of thing that was then giving Virginia servitude a bad name in Britain. Punch's case was a crucial step toward creating a system in which skin color and legal status were one and the same.[20]

Nicholas Martiau, 1624

In 1624, the small colony's government ordered a census. That document contained a reference to a man named Nicholas Martiau, sometimes anglicized as "Martian." He was a Huguenot, a French Protestant from an officially Catholic kingdom. He had made a new home for himself in the more religiously hospitable environs of London, where he fell into the good graces of Henry, Fifth Earl of Huntington, who eased his way into British society. Many French Protestants were then coming to England for religious reasons, so Martiau was no standout on that front. What made him notable was his considerable military experience. This was not lost on the Earl of Huntington, who was also involved with the Virginia Company of London and in 1620 was thinking about the colony's defenses. In aid of that project, he bundled Martiau and two other experienced military men off to Virginia. Whether Martiau arrived in 1620 or soon thereafter is unclear. What is clear is that the 1624 census contained the entry "Capt Niccolas Martue aged 33."[21] His military background was of great use during the dark days of the Second Anglo-Powhatan War.

Martiau had planned to return to England to build a career in the service of his benefactor, Huntington. But as he wrote to the earl in 1625, any scheme to return was put on hold because he was "now both a husband and a father and so constrayned to staye a while longer by it."[22] His wife, Jane Berkley, included with the letter a small sample of tobacco to show her esteem. And Martiau did stay, settling near Norfolk and eventually acquiring even more land on the York River and living out his life in the colony he'd thought he was just visiting. In a few generations, his great-granddaughter Mildred Warner would marry George Washington's grandfather Lawrence, making this Huguenot soldier Washington's first immigrant American ancestor.

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[20] Cassandra L. Newby-Alexander, "The 'Twenty and Odd': The Silences of Africans in Early Virginia Revealed," *Phylon (1960–)* 57, no. 1 (2020): 30–31. See also Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 110.

[21] John Baer Stoudt, *Nicolas Martiau: The Adventurous Huguenot, the Military Engineer, and the Earliest American Ancestor of George Washington* (Norristown, PA: Norristown Press, 1932), 10.

[22] John Baer Stoudt, *Nicolas Martiau: The Adventurous Huguenot, the Military Engineer, and the Earliest American Ancestor of George Washington* (Norristown, PA: Norristown Press, 1932), 13; Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Dietz Print Co, 1934–1999), 1: 121.

Types of British Colonies

Amid the turmoil of the Second Anglo–Powhatan War, Virginia became a "Royal Colony": one that was ruled directly by the king and his chosen officials. In Virginia, that rule was shared with an elected body of representatives called the House of Burgesses, but the king was the ultimate authority. All land, for example, was owned by the crown until it was sold or granted to a settler. Local courts had to oversee the distribution of land and ensure that wills and deeds were correct and not contested. In this way, British Virginians were like other Britons except that they lived overseas.[23]

But there were other colonial models that would emerge as more British American colonial ventures took shape. One was a variant of the company model that had originally governed Virginia. In company rule, the crown granted a charter to a group of investors who ran the colony as long as they retained the king's favor. In other cases, though, the king might give the right to govern a colony to a loyal friend or someone who had performed some notable, reward-worthy service. Such a grant would make that person a colonial "proprietor," and such grants usually stipulated that the proprietor and his descendants would rule in perpetuity. The best known of these "proprietary colonies" was Pennsylvania, granted to William Penn in 1688 by King Charles II. Similar models were at work in New England colonies as well. People living in a proprietary colony were still subjects of the king, with all the rights and responsibilities that entailed, but they also had another inserted level of authority that shaped their world. Proprietary families often had considerable rights within their fiefdom. As perpetual king's surrogates, they had considerable authority to shape the law, and in many cases *they*, rather than the king, were the owners of land so that the property of any freeholder who died without a will would return to the proprietor, who usually charged an annual fee for the privilege of owning some of his land.[24]

In addition to these organized systems of colonial rule, there also was something quite nebulous and vague. The early colonial leadership was made up almost entirely of men with military backgrounds, a fact that not only reflected how Englishmen viewed their colonial project but also helped shape their formative years. There were men with energy and ambition and often with some considerable experience with violence.[25] There was little law or structure to stop a group of people from setting up their own settlement and ruling it themselves how they saw fit. As long as they were able to persuade neighboring

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[23] Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1600–1689* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 39–50.

[24] Alan Taylor, *American Colonies* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001), 136–37; Herbert L. Osgood, "England and the American Colonies in the Seventeenth Century," *Political Science Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1902): 206–22; Daniel Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Past* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2011), 194, 274.

[25] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 149–54.

Algonquians to accept their presence, there was very little formal structure to assert more structured colonial rule over these small settlements. Both proprietary rule and informal settlements would play important roles in Popes Creek's story well before the structures of Virginia's royal governance stepped in.

Anglicans and Dissenters

Another precedent set during Virginia's chaotic early years was the primacy of the Anglican Church.[26] In Virginia's early days, the church was one of the interlinked streams of English identity, and the role of religion was a significant part of colonial life and politics.[27] Henry VIII famously broke with the Roman Catholic Church over the matter of his divorce from his first wife, Katherine of Aragon, but it would be his daughter Elizabeth from his second marriage who would lay the groundwork for what became the Church of England, or the Anglican Church. This was a Protestant church but one that retained much of the hierarchy, parish organization, and style of the Catholic system, the principal change being the placement of the monarch at its head and not the Pope in Rome. In practice, though, it was—and still is—the Archbishop of Canterbury, who sat at the pinnacle of a pyramid of archbishops, bishops, and vicars (parish priests). Every English person lived within the secular hierarchy of commoners (servants and masters were in this category), nobles, royalty, and the monarch. But they also lived within a parish system and a parallel hierarchy of priests and bishops. People were required to pay tithes to maintain the church and its systems and likewise were required to attend church at least regularly if not weekly. In its idealized form, the secular authority was there to look after the physical well-being of Englishmen and -women and Britain, while the church hierarchy attended to the nation's spiritual well-being. In much the same way that the Virginia Company of London's royal charters represented the king allocating the care for his subjects to the company, the Anglican Church was the means by which the sovereign delegated care for the nation's collective and individual souls.[28]

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[27] Brent Tartar, "Reflections on the Church of England in Colonial Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 112, no. 4 (2004): 338–71; Edward L. Bond, "England's Soteriology of Empire and the Roots of Colonial Identity in Early Virginia," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 66, no. 4 (1997): 471–99; Douglas Bradburn, "The Eschatological Origins of the English Empire," in *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, John C. Coombs and Douglas Bradburn, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 15–56.

[28] Edward L. Bond, "Source of Knowledge, Source of Power: The Supernatural World of English Virginia, 1607–1624," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 108, no. 2 (2000): 105–38; Edward Bond and Joan Gundersen, "Colonial Origins and Growth: The Church of England Adapts to North America, 1607–1760," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 115, no. 2 (2007): 166–76; Joan Louise Rezner, "The Anglican Church in Virginia, 1723–1743," MA thesis, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1968, 90.

There were, though, Englishmen and -women whose conscience led them away from the Anglican church. These "dissenters" had the right to run and attend other churches. But those rights were always under discussion, and in many cases, they still had to pay the taxes each Englishman owed for the maintenance of the official established church. Catholics and other Protestants such as Quakers and Baptists were the most prominent dissenters, but Puritans—even though most remained within the Anglican Church—also often fell into this category.

Puritans were not a powerful force in Virginia, but they did rank among the settler population. Christopher Lawne and Edward Bennett, for example, were both noted Puritans who settled on the south side of the James and brought over others of the same outlook during the first tobacco boom years. The dispersed nature of Virginia's settlements facilitated the sort of independent church management Puritans sought.[29] The 1619 act of the burgesses establishing the Anglican Church, though, made it clear that the colony would not become a dissenter project.[30]

Where Puritans settled in Virginia, they often did so in small clusters, partly out of a sense of mutual protection and partly to maintain their churches. These would mostly take the form of meetings in homes that, while not illegal, were also often not the most public of events. Small enclaves were the natural result of this concern, and since trade was largely a thing taking place within social and familial networks, the enclaves in places like the south shore of the James and the Eastern Shore also had a commercial focus.[31] In the 1640s, some Virginia Puritans felt the want of ministers and so wrote to their fellow churchmen in New England requesting ministers. Three came and began to preach their version of the word along the James and met with some success. The arrival of William Berkeley in 1642 to serve as the new governor, though, doomed their efforts as the powerfully loya, deeply anti-Puritan governor had them banned from the colony.[32] Soon after, Britain would convulse itself in a war that pitted Puritan parliamentarians against loyalist Anglicans.

For Anglicans on both sides of the Atlantic, the parishes were the fundamental building block of the Anglican church's administrative hierarchy. In Great Britain, most were simply carried over from the old Catholic network. But American colonization meant that settlements would have to become new parishes to fit into the Anglican system.

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[29] Kevin Butterfield, "Puritans and Religious Strife in the Early Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 1 (2001): 5–36; April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 116–20.

[30] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 1: 222–75.

[31] April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations on the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: Pennsylvania University Press, 2004), 113–15; Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Anthropological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015.

[32] Kevin Butterfield, "Puritans and Religious Strife in the Early Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 109, no. 1 (2001): 18–20.

Company rule mandated that residents attend church, but it was not until that significant year of 1619 that the House of Burgesses made Virginia officially and formally Anglican. Early parishes were considerably larger physically than those in England but at the same time were peopled by far fewer parishioners, reflecting the spread-out nature of English settlements. In England, each parish had at least a church building and priest, sometimes more than one of each. Virginia suffered from a paucity of clergymen throughout the 17th century, and even in the following century, parishes were often too large for a single minister to manage. Tensions between clergy and Virginians were always an issue. As British colonies proliferated and grew in America, oversight of the American Anglican churches fell to the Bishop of London. The American colonies never had their own bishop, but the unsuccessful scheme to create a special on-site bishopric became a divisive issue in the middle of the 18th century.[33]

Each parish church had a nonclergy governing body called the "vestry," made up of locally prominent men tasked with managing parish affairs and funds as well as tending to the upkeep of church property. Sitting on the vestry was a prized honor as it represented the confidence of the community and was a visible sign of a person's good character. The better-off parishes would own a "glebe" property, which was granted to the parish priest as home and farm for the duration of his service. This addressed the need for the priest to be able to make a living, but the needs of priests and the purses of parishes were always sensitive topics. Most of these priests would receive their holy orders in England and then come to Virginia. That was the case until the end of the 17th century and the founding of the College of William and Mary to train and ordain Virginia ministers on home soil.

The colony's early years unfolded far from the shores of Popes Creek. After John Smith's passing of the site, the English records have little to say about the Popes Creek area, but the many changes and disruptions taking place three rivers to the south were changing life here long before any Englishman set foot on the land. The breaking of Algonquian power on the James created shifts across the larger Native communities in the region. Meanwhile, Virginia was establishing precedents in matters of labor, economy, Native American relations, governance, and the church that would soon play out along the Potomac's shores.

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[33] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 1: 94–114; Edward Bond and Joan Gundersen, "Colonial Origins and Growth: The Church of England Adapts to North America, 1607–1760," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 115, no. 2 (2007): 166–76.

CHAPTER THREE

Potomac Prelude, 1610–1650

Potomac River Native Villages

The Potomac River was somewhat less densely settled with the towns of Algonquian speakers than was the Rappahannock. The region's largest village was near what is now Fredericksburg, on Potomac Creek.[1] This was the home of the powerful Patawomeks, who had been coping with European visitors for over half a century. One of the more significant of these visitors was Henry Spelman, who, during the years of the first two Anglo–Powhatan Wars, served as a resident go-between for the Patawomeks and the Jamestown English in addition to being a goods trader.[2] Everywhere Europeans settled, neighboring Native peoples quickly found the utility of many of the goods the visitors all but thrust at them in exchange for beads, copper, furs, and skins. Objects such as steel knives and awls, iron or copper kettles, guns, and woolens (a staple of England's economy and something colonial promoters had long before imagined would be a New World trade staple) all fit neatly into Native ways of living. For men like Spelman, being the lynchpin in a growing and often lucrative trade brought power and prestige. His influence and trade connections would prove central in keeping the Patawomeks from siding with their Algonquian cousins against the English, a choice that itself might have saved the little Virginia colony from destruction. During Opechancanough's war in 1622, Jamestown emissaries appealed to the Patawomeks for corn and military aid, and Englishmen even accompanied a group of warriors upriver to raid the town of Nacotchtank, near the future site of Washington, DC. Spelman would end up a casualty of bringing the war upriver.[3] All of this trading and

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[1] Scott M. Strickland, Julia King, et al., *Defining Rappahannock Indigenous Cultural Landscape* (St. Mary's City, MD: St. Mary's College, 2016), 67, 72.

[2] Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Pocahontas and the English Boys: Caught between Cultures in Early Virginia* (New York: New York University Press, 2019); J. Frederick Fausz, "Middlemen in Peace and War: Virginia's Earliest Indian Interpreters, 1608–1632," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 1 (1987): 41–64; J. Frederick Fausz, "Merging and Emerging Worlds: Anglo-Indian Interest Groups and the Development of the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 47–54; J. Frederick Fausz, "The Invasion of Virginia. Indians, Colonialism, and the Conquest of Cant: A Review Essay on Anglo-Indian Relations in the Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 95, no. 2 (1987): 133–56.

[3] Stephen Potter, *Commoners, Tribute, and Chiefs: The Development of Algonquian Culture in the Potomac Valley* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994): 182; Frederic W. Gleach, *Powhatan's World and Colonial Virginia: A Conflict of Cultures* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), 148–55.

coming and going passed by Popes Creek, and the repeated navigations up and down the river deepened the Englishmen's understanding of the river as a place and a set of social relationships and of the rewards it offered.

As John Smith had recorded, there were a few larger villages close to the Chesapeake Bay; the towns of Onawmanient, Chicacoan, and Wicocomoco all were downriver from Popes Creek, and unlike the Patawomek, all paid regular tribute to Powhatan. Spelman visited these towns as well and gave the river's Algonquians some access to English goods and a sense of Englishmen as potential—perhaps inevitable—neighbors. These few relationships might have played a role in the Potomac River people's decision not to join in on Opechancanough's 1622 attack—at least that was what the Patawomeks assured Spelman at the time.[4]

William Claiborne, Henry Fleet, and Sir George Calvert: Rivals in the Fur Trade

In 1621, William Claiborne arrived at Jamestown. The 21-year-old came with the title of chief surveyor for the colony, but he also brought with him considerably larger ambition than simple officeholding. He quickly moved up the ranks of Jamestown's officeholders, joining the Governor's Council in 1625 and becoming the colony's secretary of state the following year. This left Claiborne ideally placed to advocate for and protect his own moneymaking ventures rooted in trade and not planting.[5]

Traveling to the colony on the same ship as Claiborne was Henry Fleet, a cousin of Governor Wyatt and, like his shipmate, a man about to launch himself into Virginia's affairs. While tobacco was settling in as the colony-defining crop, Fleet and Claiborne had their eyes on a very different economy. French settlers on the St. Lawrence River in Canada had been making considerable profits by trading for furs with the Native populations of Eastern Canada and the Great Lakes area. The success of their European rival's fur trade

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[4] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 87.

[5] Clayton Torrence, "The English Ancestry of William Claiborne of Virginia: Part II. The English Connection," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 4 (October 1948): 441; James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 92–98.

was catching the eye of competitive Englishmen who had been conducting a similar trade along the Baltic coast with Russian and other North European partners. American furs coming into the marketplace were a direct threat to the health of the English fur trade.[6]

The North American version of this enterprise relied on a vision of Native American relations very different from the one held by Wyatt, the man who wanted to "extirpate" the region's Algonquians and others of a similar mind.[7] Sustained trade required a far gentler, less confrontational hand, and thus it is no surprise that Fleet quickly fell in with Spelman on his trading and network-making trips to the Potomac. Fleet even played a small role in the fights between the Patawomeks and the Nacotchtanks as he learned the ropes of Native American relations.[8]

Fleet and Claiborne were not the only people looking to the north and longing to tap into the profits the French were pulling out of Canada. The same year the two arrived at Jamestown, England's secretary of state, Sir George Calvert, set in motion a new colonizing effort in Newfoundland. The waters off Canada had been attracting European whalers, fishermen, and traders since the early 1500s; there is even some reason to think English fishermen were catching the plentiful cod here at least a decade before Columbus's voyage.[9] The harshness of the coast and the demonstrated ability of the neighborhood Beothuk people to defend their land made settlement less appealing an idea than it was farther south. The annual whaling and fishing trips relied more on temporary camps than on year-round settlements, and the temporary nature of these seasonal rests helped keep a tense peace between the various Spaniards, French, Dutch, and Englishmen who fished and hunted in these waters.[10]

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[6] Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Ebook, London: Verso, 2003), 120. James F. Pendergast offered a detailed review of sources dealing with Fleet's activities and those of his fellows. "The Massawomeck: Raiders and Traders into the Chesapeake Bay in the Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 81, no. 2 (1991): 1–101. See also Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Pocahontas and the English Boys: Caught between Cultures in Early Virginia* (New York: New York University Press, 2019).

[7] Philip Levy, "A New Look at an Old Wall: Indians, Englishmen, Landscape, and the 1634 Palisade at Middle Plantation," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 112, no. 3 (2004): 226–65.

[8] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 92, 93, 95–96.

[9] David Beers Quinn, *England and the Discovery of America, 1481–1620: From the Bristol Voyages of the Fifteenth Century to the Pilgrim Settlement at Plymouth: The Exploration, Exploitation, and Trial-and-Error Colonization of North America by the English Bristol Fishermen* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1974).

[10] James A. Tuck and Robert Grenier, "A 16th-Century Basque Whaling Station in Labrador," *Scientific American* 245, no. 5 (1981): 180–91; James A. Tuck, "The World's First Oil Boom," *Archaeology* 40, no. 1 (1987): 50–55.

But by the early 17th century, the impressive nature of the French fur trade and the desire to gain maximum benefit from the area's vast cod stocks were making a more permanent trading and fishing station seem like a good idea to English planners. Calvert's new colony of Avalon was to be just such an endeavor, and although his involvement was short-lived, Avalon did succeed as an English toehold on the Canadian coast.

But Calvert was not quite like the other early-17th-century English colony makers vying with one another to make good, and that difference was to have a pronounced effect along the Potomac River. Calvert was a Catholic in a nation in which anti-Catholic sentiment still ran deep. Calvert had hidden his faith for years, but once revealed in 1625, it barred him from the sort of offices he had held while in the closet. His title, wealth, and extensive colonial experience (even if of the armchair type), coupled with his dissenter status, made him find America uniquely appealing. Calvert left England for Ireland but in 1627 set off for his colony in Newfoundland, bringing with him two Catholic priests and a policy ensuring that the religion would have equal standing with Protestantism—something unique in the New World.[11] But Calvert soon found that he did not care that much for life on the cold rocky coast and began casting around for a place to found a new colony rooted in the toleration of all Christian sects.

In 1629, he visited Jamestown and conducted a tour of Virginia's rivers with the obvious intention of setting up a new colony somewhere in the area nominally claimed by Virginia but still mostly inhabited by Algonquians. That same year, the man who would take over Calvert's role in Newfoundland, Sir David Kirk, sailed up the St. Lawrence and raided the French city of Quebec, stealing more than 6,000 beaver pelts from the French stores. At the time, a single pelt was worth somewhere in the range of one pound sterling, making a few furs comparable in value to a full cask of tobacco grown and dried in Virginia—and all the labor in catching, skinning, and tanning the pelts was done far away by Native hands.[12] On top of that, the mid-1620s saw a drop in the market price of tobacco thanks to overproduction resulting from the first big tobacco boom. There was every reason for enterprising colonists to be looking around for new American economies. The

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[11] Peter E. Pope, *Fish into Wine: The Newfoundland Plantation in the Seventeenth Century* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 124–32; John D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 92–102; Heritage Newfoundland and Labrador, "George Calvert and the Colony of Avalon," https://www.heritage.nf.ca/articles/exploration/calvert-avalon-colony.php; James Lyttleton, "The Lords Baltimore in Ireland and North America: the Beginning of an Atlantic World," *Archaeology Ireland* 27, no. 4 (2013): 19–22.

[12] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 94.

value of furs and the snooping around of the Catholic Calvert were not lost on Claiborne, who had used his position in Jamestown to secure for himself and his allies control over the northward-looking fur trade along the Potomac.[13]

Claiborne, the Susquehannocks, and Kent Island

The crucial players in the Potomac fur trade were the Susquehannocks, an Iroquoian-speaking people living at the head of the Chesapeake and areas stretching northward along the river that now bears an anglicized version of their name. The Susquehannocks had long been foes of the Algonquians and for centuries had raided the Potomac villages. Being Iroquoian speakers, they maintained tense but largely peaceful relations with their distant Five Nation Iroquois kinfolk farther north, and those links also gave them access to the pelts of beaver country. These Northern Iroquoians found themselves caught between French colonies to the north and English and Dutch colonies to the south and east. This reality made them master diplomats, and because of their large numbers and determination to defend their homeland, they were feared by Europeans—an only partially deserved reputation as warriors that persists in the public mind even today. The Susquehannocks had their own version of this two-fronted colonial encounter. In addition to Englishmen to their south, by the 1620s, the Susquehannocks also traded with the Dutch in what is now New York, on the Hudson River to their east. Like Claiborne and Fleet, the Dutch wanted a piece of the lucrative fur trade and were busy setting up trade forts along the river. By the end of the 1630s, a small Swedish colony in what is now Delaware entered the game and quickly built alliances with the Susquehannocks.[14] The presence of the Dutch and the Swedes meant that the Susquehannocks could be discerning shoppers and careful diplomats who knew they had options (more options, in fact, than either of their erstwhile partners). They could play the offers of English merchants off those of the Dutch and maintain a flexible independence the whole time. They also became all the more dangerous to their Massawomek foes to their immediate west and the Lenape Delawares to their immediate east, as well as any colony or Algonquian town they wanted to menace.

But to William Claiborne, Henry Fleet, and their trade partners, all any of this meant was the possibility of bringing valuable furs south for shipment to England. Fleet devoted himself to heading into the interior to seek out Native trade. Meanwhile, around

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[13] Antoinette Sutto, *Loyal Protestants and Dangerous Papists: Maryland and the Politics of Religion in the English Atlantic 1630–1690* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 26–46; Aubrey Land, *Colonial Maryland: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1981), 6–10; J. Frederick Fausz, "Merging and Emerging Worlds: Anglo-Indian Interest Groups and the Development of the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 47–98. See also April Lee Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 185–87, for a larger contextualization.

[14] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017): 401–36.

1631, Claiborne established a fur trade station on a triangular island on the upper reaches of the Chesapeake across from what is now Annapolis, Maryland. Claiborne named the place Kent Island in honor of his English home county. Because Claiborne was himself a part of Virginia's governing structure and held his trading rights through that colony, his island project was nominally Virginian. It also helped that Kent Island sat within the territorially ambitious but unenforceable land grant that was part of the colony's charters.[15]

But while tobacco was becoming the mainstay of James River Virginia, Kent was a fur trade operation and thus rested on a very different understanding of Native American relations from what was the norm in the tobacco-growing colonial core. Good relations with distant trade partners were, of course, vital for successful trade, but so was keeping the peace with new neighboring Algonquians. Kent Island was also quite a project in its own right, with more than 100 carpenters, laborers, hog keepers, millwrights, and "huntsmen," and a cook named Thomas Cakebread as well as fewer than a dozen women employed as "mayds" and scullery workers, many with Puritan sensibilities. The island housed two windmills, an Anglican parish church (with its own Puritan-leaning minister), and several houses, all enclosed by a "palizado."[16] Despite the bright prospect of a friendly trade-based future, life on the island was anything but pleasant, with key leaders dying on arrival, London backers fighting with one another, and all sorts of trouble on the ground. Fire, for example, quickly burned up the islanders' supplies, and Richard Hansley, "a very untoward youth," was sold off the island when his fellows suspected that he had deliberately "fyered the houses."[17] Nevertheless, Kent Island was Claiborne's own fiefdom, a unique quasi colony all its own. Importantly, it represented a different version of what a Chesapeake-region British colony could look like and how it might try to profit.

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[15] Clayton Torrence, "The English Ancestry of William Claiborne of Virginia: Part II. The English Connection," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 4 (October 1948): 443. James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 93, 94–96. See also Karen Ordahl Kupperman, *Pocahontas and the English Boys: Caught between Cultures in Early Virginia* (New York: New York University Press 2019), 170.

[16] "Claiborne vs. Clobery et als. In the High Court of Admiralty," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 28 (1933): 180–87. The principal records of the Kent Island settlement come from this extended lawsuit between the partners and are transcribed in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* and published in sections in the 1931, '32, and '33 volumes.

[17] "Claiborne vs. Clobery et als. In the High Court of Admiralty," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 28 (1933): 180–87. The principal records of the Kent Island settlement come from this extended lawsuit between the partners and are transcribed in the *Maryland Historical Magazine* and published in sections in the 1931, '32, and '33volumes.

The Founding of Maryland, 1634

As long as Kent Island was nominally Virginian, its autonomy and distinctiveness did not pose a problem in Jamestown. But the picture was about to become a bit more complicated.[18] George Calvert had long been agitating for the papers that allowed him to establish a new Newfoundland-style proprietary colony on the northern shores of the Potomac. Objections at court centered mainly on the possible conflicts this project would mean for Virginia's charter. Advocates for both sides could make their case, but eventually, King Charles I concluded that colonial boundary disputes were manageable, and the possibility of wealth gleaned from colonies was too good to forgo. Calvert's 1632 death meant that his title, Lord Baltimore, and his colonial ambitions passed to his son Cecil Calvert, who two years later received proprietary rights for him and his descendants to rule their new colony in exchange for a percentage of the money the project gleaned.[19]

With this agreement inked, Calvert set about creating a colony that would be at once a tobacco grower, a fur trader, and a haven for Catholics. His father had moved from England to Ireland to Newfoundland, but the new Lord Baltimore was rather less adventurous and sent his brother Leonard Calvert in his stead to manage the colony on the ground. Calvert offered 100 acres to anyone who could pay their own way to this new Maryland and set up a homestead. The deal also offered another hundred acres should these men bring their wives and an additional 50 acres for each child or servant a man transported.[20] There were several takers, although most were Protestants. One of those who paid his own way over was a Bristol-born merchant, Nathaniel Pope, who was soon to become a significant figure on both sides of the Potomac. He also was George Washington's grandfather going back four generations.

For people who could not pay their way, the deal was rather less enticing. Most would be servants, but whereas the Virginia system offered land at the end of a term of service, Calvert's Maryland was more of a seigneurial system whereby a handful of grandees owned the land and those without resources could rent some in exchange for a portion of their crops.[21] In Maryland, this model came to be known as the manorial system,

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[18] Aubrey Land, *Colonial Maryland: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1981), 11–12; Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 12–25.

[19] Aubery Land, *Colonial Maryland: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1981), 27–31; John D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 129–52.

[20] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 250–51; John D. Krugler, *English and Catholic: The Lords Baltimore in the Seventeenth Century* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 129–52.

[21] Garry Wheeler Stone, "Society, Housing, and Architecture in Early Maryland: John Lewger's St John's," PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA, 1982, 9–10.

and it mirrored Europe, where land had been owned for generations. Tenancy made sense where landownership was just out of the question for many, but in America, it was a bit contrived and restrictive. Tenancy did work in some colonies. The Dutch had had success with it on the Hudson River, for example, where baronies (*patroonships*) were huge and the terms quite generous, and the English left the system largely in place when they took over the colony. But Maryland presented a problem that was not the case farther north. Calvert's vision privileged Catholics, meaning that many Protestants settlers in that age of religious conflict would owe rent to a dissenter landlord. This merged religious resentment with the plain old inequality of Europe's long-standing land systems. It was a problematic mix from the start.[22]

Maryland's Fur Trade

The new colony, with its initial 128 colonists and two Jesuit priests, was centered at St. Mary's City, a grandiose name for what was, in reality, an earthen fort and a cluster of small buildings on St. Mary's River, very close to the mouth of the Potomac River. Like Jamestown, the early settlement was primarily made up of waterfront plantations close to St. Mary's City, the colony's capital and main trade center.[23] The inflow of new settlers was slow but steady, and as with Virginia, tobacco farming rapidly became a staple of the economy. As in Virginia, most settlers were young, unmarried men bound in some form of service.[24] But initially, at least, the fur trade seemed to be Maryland's American route to riches.

Calvert established a joint stock company specifically for the trade, and early promotional literature tried to lure colonists with claims that "furres alone" would be enough to make the venture financially worthwhile.[25] The Virginians had a two-decade advantage in the trade even though these enterprises were not the top priority for most planters, and this posed challenges to making Maryland a fur trade center. For one thing, this new colony was south of Kent Island, meaning that any Native traders heading to

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[22] Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1645–1646* (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Society, 2004), 40–43; Lorena Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 28–29, 87; Jean Russo and Elliot Russo, *Planting an Empire: The Early Chesapeake in British North America* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2012), 44–47; Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 12.

[23] Garry Wheeler Stone, "Society, Housing, and Architecture in Early Maryland: John Lewger's St John's," PhD diss., University of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia, PA 1982, 14–16.

[24] Lois Green Carr, Russell R. Menard, and Lorena Walsh, *Robert Cole's World: Agriculture and Society in Early Maryland* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991), 18.

[25] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 97.

Maryland down the Chesapeake would have to pass by the Kent Island bottleneck—and since both the Marylanders and the Kent Islanders would draw their trade goods from more or less the same English suppliers, what sensible trader would go all the way down the bay when the same blanket, knife, or musket was on offer farther north? On the other hand, St. Mary's had better access to the Potomac River, the Native towns on its banks, and the routes it offered farther north. But this was exactly the route that Henry Fleet had been working for his Virginia partnership. Rather than compete from scratch or try to push him out of the market, Calvert simply offered Fleet a good deal to trade under his auspices, and with a handshake, Maryland was in the fur trade business.[26]

Different Potomac Settlements circa 1640

With the arrival of the first Maryland colonists, the region now had several different and competing polities. Even though the violent events farther south had disrupted Native politics, there still were several large Native communities doing quite well both on the Potomac and on its tributaries. By the end of the 1630s, most of the people along the river were still the descendants of those who had called it home for centuries, living now in the larger towns of Wicocomoco, Onawmanient, Patawomeck, and Tauxenet, as well as many small and temporary settlements between the major towns.[27] These Algonquian speakers together constituted about 5,000 people. About 7,000 of the Jamestown Virginians lined the James, where they had largely displaced and killed the original inhabitants, and Virginia planters were also extending Virginian rule to outlying settlements on the York and in the Chesapeake Bay.[28] Anglican Virginia was a royal colony ruled by its governor, his council, and the elected House of Burgesses, and had already developed many of the hallmarks of the colony's county structure.

Maryland's scant 400-odd settlers lived in a proprietary colony overseen like a private principality by a Catholic ruling family. These people clustered mainly around St. Mary's City and on the banks of the river with the same name. Kent Island's roughly 100 people were part of a corporate venture run by a set of investors who, in turn, held their rights through Virginia's charters. North of all of this lived about 6,000 Susquehannocks in their northward-stretching network of villages.[29] Each of these variants offered its own way to live in the region. As if this were not complicated enough, conflict was going to quickly overtake all of these competing parties, and England was about to tear itself apart in a civil war that pitted crown against parliament and had folded into it a

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[26] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 96.

[27] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 102.

[28] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 102.

[29] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 102.

separate battle over religion and lingering questions about church reformation. Conflicts on one side of the Atlantic led to destruction and bloodshed on the other side as well and had enormous implications for the Potomac at large and Popes Creek in particular.

Fur Wars, 1631–1644

Claiborne immediately saw the threat that Calvert's Maryland presented to his control over the fur trade, and once Fleet changed sides, Claiborne's worst fears were coming true. What was worse, the Maryland charter placed Kent Island nominally under Calvert control—something that Claiborne, his Virginia allies, and the Kent Islanders could not abide. Leonard Calvert was happy to have the island's fur trade continue as it had been but, from that point on, under the auspices of Maryland and not Virginia. For his part, Virginia's governor, Sir John Harvey, was content enough to leave the new borders where they were, but Claiborne was not willing to see his venture ceded to Maryland, and a small war of sorts broke out between the Kent Islanders and the Marylanders. Rival trading vessels battled each other on the Potomac's waterways, and Calvert made plans to march on and sack Kent Island.[30] Meanwhile, at Jamestown in 1635, a council-led coup had Governor Harvey arrested and shipped back to England, replacing him briefly with John West, a man more sympathetic to the Kent Island cause. All of this strengthened Claiborne's hand in the small colony's politics. But this little palace coup proved a bit too brazen, and when Charles I sent his appointed governor Harvey *back* to Virginia, Harvey brought with him an arrest order for Claiborne, who rapidly was fired by his backers in London and returned to England with a cloud over his head. He was not done with his Potomac adventuring just yet, though. In 1638, Calvert succeeded in taking control of Kent Island and expelling some of the Virginians but only enough to tame the recalcitrant place while leaving the fur trade operation largely intact.[31] Most importantly, the fall of Kent Island made Calvertite Maryland rule an established fact on the north bank of the Potomac.

Calvert sent traders north to work deals with the neighboring Algonquians, such as the Piscataways, but as with the French enterprises in Catholic Canadian New France, he also saw trade as a vehicle for evangelizing. Leaders in both New France and Maryland

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[30] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 92–107; Frederick Fausz, "Merging and Emerging Worlds: Anglo-Indian Interest Groups and the Development of the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," in *Colonial Chesapeake Society*, Lois Green Carr, Philip D. Morgan, and Jean B. Russo, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1988), 71; Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1645–1646* (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Society, 2004), 11.

[31] Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1745–46* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2004), 24; Fausz, "Merging and Emerging Worlds," 72–74; Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 12–19.

reasoned that converting Native trade partners would be a way to strengthen the bonds of trade while also doing something good—in their eyes at least—for the immortal souls of Native people, who were condemned to purgatory if they did not enter the Catholic communion. In Canadian New France, the 1630s saw some of the first Jesuit missions in North America. Likewise, in Maryland, Jesuit missionaries brought their books and portable eucharistic altars to Native villages. In 1642, though, Susquehannock warriors stormed south and raided the Maryland mission stations, killing Piscataways and Maryland tobacco growers in a few outlying settlements. With the Kent Islanders watching but not stepping in to help, Maryland militiamen went to war only to find themselves bested by the far more numerous Swedish-armed Susquehannock raiders from the north. Soon after that defeat, Opechancanough launched his 1644 second attempt to destroy Virginia from its west, and right after that, the English Civil War opened an overseas theater along the Potomac. War was the order of the day.[32]

Maryland's "Plundering Time," 1641–1655

Chaotic and violent as life was on the Potomac, things were not that much more peaceful on the British Isles. In 1641, Irish Catholics rose up against their hated English overlords and imported Protestant Scots settlers. The rebellion was fairly quickly crushed, but it was a reminder to all Englishmen that Catholics were always a potential problem. The following year, long-simmering tensions between King Charles I and Parliament boiled over. Charles fled London and set about raising an army. The resulting war divided the country and created a political vacuum. The war cost Charles first his throne in 1648 and then his head in 1649, leaving a decidedly Puritan-leaning and strongly anti-Catholic Parliament to rule the country without a monarch for over a decade. Understandably, this was a considerable source of unease for the Calverts, Maryland's Catholic proprietors, whose precarious right to rule their colony came only through the favor of a despised, deposed, and decapitated sovereign.[33]

The same year that Opechancanough attacked Virginia, all of this old-world conflict came to Maryland in the form of a Parliament-supporting, freebooting Protestant merchant and trader named Richard Ingle.[34] His deep hostility to Catholics was as obvious as his ship's name: *Reformation*. Ingle knew the river and was already quite familiar with

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[32] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 92–107.

[33] Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 14–26.

[34] Ingle can be read many ways. Sutto situates him within England's religio-political contest. Others have seen him as a pirate. See Richard Blakemore, "The Politics of Piracy in the British Atlantic, 1640–1649," *International Journal of Maritime History* 25, no. 2 (2013): 159–72.

Maryland's conflicts and personalities; in fact, he had already run afoul of Calvert royalist loyalties when they had him up on charges for declaring to the wrong company that Charles "was no king neither would be a king" without the agreement of Parliament. For that little bit of political opinion, Leonard Calvert tried him without success as an "enemy and traitor" to "our lord the King."[35] Ingle knew firsthand the colony's many political, religious, and military vulnerabilities, and he sensed the opportunity created by the chaotic 1640s. On top of that, he was able to recruit a willing force of Virginians, some of whom were Kent Islanders still angry over the Calvert takeover. Claiborne also had just returned to Virginia and was eager to try to regain control over his fur trade enterprise. Ingle and Claiborne were natural allies against the Catholic Calvert and his loyalists.

With all of that in his sails, Ingle set in motion a wave of violence and turmoil that devastated Maryland. Claiborne moved (without success) to retake Kent Island, while Ingle sent out word to all the colony's Protestants that he had a commission from Parliament to root out Catholics and steal all they owned. The promise of the legal right to steal a neighbor's property under the banner of Parliament and the reformed religion unleashed chaos. Calvert's Maryland collapsed. Bands of Protestants, Virginians, and assorted opportunists massed in varying combinations and went from house to house, issuing demands and taking anything of value they could find. Prominent men fled or were locked up on Ingle's *Reformation*, and a new rebel-led Protestant provisional government was set up amid the ashes of burned homes.[36] Too much damage had been done, though, and soon even Ingle sailed away from the mess he had helped make. Leonard Calvert returned to St. Mary's City from his short wartime exile in James River Virginia, and reestablished proprietary rule in 1646. He died the following year, leaving his Catholic ally Thomas Greene in charge, and the following year, the Susquehannocks launched a new wave of attacks along the Potomac.[37]

Claiborne and his allies still wanted control in Maryland. In 1650, armed with a commission from Great Britain's new ruler, the Puritan Oliver Cromwell, Claiborne set about making sure that lingering royalists in Virginia were brought to heel and that the "nest of Catholics" in Maryland was swatted once and for all.[38] Claiborne dissolved Calvert rule and installed a solidly Protestant pro-Virginia ruling body while grabbing an office for himself. Marylanders were split by their loyalty either to the old ruling family and Stone or to Claiborne and his Puritan assembly. But in 1655, Cromwell, England's "Lord Protector," smiled on the Calverts, as had his predecessor, and handed Maryland back to the family.

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[35] *Archives of Maryland*, 4: 241; Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 14–26.

[36] Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1745–46* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2004); Antoinette Patricia Sutto, "Built Upon Smoke: Politics and Political Culture in Maryland, 1630–1690," PhD diss., Princeton University, Princeton, NJ. 2008.

[37] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 105.

[38] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 104–105.

The news set off all the old tensions as Calvert supporters and Parliamentarian Protestants dropped their tobacco hoes and picked up their guns to start killing each other once more. This new fight was short-lived, but by the time it was over, Maryland barely resembled its former self. Gone was its commitment to being a Catholic refuge and its seigneurial system of large landholders. From now on, the colony would look like most other British endeavors in matters of religious demographics.[39]

Gone from Maryland, also, was the manorial landholding system, which was replaced by one that looked very much like Virginia's. Maryland had become a place where Britons could hope to survive a term of service and become landowning freeholders themselves. Tobacco had eclipsed the fur trade as the major export commodity too. This meant that the fur trade model of (hoped-for, at least) peaceful coexistence with local Native people and distant trade partners would fall to something more like the ever-increasing demand for new tobacco acres that fueled Virginia's near-genocidal wars. For the next several decades, Virginia and Maryland would be variations on what it meant to be a tobacco colony.

John Mottrom's Chicacoan

Amid all this conflict, there was very little reason to think that Maryland would be a long-lived project. After all, almost all of its colonial enterprises had ended, and Maryland had all the signs of being well on the way to ending up another failed venture. Giving up on Maryland, though, did not have to mean giving up on the Potomac.

The south shore of the river was still dotted with Algonquian towns, villages, seasonal camps, and fields. Although on paper it was all claimed by Virginia, there was little effort to make those claims a fact on the ground. This was underscored by a provision in the 1646 treaty that ended the Third Anglo–Powhatan War, which barred Virginians from traveling north of the York River without specific permission.[40] But Virginia's ability to enforce its rules was limited. Besides, there were many Englishmen who saw no reason to allow one colony to make such grand pronouncements while it was clear that establishing one's own colonial venture was still very much a possibility.

All of this came to a head when Calvert took over Kent Island in 1638. Around that time, a trader named John Mottrom set up a small settlement on the Coan River in what is now Northumberland County. He was near the Chicacoans, who had been working with English traders for decades. Mottrom's presence was a bit like Spelman's earlier stays with the Patawomeks, except in this case, Mottrom was less directly linked to Virginia

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[39] Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 31–53.

[40] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 121.

officialdom than Spelman was. Also, he built a home and established a small British community there. Many of the people who settled there were Kent Islanders who had fled Calvert rule. Mottrom's Chicacoan was the northernmost point of non-Calvert-controlled settlement, so for Kent Islanders, this would be an easy move with the promise, perhaps, of even continuing in the fur trade.[41]

But this settlement also occupied a curious legal limbo. It had no allegiance to Maryland. Its anti-Calvert inhabitants would not abide that, partly out of resentment and partly due to the fact that many had strong Puritan leanings. In fact, Mottrom's Chicacoan was something of a refuge for Puritans wanting to escape the strength of Anglican royalists in James River Virginia. British Chicacoan sat within the paper boundaries of Virginia and the Kent Islanders and, though strongly autonomous, still favored that colony. In recognition of the Virginia-ness of the outpost, Mottrom represented the community in the House of Burgesses as early as 1645. Virginia's governor, William Berkeley, certainly saw the settlers as Virginians when he demanded that they pay their fair share of colonial defense, adding teeth to the demand by warning that "in case the said inhabitants shall refuse or deney payment of the said leavy," they would be forced off the "said plantation" in "speedy course."[42]

At the same time, connected legally to Jamestown though it might have been, this community was not, strictly speaking, Virginian. Even when Mottrom went to the burgesses in Jamestown, the Potomac was still viewed as disputed territory, and after the 1646 treaty, it was technically a violation of the agreement for Virginians to even *be* that far north. In 1648, the area formally became Northumberland County, and any pretense that Virginia did not plan on claiming everything it could simply fell away.[43] But for a time, British Chicacoan was yet another variation on Potomac colonization.

The area became especially important during the conflicts of the 1640s and 1650s. Sitting almost directly south of the mouth of the St. Mary's River, Chicacoan was the perfect staging ground for attacks on Calvertite Maryland. Former Kent Islanders were happy to lend a hand—in some cases literally, when former islanders joined the plundering bands—and Puritans saw these battles in simple religious terms. For them, the rebellion was just the next step in establishing a fully reformed church in England and its many dominions. For his part, Mottrom was happy to supply Ingle and work with Claiborne to

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[41] Lauren K. McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Anthropological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Triade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 208–14; Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1745–46* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 2004); Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 19.

[42] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 1: 338.

[43] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 1: 352.

break Calvert rule while his estate became something of a rallying point for the anti-Calvert forces and served as a market for goods stolen from Maryland. The colony's official records were even brought over to Chicacoan and from there were eventually lost.[44]

On top of that, Chicacoan was, as it had been for the Kent Islanders, the quick and logical retreat for Marylanders fleeing the fighting and home burnings on the Potomac's northern shore. What began as a small outpost rapidly became a growing Protestant community of people looking to start again free from Maryland's Catholic seigneurial rule and rolling warfare.[45] These growing numbers were a main incentive for the burgesses to make the area officially part of Virginia in 1648 and bring the patterns and the legal and governmental structures from the James up to the Potomac. The south shore of the Potomac became the Virginia side, and that represented a haven, offering quiet and noninterference that the north shore lacked. This move of Marylanders—a collective defection to another version of colonial enterprise on the south side of the Potomac—was the first definite step that soon led English people to the curves of Popes Creek.

Nathaniel Pope and St. Mary's City

George Washington's grandfather four generations back most likely arrived in Calvert's Maryland in 1636. He was not one of the very first settlers, but he was one who had resources enough to pay his way over to America and take up the offer of 100 acres of land near St. Mary's City and an extra few 50-acre parcels for bringing his wife, Lucy, and some servants.[46] We will never know which pamphlet or conversation persuaded the 32-year-old Bristol merchant to pack up and leave for Maryland, but if we had to guess, a likely answer would be that it was about trade opportunities. During the first half of the 17th century, Bristol was the realm's second city of trade—the capital, London, being the premier. From their home base on the western side of the island, Bristol's merchants were already deeply involved with trade with the continent and Ireland, so America was a logical next step. As

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[44] Charles Arthur Hoppin, ed., *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 252.

[45] Lauren K. McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Anthropological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Triade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 208–14. See also Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, which argues that herein were the roots of what Hatch called a "proto-Lockean" community of settlers who maintained an alliance through business ties and marriages for generations.

[46] "Land Notes, 1634–1655," *Reynolds Historical Genealogy Collection* (Baltimore: Maryland Historical Society, 1910), 271.

Britain became increasingly involved in the African slave trade after the middle of the century, Bristol became a significant port and financial center where merchants could get rich from the sale of human beings.[47]

Even once he was in America, Pope retained his links to his home port, in part through relations in the city. Pope's Maryland career was itself an interesting thing. His home, "Pope's Freehold," sat on a gently rising stretch of ground between the bay and St. John's Creek just west of St. Mary's City; today there is a college rugby field on the site. On a daily basis, Pope would have seen all the comings and goings in the city and its harbor, and he had a business interest in most of them. Although he never seems to have acquired the ability to properly sign his name, Pope rose rapidly in the small colony. By the early 1640s, his neighbors had enough confidence in him to elect him assembly member, and soon his name bore the title "Mr." before it, a sure sign of his rising wealth and prominence. Pope also had the confidence of Leonard Calvert, with whom he did considerable business.[48] In 1642, he purchased Calvert's St. Mary's land and town home, which had been dragooned into serving as the principal government meeting place.[49]

By 1643, Pope was handling considerable amounts of tobacco, loaning money to other people, and handling their estates and affairs. Calvert also listed Pope as one of the advisors to Henry Fleet in the latter's fur trade and diplomacy enterprise, a fact that points to both Pope's local prominence in business and his personal involvement in the lucrative trade. Pope even benefited from a governor-granted exemption "from all watches and wardings" and from all militia "musters and trainings" whatsoever for himself and his nine servants.[50] All "captains commanders and officers whatsoever" were ordered "at their perill" to not "infringe or violate any the exemptions" awarded to Pope.[51] The timing of this exemption was ideal for Pope since Calvert was planning a march against the Susquehannocks at the time. Calvert clearly saw Pope's activities as being just too valuable to be disturbed by either the mundane or the highly dangerous duties demanded of regular colonists.

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[47] In the first few decades of the 18th century, Bristol dominated the British slave trade. Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 202.

[48] This confusion stems from a string of years missing from the Maryland records. Pope entered the missing era a regular planter, and when the records recommence, he was well off and prominent. See Timothy Riordan, *The Plundering Time: Maryland and the English Civil War, 1645–1646* (Annapolis: Maryland Historical Society, 2004), 223.

[49] Henry M. Miller, "The Country's House Site: An Archaeological Study of a Seventeenth-Century Domestic Landscape," in Paul Shackel and Barbara J. Little, eds., *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 65–84.

[50] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 130.

[51] *Archives of Maryland* 3: 130.

Pope and the Plundering Time

Pope found himself in an uncomfortable position during Maryland's darkest days. On the one hand, he had been a Calvert loyalist from the start and had benefited handsomely from that loyalty. On the other hand, protecting the fortune and trade he had built required a certain agnosticism in alliances, especially as the continuation of English royal authority and Calvert rule were very much in doubt in the mid-1640s. Pope must have been personally comfortable with Catholics as associates and partners, but despite his name, he was a Protestant, although there is little documentation to suggest the depth or shape of his convictions.[52] During and just after the conflict, he was involved in the sale of stolen goods and also paid neighbors for things they had lost—certainly noteworthy behavior but not enough to condemn him as a rebel or a plunderer.[53] Pope's home, the Country's House, was already a symbol of local governance, so it understandably became a place Ingle wanted to occupy.[54] Pope had the home enclosed with a hastily constructed earth-and-timber breastwork that protected it almost like a lock on a strongbox. The earthwork has been known ever after as Mr. Pope's Fort—a name that makes Pope seem to have been more involved in the fighting than he actually was.

Pope did play a significant role regarding Kent Island. The islanders might not have been thrilled with forced Calvert rule, but even so, Claiborne had been unsuccessful in his attempts to entice them to join in the widespread rebellion. It was a shaky abstention, though, and the fact of an insular Protestant community with at least some members still nursing strong anti-Calvert sentiments was a worry for Leonard Calvert. In an attempt to keep the Kent Islanders loyal to him—or at least not actively disloyal—the governor sent Pope as his emissary. It was a logical choice. Pope was familiar with the fur trade, and at that point, he was perhaps the colony's most influential Protestant. But once there, Pope seems to have hatched a completely different plan and one quite at odds with his mission. Later witnesses attested under oath that Pope spoke against Calvert, claiming that "though the Gouenr [Governor] made lardge promises," the Kent Islanders would soon find that "there would nothing be performed by him" and that all of Calvert's prospects of victory

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[52] *Archives of Maryland*, 1: 2128, 1: 21, 3: 193, 4: 146.

[53] These are the contentions of Timothy Riordan. See *Plundering Time*, 224–30. The evidence for this is on the thin side, being mostly from ambiguous wording in a 1648 court case. See *Archives of Maryland* 4: 418. It is notable that Antoinette Sutto did not mention Pope at all in her work. Noeleen McIlvenna sees Pope as having played a significant role in Ingle's Rebellion. See *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 18–25. Martin Quitt, on the other hand, saw Pope as keeping his head down. Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 24.

[54] Henry M. Miller, "The Country's House Site: An Archaeological Study of a Seventeenth-Century Domestic Landscape," in Paul Shackel and Barbara J. Little, eds., *Historical Archaeology of the Chesapeake* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Press, 1994), 65–84.

over the Ingle rebellion were "mere delusitions [delusions]."[55] Pope then urged the settlers to up sticks, "auoyde [avoid] the island" entirely, and come "and liue [live] with him" on the Potomac's south shore. Once there, it would have been a "shortt tyme" before they could build a force with "strength enough to get the Country againe."[56]

This was a pretty bold—even opportunistic—move but one that made sense in the moment. Calvert's Maryland was in ruins, Pope's home in St. Mary's City was a fortified stronghold used by the usurpers (perhaps even with his own acquiescence), and between the colonists fighting one another and the Susquehannocks flexing their considerable muscle, there was little reason to think that things would settle down soon and trade would resume.

Back in England, the king had been driven from his home, and a variety of voices were calling for a host of radical changes. On top of that, this was still a time when well-connected men willing to risk it all and not worry about the consequences were betting big. If Claiborne, Fleet, Mottrom, and even Ingle were able to carve out a small, unofficial colonial space for themselves, why then shouldn't Pope join their ranks? It is easy to see how, amid such unsettled and unsettling times, it would seem that every loyalty was fragile and every opportunity was to be grabbed. What Pope seemed to offer the Kent Islanders was nothing short of a half-baked fresh start on the south side of the Potomac: a chance at a whole new settlement built on the islanders' fur trade connections and Pope's link to Bristol merchants. This new settlement could perhaps even be a staging ground from which to retake Maryland itself and maybe even install a new government. Pope would hardly be the only man on the Potomac looking around and thinking he could do this better and make a better profit along the way.[57]

The plan did not work out—or, at least, not as a reboot of the Kent Island project. But soon thereafter, Pope did abandon Maryland for the Potomac's south shore, and a few Kent Islanders came along.

Was Pope a rebel, though? There is no clear answer. There is no evidence that he burned any homes or stole any property. But the witnesses to his actions at Kent Island certainly spoke words that condemned him as a traitor to the Calvertite cause. In 1648, Humphrey Howell and Blanch Oliver sued Pope "in satisfaction of a cow which Pope or

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[55] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 192–93.

[56] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 192.

[57] Noeleen McIlvenna sees Pope as a rebel and also sees in this and other 17th-century rebellions the roots of American republicanism. See the chapter "Ingle's Rebellion, 1638–1650," in *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020). Lauren McMillan in her dissertation saw the move to Virginia as being rooted in a desire for trade freed from Calvert interference. See "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley, ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015.

some of this accomplices killed in the time of the rebellion."[58] The death of that cow could have quite a few explanations short of anti-Calvert zeal. It was, after all, a complicated time. Do we see in Pope something of the commitment to change that emerged in his great-great-grandson George? That would be too much to claim. Instead, Pope showed himself to be an opportunist who knew the art of bending but not breaking and who could adapt himself to changing conditions. He was a survivor, not a man of causes.

Pope and the Settlement of Appamattucks

Pope's relationship to Maryland was contradictory. He had begun his American life very much allied to the Calverts, whose trust he clearly had earned. He also had served as a grand juror in 1637, when Calvert tried to use colonial law to bring Claiborne to heel. In 1646, as things heated up, he swore an oath of fealty to the regime, and he was the man to whom the governor turned to keep the Kent Islanders in the Maryland camp.[59]

On the other hand, his invitation to the islanders was a betrayal of the Calverts and their colony. Perhaps significantly, it did not land Pope in any meaningful trouble—and he was hardly the only Marylander working multiple sides in the dark days of the revolt. When Leonard Calvert and his successors tried to reestablish proprietary rule, they turned back to the same people, such as Pope, who had stayed in Maryland and who had the acumen and resources needed to get things moving once more. Recognizing the fragility of loyalty in this new place and era, Governor Thomas Greene offered an amnesty of sorts to all who had slipped the leash and had "had any hand in the late rebellion" if they swore an "oath of fealty" to this new government and the proprietors as part of starting all over again.[60] Word went out, both in Maryland and on the Potomac's south shore, that Greene wanted peace and stability and all would be forgiven for those willing to return and start again.

Pope was one of several who took up the offer, pledging loyalty for as long as they "shall remaine in this Province" and promising to dutifully "reveale" and "resist to your power" any "conspiraces and practices" they might hear of against the colony and its rulers.[61] With eager hands or wary ones, Marylanders signed the oaths. With the oaths came a return of the restrictive Calvertite rules that had made Protestant settlers bristle in the first place, but this time, the rules were informed by a fresh fear of sedition and rebellion recurrences.

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[58] *Archives of Maryland*, 4: 424.

[59] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 192–93; *Archives of Maryland*, 5: 169.

[60] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 174. Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 24.

[61] *Archives of Maryland*, 3: 193.

Pope might have signed the Calvert oath in 1648, but the idea of leaving Maryland for the south side of the river did not leave his mind. Sometime around then, he had acquired land on a stretch of Potomac shore upriver at Mattox Creek, a bit farther west than Mottrom's small settlement at Chicacoan. Marylanders had already been calling this area Appamattucks, a somewhat anglicized version of an Algonquian word that referred to a bend in a tidal river.[62] That is a perfect description of the river at what is now Dahlgren, Virginia. The name Appamattucks is also still recalled in the name of Mattox Creek, a place designation the English were using in the 1650s. Appamattucks was similar to its south shore neighbor to the east, Chicacoan, but also different in a few important ways. For one thing, unlike Mottrom's Chicacoan, there was no English settlement yet on that stretch of the river; this was a significant push upriver. Chicacoan also was close to large Algonquian towns that had long been trading with the Jamestown English. This meant that Englishmen had known that area for some time and, like Mottrom, had begun to call it home. Appamattucks was in the English consciousness; traders such as Spelman had floated past it, going up and down the river for years. But it was not yet a place of colonial settlement. There were several Native towns on the north bank of the Potomac and its Maryland tributaries, but from the time of John Smith's map into the 1650s, there did not seem to be any large towns on the south shore before reaching the Patawomeks upriver along Potomac Creek, though there were smaller Native settlements as well as many seasonal fishing and hunting camps. There were towns on the north bank, though, and these were regular Susquehannock targets. The combination of being far upriver and also being a possible target of raiders had largely left Appamattucks off the English settlement agenda.[63]

Pope's oath to Calvert family rule only held sway *within* Maryland itself. It put no restrictions on him—or any other settler—should they choose to live somewhere else. That fact does not seem to have been lost on Pope. For the year after he swore his 1648 oath, Pope had a residence and warehouse along Mattox Creek in the Appamattucks area of this new Northumberland County. He appeared in Northumberland court at least eight times that year as well.[64] Pope retained business interests in Maryland, as did many of the former residents who would soon relocate to the south shore. It was common, in fact, for them to cross the river regularly for commercial reasons, to own land in both colonies, and in some cases to take up suits in the different colonies' courts. Significantly, though, by moving his seat south, Pope made it so that his lineage would unfold in Virginia and not in Maryland.[65]

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[62] William R. Gerard, "Some Virginia Indian Words," *American Anthropologist* (April–June 1905), 223.

[63] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 102.

[64] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 270.

[65] Noeleen McIlvenna sees Pope's move as sitting within the politics of Ingle's Rebellion. See *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640 to 1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 18–25.

CHAPTER FOUR

Settling Mattox Neck, 1648–1660

Land Patents and Settling Appamattucks, 1648–1660

Nathaniel Pope was not the only Marylander eyeing the Potomac's south shore and its lands from Appamattucks westward. What began as a wartime trickle to the south shore at the end of the 1630s had become more of a rush by the dawn of the 1650s as streams of both Marylanders and Virginians took part in a small Potomac land boom.

William Claiborne remained very much interested in the Potomac and in ensuring that as much of it as possible ended up under his sway and not Maryland's. In his capacity as treasurer for the Virginia colony, he appointed an ally named William Cocke as the official surveyor for the Northern Neck.[1] It was Cocke's job and that of his successor, Gervase Dodson, to ensure that each new land claim would carry some sort of official blessing. This meant that despite treaty rules, Virginia officialdom was not only interested in breaking the terms of the 1646 ban on settlement north of the York but actively encouraged it as well.

The crucial first document in any legal land acquisition was the patent, a written description of the land's size, dimensions, and location that brought the land into the English system of law and economics. The survey was the centerpiece of any patent since that transference of landscape into words on paper changed land to property. As early as 1622, colonial rulers acted to ensure accurate land surveys so as to create clear and indisputable records.[2] Virginia counties had their own official county surveyor who either conducted or oversaw these surveys, although many planters made a point of learning this craft themselves. So much wealth was attached to its practice, it was in an ambitious planter's interest to be able to be the first to survey and claim acres and in that way keep for himself the most useful parcels. Surveys were words, written descriptions of the distances between landmarks that would be recognizable to all and the distances and directions between each marker. Unique trees, specially marked ones, and landscape features (such as turns of a waterway or the intersection of paths) were all easily located markers brought into service by the surveyor. In the area around GEWA, certain swamps

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[1] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 121.

[2] William H. Sellier, "Land Processioning in Colonial Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1949): 416–17.

and creek heads appeared in multiple surveys over the centuries. All of this gave the selected landmarks a special value in landscape, law, and the ways local people understood their homelands.[3]

Ambitious Marylanders had been laying preliminary claim to Appamattucks lands in the 1640s, but the legal system governing that ownership was murky. Many of these claimants were absentee owners until such a time as the land claims became more useful either for settlement or sale. Maryland, of course, had no authority to certify south shore land claims. As Virginians, Claiborne and Cocke were very concerned with making sure that there was a solid Virginia presence on the south shore and that these land claims would also have some legal basis. The 1648 formation of Northumberland County helped accelerate a small land rush, in part by making the patenting of land a simpler affair. Once the county was formed, many of the people who had already made early claims on the river went to the Virginia courts to formalize their claims with new official patents.

But while Virginia was developing a settlement plan, Marylanders were already on the move. During the decade after the mid-1640s, at least 36 Marylanders crossed the river and resettled in Virginia. About half came from the mainland settlements, while the other half were Kent Islanders, some perhaps even inspired by Pope's double-dealing embassy.[4] If estimates for Maryland's war-withered population are correct, that means that nearly a third of all colonists abandoned the province for the south shore. Likewise, one estimate showed that by 1652, one in three south shore landholders had come over from Maryland.[5] While some went to Chicacoan, with its long-standing anti-Calvert associations, a number of prominent former Marylanders pushed upriver to switch their family seats to Appamattucks.

Early Appamattucks Land Patents

The first area patent was by Virginian John Walton, who in 1641 claimed land along Mattox Creek.[6] In 1643, another Virginian, John Vaughan, claimed the first patent for land on the east bank of Popes Creek where it meets the Potomac. He and a partner, Edward Murfrey, also claimed 1,200 acres, which they held only on paper.[7] The choicest lands were those with river and creek frontage, and so, unsurprisingly, freeholders tried to grab those first.

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[3] William H. Sellier, "Land Processioning in Colonial Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 3 (1949): 416–36.

[4] Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 83–84.

[5] Danny Brad Hatch, "Colonial Virginian Communities and Atlantic Migration Patterns, 1634–1652," unpublished paper, University of Tennessee, 8.

[6] John Washington Patent, 1664, Colonial Land Office Records, Richmond, Library of Virginia, Book 5: 49.

[7] Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers*: *Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1934), 153.

In 1647, a line of claims marched upriver, from Chicacoan all the way west past Mattox Creek. Thomas Speke, the man who had called out Ingle's treasonous bluster at the start of the Maryland conflict, patented about 1,000 acres at the Nomini cliffs between Nomini Creek and what is now Westmoreland State Park. Marylanders James Baldridge, Thomas Baldridge, Walter Brodhurst, John Hallowes, William Hardidge, Andrew Monroe, and John Rosier all joined Kent Islander Thomas Yuell that same year in grabbing waterfront parcels ranging in size from 300 acres to 2,728 acres.[8]

By 1650, John Walton had new neighbors along Mattox Creek. One was John Hallowes, who owned enough land there that some of the patents called the waterway Hallowes Creek. This place name is all the more confusing because Hallowes made his main residence downriver near Nomini Bay on *another* waterway called Hallowes Creek or Hollis Creek, today known as Cold Harbor Creek.[9] In 1648, Nathaniel Pope owned land near the head of Mattox Creek, but the patents have not survived, and the references in the surviving ones are sometimes contradictory. He also soon had considerable holdings downriver in the area of what is now Westmoreland State Park.

In 1650, Marylander Henry Brookes (sometimes spelled Brooke or Brooks), a man with deep connections to the Kent Island fur trade, became the first Englishman to patent land within the GEWA park area with a claim of 658 acres years later, described as "abutting north east upon Potomack river South East upon a creeke yt divideth this land from ye land of Nath Pope Gent, North West upon a creeke yt divideth this land from ye land of Hercules Bridges and South west unto the mayne woodes."[10] The patent shows not only Pope's early landownership in the area but also the fact that much of the land was still heavily wooded.

During the next few years, Thomas Blagg, Richard Brown, William Freake, John Cook, and Thomas Baldridge each also claimed a part of the eastern waterfront stretching from the bottom of Mattox Creek along the Potomac and on to Bridge's Creek. The largest of these holdings was the 840-acre area that Baldridge patented in 1651, while the

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[8] Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 83–84; Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1934), 1: 189, 193, 205, 193. Brookes's Kent Island trade was mentioned in AM 4: 336.

[9] Walter Briscoe Norris Jr., Westmoreland County Virginia, 1653–1983 (Montross, VA: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), 70.

[10] "Henry Brookes Patent, 1650," Patent Book 1: 225; Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 83–84; Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1934), 1: 380.

smallest was Thomas Blagg's 189-acre area claimed the same year. He already had a claim of about 850 Appamattucks acres from a 1650 claim and had probably been living on the south shore since 1651, but in 1657, he added 1,020 acres just east of Bridge's Creek.[11]

The same process was taking place along the Rappahannock as well. Directly south of the GEWA park, Toby Smith, William Mills, Thomas Hobkins, Francis Hobbs, John Merryman, and Morgan Heynes all claimed large riverfront parcels between 1650 and 1654. Significantly, none of these men were Marylanders, instead being either Virginians or immigrant Britons. From Appamattucks's earliest days, there was a difference between those escaping Maryland by settling on the Potomac and those coming up from the south and settling on the Rappahannock as well as the Potomac. The Marylanders were, by and large, the first to arrive, in part because the colony they were starting to flee placed no restriction on their abilities to claim south shore land. Virginia, though, was still at least nominally bound by treaty restrictions officially limiting settlement. Certainly, there were many Virginians and Chicacoan residents who were happy to ignore the terms of that treaty, just as there were advocates in Jamestown cheering them on. But once those treaty terms were officially discarded, there was nothing to hold Virginians back any longer.

In time, any distinctions of background between Marylanders and Virginians would gradually fade away, and the land between the rivers would become a patchwork of differently sized and shaped parcels worked and inhabited by Virginians of many classes, who came from Europe and Africa as well as other colonies.[12] Nevertheless, the families of the former Marylanders were prominent on Mattox Neck and often intermarried, creating kinship bonds that carried an echo of their Maryland roots for generations.

The Great Native Displacement of 1650–1670

The fur trade economy rested on good relations with Native American trade partners near and far. It was also an activity that did not require all that much English labor. Growing tobacco, on the other hand, required land and labor to work it.

Centuries of residence had allowed Algonquian people to settle in the areas that offered the most agricultural promise and access to other resources. Good farmland for Algonquians was also good farmland for Englishmen. Likewise, access to fisheries, oyster beds, and forests, along with shelter from storms and good river access, were all things the English wanted that the Algonquians had long ago located and made their own. Conflict over land and resources was inherent to the British model of settler colonization, and as

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[11] Brooke S. Blades, *Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites* (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979); Brad Hatch, 83–84; Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1934), 1: 380.

[12] Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 83–84.

English people began to claim Potomac land, they brought with them the kind of conflicts that had defined the first few decades of British occupation of the James. On the Potomac, the first areas of intense settlement were in precisely those places that had long sustained some of the area's largest Algonquian populations.[13] Mottrom's Chicacoan eventually pushed out the actual Chicacoans. In 1651 (an important year in this area's story), Governor Berkeley required that the Chicacoans and the Wicomicos merge themselves into a single tribe and restrict themselves to a few thousand acres granted to them by the colony.[14] Centuries of self-determination for these two influential communities came to an end.

The Onawamanients saw their Nomini River lands rapidly surveyed and patented out of their control. After some formal complaints in 1651, the Onawamanients' werowance, Peckatoan, agreed to let Isaac Allerton stay on the land as long as he kept his livestock from wandering into the nearby Native towns and fields. Virginia law provided a small allowance of land and some security to any werowance who would accept the authority of its courts, its rules about land ownership, and its prohibition of Natives carrying guns.[15] After 1650, many Algonquian leaders and communities found living near a few skittish Englishmen with their wandering hogs and cows preferable to outright war or abandoning their homelands. Accepting Virginia's terms, though, meant that little by little, Native communities would end up living as European-style family units on ever-smaller parcels of land back from the river they had for so long needed for their survival. Adapting to the new reality along the Potomac meant subtle but powerful changes to Algonquian life.[16] The Onawamanients eventually found their situation untenable, and violence erupted. Faced with no other option, the entire community moved upriver to where neighbors were less thick on the ground. Once settled at Chotank Creek, near what is now Hooes, the community became known as the Matchotics and survived autonomously for another decade or two before its last members left or were absorbed or pushed out for good.[17]

Also in 1651, Maryland siblings Mary and Giles Brent both patented land near Potomac Creek, close to the still rather sizable Patawomeck community living there. Even though the two Brents formed an agreement with "the King of the Potomacs," their land claim was a sign that upriver Algonquian autonomy was about to be sorely tested. Soon after the Brents' patent, Gerrard Fowke met with the same Patawomeck werowance (probably a man named Wahanganoche) and secured permission to claim for himself 3,000

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[13] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 134.

[14] Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas's People: The Powhatan Indians of Virginia through Four Centuries* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1996); Helen Rountree, *Pocahontas, Powhatan, Opechancanough: Three Indian Lives Changed by Jamestown* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2006).

[15] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 127.

[16] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 127.

[17] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 127.

acres on Potomac Creek.[18] The deed outlined that Fowke could "build himself an house" and "plant tobacco and corne and keepe what cowes hee pleases" on Wahanganoche's land.[19] If any Patawomeck men decided to "joyne in" and help with Fowke's farm labor, Wahanganoche would get half the yield.[20] Fowke also made sure that the agreement included specific permission for the kinds of daily nuisances that made for trouble between Allerton and the Onawamanients.

Any pretense of peaceful coexistence, though, was short-lived. Ever more planters claimed ever more Patawomeck land, hemming the people in and disrupting long-standing lifeways. Tensions rose over land use and wandering animals, and as tempers flared, people were killed. In a rare reversal, an attempt by Brent, Fowke, and some allies to frame Wahanganoche for the murder of a settler backfired, and the Englishmen had to pay fines and endure being temporarily stripped of their offices for abusing the court system. But in 1663, Fowke led an armed band to attack the Patawomecks and drive them off the land the Englishmen wanted. In 1665, to lessen tensions, Virginia claimed for itself the right to appoint all Algonquian werowances. The following year, in response to more killings, the governor and his council called for the "utter destruction" of the Patawomecks and insisted that their "women and their children and their goods" be confiscated and "disposed of."[21] This ominous-sounding demand was not unique. Although Algonquians never were the backbone of the labor force in tobacco fields, many Native people were stolen and forced into slavery with English masters. Both Maryland and Virginia officially tried to stem the sale of Native American slaves, understanding fully well how the practice enflamed tensions. But both colonies were perfectly comfortable with capturing and enslaving people as long as the pretext of war was invoked.[22] Slavery was just another way that Native societies were buffeted by the changes the British enacted. In the case of the Patawomecks—the people who had once helped save Jamestown in its darkest hour—by 1669, they were gone as an organized, autonomous community.

This pattern was repeated all along the Potomac and its tributaries as Englishmen sought out more and more land for tobacco cultivation. Expansion of the Maryland settlements in the 1650s quickly drove the Portobacco people from their river in that colony, and they joined a steady flow of westward-moving individuals, families, and whole communities harassed out of their lands. The falls of the Rappahannock, at what is now

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[18] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*, 134.

[19] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County Records, 1661–1664* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1972), 1.

[20] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County Records, 1661–1664* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1972), 1.

[21] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*, 135.

[22] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*, 136.

Fredericksburg, became a refuge for many Algonquians who moved upriver.[23] Their numbers grew rapidly, and by the end of 1660s, the area was home to close to 500 people in various groupings of Nandtanghtacunds, Nanzaticos, and Portobaccos.[24] The Rappahanocks themselves also moved upriver to escape contact with their dangerous and annoying English neighbors.

Out of this movement and mixing emerged a people known as the Doegs, a community of uncertain origin but most likely made up of refugees from the lower reaches of the Northern Neck. Unlike the communities that were accepting the Virginians' offers of reservation land or those independently setting up fairly dense new Native towns, the Doegs seem to have been rather less settled and harder to locate, perhaps another indication that their community coherence rested on a hard-earned suspicion of Englishmen and their demands.[25] One thing is clear: they quickly earned a reputation for holding a powerful hostility to the British settlers.[26]

Diseases, Mortality, and Native Displacement

For most of the 17th century, Virginia was something of a killer for new arrivals. Mortality rates were noticeably high.[27] There was no single factor shortening life expectancies for new arrivals. Instead, it was a collision of realities that gave Virginia a hellish reputation back in Britain. For one thing, American winters were colder and summers hotter than anyone in Britain was used to. Extremes of temperature had their own perils—heatstroke, for example. But more generally, severe temperatures increased the rates of colds and flus, which in turn increased the number of chances for a small illness to turn deadly. During the days of Virginia Company rule, brackish and feces-laden water was a killer in Jamestown but less so on the outlying plantations. There, harsh regimes of labor played a deadly role, especially when in extreme temperatures. Parasitic ailments from poor water, as well, were always a problem, and bowel ailments

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[23] Many Native American communities were forced to move from the homelands they inhabited at the time of contact. One of the most influential frameworks for understanding this can be found in Richard White, *The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650–1815*, reprint (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2010). See also Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, eds., *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009).

[24] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson*, 136.

[25] Daniel Richter, *Before the Revolution: America's Ancient Pasts* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2011), 266–68.

[26] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 137–148.

[27] Carville Earle, "Environment, Disease, and Mortality in Early Virginia," *Journal of Historical Geography* 5 (1979): 365–90; Daniel Blake Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8, no. 3 (1978): 403–27. For a review of the Native American disease environment, see Douglas Ubelaker and Philip D. Curtin, "Human Biology of Population in the Chesapeake Watershed," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 127–48.

such as dysentery were common and rapid killers throughout the century. Dysentery in particular had a 12 percent to 25 per- cent mortality rate in this era. Likewise, typhoid fever could lay a full quarter of its victims low, as it did repeatedly at Jamestown.[28] Servants coming from London or other cities had a unique advantage over their country cousins because the former had long been drinking bad water and living in close quarters with contagion, so their bodies had learned to endure the consequences.

By the late 1630s, the worst periods of high mortality had passed. Colonists moved away from the Jamestown core, and dispersed habitations and proximity to sites of clean water lessened the chance of epidemics. Nevertheless, new arrivals were still often most at risk during their first year, their "seasoning" period, in which they had to adjust to the environment and labor conditions or die trying. The numbers of the latter gradually tapered off.

Disease, particularly imported contagious and often deadly diseases from Europe and Africa, played important roles in the damage done to Native American populations. Continental isolation had left these populations with no experience of or any earned immunities for viral killers such as smallpox and measles, and even relatively benign conditions like chicken pox could be deadly. But the importance of the diseases in the long conflict between Native peoples and European invaders is often overstated. There certainly were bad outbreaks of smallpox and other fevers that wrought demographic havoc on villages and communities and were disruptive and demoralizing for those who survived. European observers were often shocked by the deadly speed and strength of outbreaks in Native communities, leading them to ponder the meaning of this seeming accident and to write about it quite a bit. The memoirs of the 17th-century Jesuit priests in Canada, for example, were filled with often quite lurid tales of the sick and the dying. This was in part due to the fact that visiting priests might spend a whole winter in an Iroquois or Huron longhouse with little to do other than tend the sick and dying. Likewise, they understood disease outbreaks as part of a larger spiritual drama and sought to use the suffering of Native peoples as conversion opportunities, both in the moment and by published

[28] Carville Earle, "Environment, Disease, and Mortality in Early Virginia," *Journal of Historical Geography* 5 (1979): 371. See also Russell R. Menard and Lorena S. Walsh, "Death in the Chesapeake: Two Life Tables for Men in Early Colonial Maryland," *Maryland Historical Magazine* 69 (1974), 211–27. See also Terry Sharrer, "Farming, Disease and Change in the Chesapeake Ecosystem," in *Discovering the Chesapeake: The History of an Ecosystem*, Philip D. Curtin, Grace S. Brush, and George W. Fisher, eds. (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2001), 304–21.

example. Britain did not experience large-scale smallpox outbreaks itself until the second half of the 17th century, so some of Englishmen's interest in this particular disease came from their own unfamiliarity.[29]

Thus, the colonizing work of pathogens often had—and has continued to have—an outsized role in the popular imagination. Diseases did not simply wipe out huge percentages of Native peoples like a biblical plague and leave the land empty for new arrivals. In fact, in Virginia, imported diseases played almost no role in the conflicts along the James River, where killing and displacement had to be done act by bloody act. The worst of these killers, smallpox, was virtually unknown in Virginia until a 1748 outbreak in Williamsburg.[30] The great displacement of the Northern Neck's Algonquians owed more to land patents, British courts, and livestock than it did to illness or even outright violence.[31]

It was not until the fateful 1650s that the imported diseases began to be felt in the colony and its Native population. The situation was a perfect storm. All along the Potomac, Natives and new arrivals were living closer to one another and having more regular contact than had been the norm farther south. At the same time, the expansion of British trade networks (of which we will see more later) expanded the disease palate, adding the Baltic, Northern Europe, the West Indies, and Africa to the mix. Some illnesses would do their worst on a cross-Atlantic voyage and be finished before even arriving in the Chesapeake; that, in fact, had been the norm for most illnesses. But as more Britons came to the region right at a time when more Britons were getting ill in the first place, the stage was set for exotic diseases to be felt in Potomac River Native communities. Malaria, presumably from Africa or the West Indies, was one illness that neither European nor Native American was able to handle well but came to be part of life (and death) on the Potomac. Malaria or influenza might not outright kill a victim, but infected people in a weakened state were more susceptible to a host of other ailments that a strong body could resist. Englishman

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[29] The question of European diseases, their effects on Native American populations, and the size of those populations has an extensive literature. Some significant highlights include Alfred Crosby, *The Columbian Exchange: Biological and Cultural Consequences of 1492* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Publishing Company, 1972); Henry F. Dobyns, *Their Number Became Thinned* (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1983); Alfred Crosby, *Ecological Imperialism: The Biological Expansion of Europe, 900–1900* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1986); Noble David Cook, *Born to Die: Disease and New World Conquest, 1492–1650* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); Elizabeth A. Fenn, "Biological Warfare in Eighteenth-Century North America: Beyond Jeffery Amherst," *Journal of American History* 86, no. 4 (March 2000): 1552–80; Suzanne Austin Alchon, *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).

[30] William Quentin Maxwell, "A True State of the Smallpox in Williamsburg, February 22, 1748," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 63, no. 3 (1955): 269–74.

[31] Suzanne Austin Alchon, *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003).

and Algonquian alike often died after being hammered by multiple ailments at once. The same took place at the community level as Englishmen exploited the weakness and disadvantages illness caused in Native huts and villages.[32]

Nathaniel and Lucy Pope Cross the River

Lucy Pope (Nathaniel's will called her "Luce") had joined her husband in Maryland in 1639, arriving with five servants he had transported as well but no children. Although he had been in the colony a year earlier, he might have returned to England to bring her over himself. It is also possible that he met and married her on that return trip.[33] No record of her place of birth, her birthdate, or even her premarriage name has survived. While in Maryland, she bore four children who lived to maturity: Thomas, Nathaniel Jr., Ann, and Margaret. It is also not entirely clear when the Pope family crossed the river for good and made the Virginia shore their new home. Pope certainly had seen the area even before the Plundering Time and might even have staked out a claim or two—land that might have informed his vaguely seditious offer to the Kent Islanders. In 1648, however, he had a home and a warehouse on Mattox Creek and was active in Northumberland court.[34] That would be around the same time he had signed his oath to the Calvert government, but that might have been a formality so that he could keep his options open, avoid having Maryland property confiscated, or just carry on doing business in the colony.[35]

Uncharacteristically, Pope missed a court date in St. Mary's City in February 1649, and in October of 1650, he designated business associate and soon-to-be son-in-law William Hardich as his "true and lawful attorney" to settle disputes over Pope's Maryland affairs.[36] In this era, picking a friend or a well-disposed neighbor to handle one's cases—someone with more court experience or more familiarity with the law—was a common practice. Having a friend act as a stand-in was also routine since people could not always make it to court. Occasionally, modern biographers and genealogists have misread this regular occurrence as meaning that the designated friend *was* an attorney in the way we now understand the word: a professional trained in the law. In most cases in Virginia and Maryland, and especially so in the 17th century, the people acting as attorneys were

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[32] Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country*, 132–33; Suzanne Austin Alchon, *A Pest in the Land: New World Epidemics in a Global Perspective* (Albuquerque: University of New Mexico Press, 2003), 111–45.

[33] This is inferred from Lois Green Carr's note cards on Pope, "Nathaniel Pope, Career," in the Maryland Archives.

[34] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 270.

[35] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 270.

[36] *Archives of Maryland*, 10: 39.

simply clever or well-trusted neighbors. By the 18th century, when wealthier families would send sons back to England for formal education, there began to be Virginians with something that looked a bit like training in the law. But for the first century of settlement, the court, the justices, the jurors, the plaintiffs, the defendants, and even the bailiffs were all planters for a living, who played, out of necessity, all the roles of civil governance.

The most significant part of Pope's designation of Hardich was that in making it, he called himself "I Nathaniell Pope of Apomatocks gent" — a clear indication that by 1650 he had made the move and the move was permanent.[37] Two years later, he appeared in Northumberland court to formally record the way he marked his hogs so that there would be no mistaken identities. English Virginian practice was to let animals range freely until they were needed. Planters developed an elaborate system of brands and ear cutting that marked each cow or hog as belonging to a specific planter. Algonquians had long been enraged over the marauding of English free-range livestock, which trampled their fields and brought no end of legal trouble and even violence should a Native hunter kill a wandering beast, thinking it a wild animal. Planters, too, were constantly in and out of court, accusing one another of having killed their free-range pigs.[38] The same year Pope recorded his hog marks, he also sat as a justice of the court, along with established grandees John Mottrom and Thomas Speke.

In 1651, Pope formally patented his 1,050 acres on the east shore of Mattox Creek, roughly in the area where today's Route 205 crosses the water. He soon added another 550 acres to that original patent. He would come to own more than five times that amount of land, although not all of it touched his original patent. Before the decade was out, Pope had claimed 5,100 south shore acres at various sites.[39] Pope's sons added even more acres as well after Nathaniel's death, including what came to be called the Cliffs in what is now Westmoreland State Park and the Stratford Hall property.[40] In 1664, the old Vaughn patent, the very first one in the area, went to Thomas, Nathaniel's son. With Popes now owning its eastern bank, the winding stretch of water then known as either Fishing Creek or Cedar Island Creek took a new name, the one that it still has to this day: Popes Creek.

Despite his relocation, Pope's connection to Maryland planters was far from over, and he was part of cases in Maryland courts for the rest of his life. Records show his either appearing in or being called to Maryland courts at least a dozen more times. Most of his dealings had to do with tobacco he owed or was owed in exchange for goods, but the case

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[37] *Archives of Maryland*, 10: 39.

[38] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 270.

[39] Edmund Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Article," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80, no. 3 (July 1972): 365.

[40] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1: 447. The reference to the original Pope patent is in Patent Book 5, no. 42.

of the cow slaughtered during the rebellion dragged on for a few years. Most of the former Marylanders, like Pope, also crossed the river often for commercial and legal activity, making regular appearances in the courts of their former home colony.

Pope's prominence in Maryland affairs followed him to the Virginia side, where he quickly became one of Appamattucks's leading lights and added "Justice of the Peace" and the militia rank of "Colonel" to his name.

County Courts and County Formation

Courts not only certified landownership; they also were vital to keeping the local economy working by settling debts and thus providing a desired and confidence-inspiring measure of stability and predictability.[41] Ideally, the court would meet at a fixed or posted location every month but perhaps would also have a special session if an issue arose. In practice, meetings were often less frequent.[42] At least four justices were required to constitute a quorum at any given court session, but there were clearly times when that was not practical and a single lone justice would sit on the bench. All, though, were locally prominent men appointed to the office and approved by the governor. These justices of the peace were the core of local government and handled all local affairs, from criminal cases to land deals to certifying wills. Family matters such as marriages, births, and deaths were handled by the parish church, even though these concerns sometimes appeared in county court records.[43] The institution of the court was lifted in form from the English shire court model and, as such, was vital to the way English people planned to live in Virginia. For this reason, a planter would be in and out of court all the time, one day appearing as a plaintiff and the next time appearing as a defendant. Far from their courts being a nuisance, 17th-century English people would have seen them as a comforting illustration that English law was in force in this new land, and they turned to them often.[44]

Because courts were so vital, settlers did not want to live too far from them. This was part of the inspiration for the formation of new counties, because as Virginians moved farther and farther from the administrative core of an older-growing county, they found themselves distant from the court, making it hard to get there for their cases. Missed dates were frequently rescheduled, but missing one's court dates too often could have unwanted

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[41] Isabel Ferguson, "County Court in Virginia, 1700–1830," *The North Carolina Historical Review* 8, no. 1 (1931): 14–40.

[42] Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1600–1689* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 69–82; Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 2: 516–17.

[43] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 2: 488.

[44] Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1600–1689* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 39–50.

consequences. One answer was to have a friend act as attorney, but that meant always being at a bit of a disadvantage and reliant on others to make one's case. If enough people were living in the outreaches of a county, it made more sense for them to petition the burgesses and governor to form a new county with a closer court. The Jamestown government was almost always only too happy to oblige because more counties simply meant more Virginia; county expansion effectively outsourced colonial expansion. A new county also meant new office—justice of the peace, county surveyor, bailiff, and sheriff—for its most prominent men. By 1651, there were enough Virginians on the south side of the Northern Neck that they pulled out of Northumberland County to form Lancaster and establish a court of their own closer to home. Two years later, Appamattucks did the same thing and became Westmoreland County. Nathaniel Pope and his sons were immediate beneficiaries of the creation of the county.[45]

The Headright System

The need for labor was an unceasing concern for planters trying to grow and harvest a profitable tobacco crop. Virginia developed a system that at once incentivized planters paying to bring over new laborers from Britain and facilitated the claiming of ever more land for tobacco. The system was a legal structure for the government's distribution of free land to those with some resources, and it was effective and ingenious in its simplicity. In 1618, when the Virginia Company still ran the colony, it established the rule that "whosoever transports himself or any other at his own charge unto Virginia, shall for each person so transported" have awarded "to him and his heirs forever 50 acres of land."[46] During the transition from Virginia Company rule to direct royal control, many planters worried that the change in regime would negate the land claims granted to them by the company. Burgesses agitated for a return to company rule for just that reason. Their worries, though, were assuaged by a declaration from the king stating that his new government would respect existing claims and carry on the practice of awarding free land to freeholders. The law was recast and remained on the books until the eve of the Revolution, even though its actual practice trailed off by the end of the 17th century.[47]

The 50-acre reward came to be called a "headright." In short, this was a scheme for the government to give away free land—one of many such schemes over the course of American history. The only stipulations were the removal of Native inhabitants, showing

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[45] Walter Briscoe Norris Jr., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, 1653–1983* (Montross, VA: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), 20.

[46] Susan Myra Kingsbury, ed., *The Records of the Virginia Company of London Volume I* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1906), 57.

[47] Edmund Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Article," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80, no. 3 (July 1972): 361–71.

no overlapping with other claims, and providing proof of the transportation of the people claimed, although this last requirement was often overlooked. The system was in every way a gift to planters who would have had to transport labor to their Virginia acres regardless of any extra reward; without that labor, there would be no tobacco crop to sell. But the headright system meant that for the cost of transporting someone over the ocean—a small cost for well-off planters—the payee received not just the labor of the transported person but also 50 acres of land. The more land a planter had, the more laborers he could transport and thus the more land he could claim. Headright ensured that those with the most would continue to get more.

Many indentured servant contracts stipulated that the laborer would receive 50 acres on the completion of his service. This promise was a significant incentive for Britons to sign on with Virginia masters. In theory, at least, the headright system secured those acres close to the time of transportation by ensuring that "freedom dues" acres would not have to come out of the master's own acreage.[48] One could expect masters to be less generous and less forthcoming with awards if they came from their own holdings. The headright system negated that problem. In practice, though, many servants did not live long enough to earn the reward of land. The headright grant made the land the private property of the transporting master but not the servant whose travel created the grant. That meant that if a servant died before his term of service was over, as was often the case, the land simply stayed in the ownership of the master who'd paid for the transportation. Each dead servant *did* mean lost labor, but that was more than compensated for by the gift of the 50 acres the dead servant could no longer claim. The headright system was a very good deal for the master class because it created a legal structure that gave them land for virtually free and backed that gift up with the full weight of legal documentation. Many a vast family holding was built on the eagerness of the royal government to hand land out to those who could pay for servants. In that way, the system was instrumental in establishing the wealth of some people at the expense of others.[49]

On top of that, the rule was unambiguous in its application to *any* person transported, which included the planters themselves as well as their wives and children. Some crafty planters even claimed a headright for themselves multiple times, relisting themselves as transported anytime they traveled to England and then later returned to Virginia. Gerrard Fowke, for example, paid the Atlantic passage costs for Thomas Pope (or at least said he did) three times and claimed 150 acres for the effort.[50] For its part, the government

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[48] Edmund Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Article," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80, no. 3 (July 1972): 361–71.

[49] Edmund Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Article," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 80, no. 3 (July 1972): 361–71.

[50] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1: 446. Fowke also claimed 50 acres for transporting Lawrence Washington to Virginia.

had no interest in policing irregularities because the headright system facilitated the expansion of the colony. Headrights also could be collected and saved. There was no need to claim them all at once or at any particular time. They were like money in the bank, and many planters simply amassed them through transportation or gift and then cashed them in when the time was right.

Headright land, of course, had to be land already unclaimed by English landownership systems. With each new person transported to Virginia, the rights to claim land written on paper piled up, and as that happened, the desire to push out and find that new unclaimed land intensified. This is precisely what took place on the Potomac's south shore as Appamattucks filled with land patents and is why the office of county surveyor was so important, since that agent would often do the work of describing distant acres and turning them into valuable property for the holders of headright claims. This, of course, also fueled the conflict with the Algonquians and their eventual removal or containment. Nothing could stand in the way of hundreds of land-crazed planters sending agents outward and westward in search of more land to patent in exchange for having transported their most recent cargoes of servants.[51]

Once the land was patented and transformed into private property, it was a commodity that could be disposed of as a planter wished. Many, of course, awarded their less-desirable holdings as freedom dues to servants now entering the brotherhood of freeholders. Many planters also set up satellite plantations either to run for themselves or as startups for sons who would soon come of age and need a place all their own to get started. Once the sons began to make tobacco profits, they could transport some servants of their own and start the headrights cycle all over. The same was true of new freeholders, who themselves could begin to amass headrights just as soon as their tobacco crop produced enough profit to transport a servant. Sometimes planters sold or traded more distant acres for others closer to their chosen seat or used the earnings from a sale to buy out a neighbor. This was part of how both the Popes and, later, the Washingtons turned a patchwork of small freeholder patents into a large single-family holding. The actual headright itself was even a commodity, with planters using the written promise of 50 acres to settle debts and bets.

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[51] Edmund Morgan, "Headrights and Head Counts: A Review Article," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 80, no. 3 (July 1972): 361–71.

Mattox Neck: The Community between Mattox and Popes Creeks, 1650–1665

The combination of new arrivals, land claims, and Algonquian displacement meant that in the 1650s and 1660s, the neck of land between Popes and Mattox Creeks—Mattox Neck—rapidly filled in with a patchwork of small and medium-sized English freeholds whose owners worked hard to produce a good tobacco crop. The most desirable tracts were those with river frontage since that meant that a planter could load tobacco to ships directly from his own wharf. Interior parcels, though, were still well worth the effort, and most were patented either by new freeholders or by established planters claiming headright land. By the third quarter of the century, Mattox Neck was a crowded place filled with homes, kitchens, dairies, tobacco barns, sheds, corn houses, stables, and all the various buildings needed for British rural life in America. Hercules Bridges—a native of Stratford-upon-Avon who was born there while its most famous son, William Shakespeare, was still alive—even operated a small tavern (and ordinary) somewhere here to capitalize on the needs of new arrivals or the sailors from the tobacco ships riding at anchor at the mouth of Mattox Creek.[52] The fields themselves were becoming the regionally typical patchwork of tobacco fields, cornfields, kitchen gardens, and woodlots. Fields were fenced in most commonly by lines of pales set directly into the ground. These fences were vital because it was the Virginia habit to let livestock roam free, so if a planter didn't want his and his neighbors' pigs rooting up his garden, a good fence was the answer. Given how often planters took each other to court over exactly this issue, one can infer that the fences were not up to the task. This may be part of the reason why the pale fence, so common in the 17th century, fell out of favor by the 18th and was replaced by the more effective split rail fence.[53]

Mattox Neck's riverfront, like the rest of the south shore, was dotted with wharves, and small and large vessels at anchor or moving up and down the Potomac would be regular sights. The smaller vessels hove back and forth across the river and up and between its creeks to carry everything from tobacco or fish to planters heading to court in the other colony. The river here, and some of the creeks as well, were deep enough to allow oceangoing vessels to dock right at a lucky plantation. These either brought goods and headright-granting servants almost literally to a planter's door or floated off to Britain once fully laden with sealed casks of dried tobacco leaf. Meanwhile, a growing network of roads granted interior planters access to either public wharves or those of other planters.

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[52] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia County Records: Order Book Abstracts of Northumberland County, Virginia, 1652–1657* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 7.

[53] Danny Brad Hatch's work on this community is invaluable. "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville TN, 2015; Danny Brad Hatch, "Colonial Virginian Communities and Atlantic Migration Patterns, 1634–1652," unpublished paper, University of Tennessee, 8.

Appamattucks Parish Church

There were enough Church of England Protestants living on Mattox Neck that it quickly had its own small parish church named for the Appomattox region. The church sat on a part of Thomas Baldridge's 1651 patented land near the mouth of Mattox Creek, in an area still called Church Point. Its first iteration was probably something that Baldridge had built for himself, his family, and his neighbors.

Appamattucks Parish Church was established at an odd time. From the end of the English Civil War until 1660—the Interregnum—the nation and its colonies had been ruled by Parliament and the Puritan lord protector Oliver Cromwell in varying combinations. For the most part, Puritan parliamentary rulers took little interest in Virginia apart from ensuring as much loyalty as they could. The colony did not devolve into out-and-out civil war, as Maryland did, but Virginia was far from immune to chaotic British politics. Its royalist governor, Sir William Berkeley, was pushed from office, and a string of short-term appointees ineffectually held office after that.[54] This created a host of instabilities and uncertainties that reached into most aspects of life. During the Interregnum, the assembly delegated control of Virginia's local churches to local parishes with very little oversight, local church autonomy being a plank of Puritan rule.[55] The question of who controlled Virginia's churches was a sore point throughout the colonial era, but during the 1650s, the whole matter was largely dropped. That made it a simple matter for Baldridge and his neighbors to set up their own church.

The Anglican Vestry

The vestry was the governing body within an Anglican parish and consisted of a group of respected parishioners elected by those members of the parish eligible to vote for their burgess. A position on the vestry was an office of considerable local power and prestige; every ambitious planter would covet such an honor. At first, there was no limit on the number of vestrymen (for they were always men), but in 1661, the assembly set a limit of 12 and then required only 12. The vestry ran a sort of parallel government to the one centered in Jamestown. England was (and remains) a theocracy: a state in which the head of church and head of state are merged in the same person or body. Therefore, there was no meaningful conflict between a church hierarchy and a secular one; in the end, both stemmed from, and were answerable to, the authority of the crown. Protestant English custom had taught

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[54] Warren M. Billings, "Sir William Berkeley and the Diversification of the Virginia Economy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 104, no. 4 (1996): 444; Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), 68.

[55] William H. Sellier, "The Anglican Parish Vestry in Colonial Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 22, no. 3 (1956): 313.

secular and church authorities to work together and complement one another. In Virginia, that was helped by frequently having the same people serve in multiple roles. Members of the vestry were likely to be justices of the peace (therefore sitting on the county court) and hold every other county office as well.[56]

But the vestry was an immediate and meaningful authority for Virginians. It ran its own court for moral offenses and had the power to arrest people as needed. At times, the vestry appointed every sort of local office, from tobacco inspector to ferry operator. Perhaps most significantly, the vestry leveled the largest tax burden most Virginians bore: an annual levy used to cover everything from the upkeep of the church and grounds to the funding of aid to the poor. Each male parishioner (regardless of his own church affiliation) was required by law to pay this tax, and the financial burden the Anglican Church put on members of other dissenter churches was an irritation that flowed into the American Revolution and informed the establishment clause of the United States Constitution.[57]

A vestry also served as the employer of a minister if one was available. This entailed handling both the terms of employment and the management of the "glebe" lands, which were acres owned by the parish and let to its minister during his tenure.[58] Ministers, though, were few and far between in Virginia's parishes, and it would be some time before a fully ordained Anglican priest was reading sermons at the little church at Church Point.

The restoration of the monarchy and the return of Governor Berkeley to office led to a reassertion of royal control over parish churches and the tightening up of previously slack oversight. On July 3, 1661, the 12 men, including Henry Brookes, Andrew Monroe, Daniel Lisson, and new Appamattucks resident John Washington, took the "oath of allegiance and supremacie" required to hold office or serve the church.[59]

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[56] William H. Sellier, "The Anglican Parish Vestry in Colonial Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 22, no. 3 (1956): 313; Arthur Pierce Middleton, "The Colonial Virginia Parish," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 40, no. 4 (1971): 431–46; Anglican vestries in Maryland were quite similar, and their example is illustrative. Gerald E. Hartdagen, "Vestry and Clergy in the Anglican Church of Colonial Maryland," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 37, no. 4 (1968): 371–96. See also Borden W. Painter, "The Vestry in the Middle Colonies," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 47, no. 1 (1978): 5–36.

[57] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 1: 123. Joan Rezner Gundersen argued that while 17th-century vestries might have had autonomy, they became ever more in conflict with the clergy in the 18th century. "The Myth of the Independent Virginia Vestry," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 44, no. 2 (1975): 132–41.

[58] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 1: 123.

[59] GEWA Records Book, Part 2: 10; William H. Sellier, "The Church of England as the Established Church in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 15, no. 4 (1949): 478–508; Markus Dirk Dubber, "The Historical Analysis of Criminal Codes," *Law and History Review* 18, no. 2 (2000): 433–40.

In March 1661, a restored Governor Berkeley convened Virginia's General Assembly, and together they formalized the return of royal governance in Virginia.[60] Part of that included reestablishing the supremacy of the Anglican Church. New laws called for educated ministers for each parish (something that was not possible); heavy fines for Quakers, Baptists, Presbyterians, or members of any other sect who "out of nonconformitie to the church totally absent themselves" from regular Anglican worship; and the establishment of the Book of Common Prayer as the only acceptable liturgy.[61] Restoration Virginia would be an Anglican colony, and law would enforce that.

Four months after the passage of these laws, the Appamattucks church vestry members gathered to swear fealty to the restored king and his church. In this way, they were participating in one small act symbolizing the end of the tumult that had disrupted the kingdom and colony and had fueled the Maryland conflict that had driven vestry members like Henry Brookes, William Freake, Andrew Monroe, and Thomas Baldridge to the Potomac's south shore in the first place. Establishing the vestry was more than formalizing Baldridge's church; it was a powerful and unmistakable statement that some version of normality had been restored. The significance of their words would not have been lost on anyone in the colony, and the swearing of fealty was of moment enough to be recorded in the county records: "I doe Acknowledge myself a true sonn of ye Church of England soe I doe beleeve ye Articles of ye faith there professed and oblige myself to bee Comfortable to ye Doctrine and dissepline there taught and established."[62]

Two years after the vestry took its vow, congregants could take communion from a silver "bowle and challace" engraved with the name of Dorothy Baldridge, who had asked that they be given to the church after her death.[63] It was in planters' interests to be there to see the new silver.

During the Appamattucks Parish's early years, the church had no formal minister, a very common occurrence across Virginia, where churches commonly outnumbered clergymen. Instead, the basic functions of Anglican Church life and recordkeeping were carried out by Thomas Wilsford, the occasional Westmoreland County Court clerk (a job often taken by someone with good handwriting) and local man of standing living on the west bank of Mattox Creek. He had enough wealth and land to be counted as a "gentleman" and also added the quasi-official title of "reader to the parish" to his portfolio.

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[60] Warren M. Billings, "Sir William Berkeley and the Diversification of the Virginia Economy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 104, no. 4 (1996): 446; Warren M. Billings, *Sir William Berkeley and the Founding of Colonial Virginia* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 2004), 123–35.

[61] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 47–48.

[62] GEWA Transcribed Records, 2: 10.

[63] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 159.

Wilsford was able to employ his literacy for the good of his neighbors, for whom reading and writing were still not a given. Prominent as he was, Nathaniel Pope, for example, could not sign his own name.[64]

The first Appamattucks church sat either on a sandy island just offshore or a bit too close to the often quite rough tides of the river. Sandy bars like Church Point change their shape and size frequently. Today's version of the point is encased in heavy stone riprap in an ongoing battle to stop the riverfront from changing as it has done from time immemorial. Fighting the river was a losing prospect, and after two decades or so of service, the vestry had Dorothy Baldridge's gift and the parish records eventually packed up and moved up Mattox Creek to a second, less threatened location. Before that would happen, though, in 1664, the county court reorganized the parishes, and Appamattucks became Washington Parish in honor of one its most prominent local congregants and vestry members, John Washington.[65]

GEWA Park Area circa 1660

The GEWA park area and its immediate environs were in the hands of a few planters. Hercules Bridges owned most of the land on the west side of the creek that still bears his name, and Thomas Baldridge held a part of the creek's bank thanks to his 1651 patent, an area that stretched from Church Point at the top to Bridge's Creek at its bottom. Henry Brookes held the land where the Washington birth home would eventually stand but had added considerably more local acreage to his initial 658-acre holding dating to 1650. These three men—Baldridge, Bridges, and Brookes—had legal titles to virtually the whole Potomac waterfront between Mattox and Popes Creek. This was the same riverfront that generations of Algonquians had farmed, fished, and harvested, and was now cut and bounded and put into tobacco planting in order to make some Europeans feel a bit light-headed by smoking Virginia-grown leaves. What had been integrated into the Algonquian way of life was now documented, enclosed private property in the English style.

In 1659, Richard Hill (himself possibly a former Marylander) patented 500 acres in two equal parcels just south of Brookes's land along the west bank of what was then still called Fishing Creek, now Popes Creek.[66] It was part of the area that had been called "the

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[64] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry and Records of the McClain, Johnson and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenfield, OH: Privately printed, 1932), 1: 167.

[65] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 154–56.

[66] *Archives of Maryland*, 4: 180.

mayne woodes."[67] Hill soon added to that holding another 63 acres just north of his original 500. The current location of the commemorative obelisk and traffic circle sits roughly where that 63-acre parcel began.

There were so many ways a planter might get some new nearby land. Once land was patented, it was property to be disposed of how and when an owner chose. Parcels could be cut up and sections sold off or used to pay debts. Planters might trade a distant parcel for one closer or even adjacent. Likewise, a planter might offer a larger faraway parcel for a more desirable, far smaller one as part of assembling lots of parcels, like dominos on a table, into one larger one. Freeholders were forever playing at these kinds of trades, and the records of this century's long swap meet can be quite dizzying. Take, for example, the fate of the Westmoreland County acres (not within the park) patented by William Loudon sometime in the early 1650s. On Loudon's death, his executor, Gervase Day, "assigned over" the parcel to Thomas Youlle, perhaps to settle a debt or maybe as a bequest in Loudon's will. Youlle assigned the land to John Redman, who then assigned it to John Mousfield, who then assigned it to Richard Searle, who assigned it to Ralph Elston. The whole genealogy of ownership made it into the October 1659 county court records because Elston showed up to assign the property to Henry Vincent.[68] This parcel had not been in English hands for more than a decade, yet English hands had passed it along six times—and countless acres changed owners just as often. It was how things were done. The reasons for these transfers and thousands like them could be as varied as the people doing the assigning. But these records reveal the human social networks through which the right to own land moved—who knew whom and who had family or business connections to whom.

We can assume that Richard Hill came to own his new additional 63 acres through the same sort of land trading that took the Loudon patent all the way to Henry Vincent. In 1661, though, Hill added another hundred acres to his Popes Creek land. These new acres were land the government gave him for transporting himself and Thomas Hill (possibly a son or brother) to the colony. The best guess is that these acres were his gift for making the return trip from a visit to England. Hill now had four separately acquired contiguous parcels, so he did what many in this situation did: he set about repatenting the whole thing as one single parcel of land, a sure sign that Hill was not thinking about selling off any part of his holdings. A single patent was easier in law and made for less paperwork, and Virginians also liked to see large numbers on their land deeds.

So it was that the surveyor set off to count up and record the distances between selected landmarks on Hill's 663-acre property. He began at a "marked oak standing on Fishing Creek" and moved along to a "marked dogwood" and eventually on to a "marked hickory," two different marked white oaks, and a "black oak" as well before completing the

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[67] Henry Brookes Patent, 1650, Patent Book 1: 225.

[68] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Private printing, 1970), 46.

encompassing circuit back where he'd begun.[69] The marked trees would have had distinguishing cuts made in their bark so that all could know they were property-marking trees. Markers like this became important parts of the landscape since their simple universal recognizability helped prevent any possible conflicts between landowners over their boundaries. As these markers died, new ones would take their place, along with an increasing number of fences, public roads, and farm lanes, all of which would become staples in the vocabulary of local surveys. In 1661, English habitation on Mattox Neck was just a decade old, and yet settlers had already remade the land to suit their way of living in the world.

The Brookes Family

The bulk of the current park grounds, and the area that less than a century later would be a Washington family seat, was on the land claimed by former Marylander Henry Brookes (sometimes spelled Brooke or Brooks). Around 1642, in Maryland, he married Jane, the widow of David Wickliffe, and became stepfather to her three children, David Jr., Robert, and Alice.[70] A century later, a claim emerged that the younger David was the first Protestant child born in Maryland.[71] Together, the couple would parent three additional daughters—Lydia, Jane, and Dorothy—either in Maryland or in Virginia. Jane and Dorothy in particular would have a long association with Mattox Neck. The Brookes family had been living on their 1,020-acre parcel of Mattox Neck land as early as 1651. The original patent is lost, but many later ones refer to it and the fact of the Brookes family's early residence.[72] Brookes's life in Virginia looked much like that of his neighbors: growing and shipping tobacco, sitting on the church vestry, and acquiring, swapping, and going to court over parcels of land. But it is through Henry and Jane Brookes and their daughters that we get our first material look at English life in Mattox Neck, thanks to excavations at his homesite in the 1930s and again, in far more detail, in 1977.

The Brookes Site and Post-in-Ground Homes

The Brookes family home sat a few dozen yards back from the cliffs of the Potomac, not too far east of where Bridge's Creek meets the river. Excavations never fully defined the complete outline of the home, but they did reveal that the home contained a brick-lined cellar

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[69] Richard Hill Patent, 1661.

[70] https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Brooke-2047.

[71] "David Wickliffe," *William and Mary Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1902): 175–77; Hatch, "Colonial Virginian Communities and Atlantic Migration Patterns, 1634–1652," unpublished paper, University of Tennessee, 18.

[72] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979).

and a chimney. Estimates from the 1977 dig put the home at 20 feet by 19.5 feet. That square shape and size would be unusual; rectangles of 20 by 30 or 20 by 40 feet have proven to be far more common as the number of excavated structures has increased since the 1970s. It is likely that the rest of the home's footprint sat outside the excavation area and remains there, intact and untouched.[73]

The home itself was built of wood resting on posts set in the ground. This house-building style—sometimes called post-in-ground, earthfast, or impermanent architecture—was a commonplace in tidewater Virginia, where wood was plentiful but stone was nowhere to be found.[74] Bricks were a viable option, but these had to be fired on-site and made from clay first located and then processed not too far from the building site. Brick took more effort and skill to make and build with than wood, and finding the right sort of clay was a matter of luck. Bricks could be imported or purchased, but that required something expendable to trade, and not everyone could manage that. Thus, in all cases, building in brick was easier when one lived closer to the required resources and infrastructure to support a somewhat specialized building activity. In 1650s Westmoreland County, it was far easier to build in wood on ground-set posts and sills, and fire up or buy just enough bricks to line a cellar or make a chimney firebox.[75]

Earthfast homes became so much a part of life in low-country Virginia and Maryland as well that promotional writing about the two colonies outlined what went into building them.[76] Their advantages were that they were fairly quick and easy to build and relied on readily available materials that most Englishmen—those from the countryside, at least—would already know how to handle. All a builder needed was a felling axe, an adze, some nails, and a nearby stand of trees, and he would be off and running. With more skill, time, and resources for materials, a post-in-ground home could be adorned with all the comforts of 17th-century life. The best homes had thick wooden floors (the poorer sort settled for tamped earth), wind-blocking plastered walls, and fine blue and white imported tiles around a fireplace. These earthfast homes could even have windows,

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[73] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979).

[74] Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (1981): 156.

[75] For more on bricks and 17th-century Virginia architecture, see David Brown, "Domestic Masonry Architecture in 17th-Century Virginia," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 27: 85–120; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 475–84.

[76] Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (1981): 135–96; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 493–521.

in that time typically made of small diamond-shaped panes of thick opaque green glass held in a metal frame by lead cames—rather like a church's stained-glass window but not as beautiful or spiritually uplifting.

These homes rarely had clay tile roofs since their framing could not support the weight. Tarred planks, pitched at a very steep angle to shed water quickly, kept the house dry instead. Second stories were also not possible for the same reasons of load. Almost all, though, had a loft space, and some had gables built into the roof to let in light. The inability to build upward left building outward the only viable option. As a result, many post-in-ground homes had extensive additions, transforming what began as a rectangle—typically 20 feet by 40 feet—into an L-shaped footprint or even doubling the size altogether.

The downside to earthfast building was that the supporting parts of the home sat in direct contact with the moist, bug-filled ground. That meant that they began rotting the moment they were set. Earthfast architecture required maintenance, but through regular replacement of the ground-set posts, many homes remained livable, even comfortable, for decades.

Excavations at the Brookes site also located a small square outbuilding of 12.9 feet by 13.7 feet northwest of the home. The purpose of this structure remains unclear, but it would have been one of many such buildings serving every purpose, from cooking or storing food to processing and warehousing tobacco.[77] Artifacts from the site came mostly from the dwelling's cellar, a few trash pits, and a drainage ditch. These bits and fragments reflected the possessions of a comfortable Virginia family of the time. Most of the datable artifacts were from later than the time that Henry Brookes would have lived there. They show people living on the site until about 1700. Assuming that the original Brookes home survived that whole time, that would be a good long life for a post-in-ground building.[78]

The Brookeses ate from imported tin enameled plates and drank from British-made cups adorned with yellow and brown slip designs. The excavations found a brass spigot of the kind used to tap a barrel of wine or beer, a pewter spoon, a two-pronged iron fork, numerous tobacco pipe stems and bowls, and many nails left over from when the old home was taken down around the end of the century. The family possessions were neither ostentatious nor rustic; they were, however, exactly the run of imported goods Virginians acquired in exchange for their tobacco. Unlike Nomini Bay resident and fellow former Marylander John Hallowes, Brookes never felt afraid enough of either Englishmen or

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[77] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 38.

[78] Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 237–41.

Algonquians to put up earthwork defenses around *his* home.[79] Instead, his wooden estate stood out for all to see on the edge of the river that linked him to the larger world of neighbors and markets. Between the tobacco fields and woodlots, similar homes and clusters of outbuildings dotted the shore, each with its own water-lapped wharf where the ships loaded and unloaded.

The seasons, the routines of farm and building maintenance, and the cycle of seeding, growing, harvesting, drying, packing, and shipping tobacco were punctuated only by obligations to the community and to the church-governed life at the Brookes home as it governed life all along the river.

[79] D. Brad Hatch, Barbara J. Heath, and Lauren K. McMillan, "Reassessing the Hallowes Site: Conflict and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Potomac Valley," *Historical Archaeology* 48, no. 4 (2014): 46–75; D. Brad Hatch, "Colonial Virginian Communities and Atlantic Migration Patterns, 1634–1652," unpublished paper, University of Tennessee, 94. See also William T. Buchanan and Edward F. Heite, "The Hallowes Site: A Seventeenth-Century Yeoman's Cottage in Virginia," *Historical Archaeology* 5 (1971): 38–48.

CHAPTER FIVE

John Washington Comes to America, 1650–1660

The Merchants' World of Edward Prescott

Edward Prescott was an English merchant with Northern European connections who worked the trade between Virginia, Barbados, and English and European ports.[1] He also participated in the large tobacco re-export market, shipping American tobacco to London and then selling it on to European ports.[2] During the 1650s, Britain imported somewhere near two million pounds of colony-grown tobacco, and by the end of the decade, that number would rise to close to seven million pounds. During this remarkable increase in volume, about a third of this imported tobacco would be sold on to Europe.[3] This was the arena in which Prescott operated.

In 1654, Prescott was in Virginia, sending instructions for his two-masted ship *Sarah* as it prepared for a trip between Barbados and the mainland.[4] Roughly a year later, Prescott was in the Danish Baltic port of Copenhagen with another ship, the *Sea Horse.* This voyage was a re-export trip, selling tobacco to the cities of the old Hanseatic League, a medieval network of traders and ports that was losing its grip on trade thanks to the growth of the Atlantic trade and the increasing presence of well-financed Dutch and English interlopers like Prescott. The next leg of the voyage was to Danzig, Poland's premier port on the Baltic Sea.[5]

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[1] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 145.

[2] Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higginbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 24.

[3] Jacob M. Price, "The Tobacco Adventure to Russia: Enterprise, Politics, and Diplomacy in the Quest for a Northern Market for English Colonial Tobacco, 1676–1722," *Transactions of the American Philosophical Society* 51, no. 1 (1961): 5; April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 39–59.

[4] Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry*, 1, no. 145.

[5] Erik Lindberg, "Club Goods and Inefficient Institutions: Why Danzig and Lübeck Failed in the Early Modern Period," *The Economic History Review*, new series, 62, no. 3 (2009): 610–11. See also John R. Pagan, "Dutch Maritime and Commercial Activity in Mid-Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 90, no. 4 (1982): 485–501.

During the 16th century, English trade looked much like what the Hanseatic League once had. It was in the hands of organized and influential merchant guilds and joint stock companies, who maintained control thanks to capital, well-connected company members, and access to royal charters. There were many companies, often with overlapping membership.[6] The Muscovy Company, for example, brought cloth to Russian ports in exchange for spices and other eastern goods, while the Turkey Company had the same mission in southern ports. The London-based Company of Merchant Adventurers had a tight grip on Britain's cloth trade to Baltic ports. The advent of American colonization, though, created new trade opportunities and produced new streams of investment capital, which disrupted the comfortable arrangements of long-standing companies.[7] As the fate of the Virginia Company showed, the entire model of commerce was shifting, and the older business models were having a hard time keeping up. The English Civil War and the fall of King Charles I only further fractured the established trading order and broke up the older system of requiring royal charters for trade. By the middle of the 1650s, a new class of small-scale independent merchants and small semiformal merchant partnerships had proliferated thanks to their flexibility and spontaneity and the removal of legal barriers to their participation.[8] This growing and influential constituency was also a singularly worldly group of people with connections all over the Baltic, Mediterranean, and Atlantic coasts.

Prescott was one of these new merchants and was a small player in a vast oceanic trade network that moved Polish grain to English markets in exchange for woolens and manufactured goods such as ceramic plates, while furs trapped and treated by Native Americans went to North European ports. The same ports brought in tobacco grown in Virginia and Maryland and West Indian sugar grown and refined by enslaved Africans, who were themselves shipped to American islands and coasts from their continental homes. Much of this trading relied on silver mined in Latin America by enslaved Native Americans and Africans and traded to Chinese merchants in exchange for silks and fine porcelain. The oceans and the navigable rivers, like the Potomac, that reached inland from them were the highways of commerce linking even the humblest post-in-ground homestead to the larger

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[6] Jacob M. Price and Paul G. E. Clemens, "A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675–1775," *Journal of Economic History* 47, no. 1 (1987): 3.

[7] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 81–115; Robert Brenner, "The Civil War Politics of London's Merchant Community," *Past & Present*, 58 (1973): 53–107.

[8] Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (New York: Verso, 2003), 577–633.

world. Henry Brookes's family sipped their soup from a Portuguese-made bowl, kept their wine or oil in an Italian-made flask, and drank from German-made cups.[9] This cosmopolitan domestic kit was a result of men like Prescott, their ships, and their business connections.

Prescott Hires John Washington

While he was in Denmark, Prescott wrote to a young aspiring merchant named John Washington, then living in London, to see if the latter wished to join a "co-partnership" with himself and his brother-in-law William Meares. Washington would serve in the role of "super-cargo" (superintendent of cargo) on the voyage, a job whose responsibilities entailed being the principal merchant's eyes and ears when called upon to do so.[10]

The merchants—the main backers of a commercial voyage to and from Virginia—would make their money from trading a hull full of imported goods in exchange for tobacco and then selling that in British or European markets for more money than they paid for the initial cargo and the shipping costs. A barrel of tobacco was worth a lot more than the same-sized barrel filled with dinner plates, nails, cloth, or any of the many things Virginians needed. Making a profit was almost a sure thing—if everything went well, that is.

Profiting from a voyage depended on the role one played in its funding, planning, and execution. The ship's master, the experienced mariner in charge of sailing the ship, generally received a set wage but was also allowed to carry some tobacco back to England at no cargo charge and could sell it at a profit there. The sailors received slightly higher-than-average mariner's wages due to the dangers of entering international waters, with the risk of being attacked by a foreign ship. Sailors were often also allowed a portion of the tobacco in the hold, which was theirs to sell back in England.[11] Often a single barrel was designated for the sailors, and they were allowed to share its value once it was sold. Supercargoes, though, were neither merchants nor seamen. Most were men just like Washington: young apprentices in the merchant trade who could represent their employers on a voyage. When a merchant did not want to personally make the Atlantic crossing, sending a supercargo along with the ship ensured there would be one man on board whose sole mission was to monitor the cargo and ensure its successful sale, the packing of the

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[9] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 38, 48–49.

[10] Jacob M. Price and Paul G. E. Clemens, "A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675–1775," *Journal of Economic History* 47, no. 1 (1987): 5. The source of information for these arrangements comes from the resulting lawsuit in Westmoreland County Court, in *Deeds, Wills, Patents, 1653–1659*. There is an accurate transcription in GEWA Westmoreland Court Records, 1, no. 7–10. See also Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 24.

[11] Susan Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606–1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 7.

tobacco, and its transportation back to England. Prescott was both the merchant and the shipowner for his planned Virginia voyage, not an uncommon occurrence. That meant that in this case, Washington's job would be to keep an eye on everything while Prescott was on land or otherwise engaged. As an apprentice, Washington would have a set pay agreement and perhaps might be able to claim some space in the hold for his own small bit of market-ready tobacco.

How Prescott came to know Washington is unclear, but the most reasonable explanation is that they had mutual friends or associates in the import-export trade, one of whom recommended Washington to Prescott as a reliable sort.[12]

John Washington's Path to London

How Washington came to be in London was very much a story of its time. His father was what the English called a "second son" (although technically Lawrence was a fifth son) of a well-off landholding family. English law and custom favored the firstborn son, who would stand to inherit the land and titles of a well-to-do father. Subsequent sons—though still graced with a good name, connections, and a stipend from the family coffers—were usually left with the promise of a far smaller inheritance and regular income than the eldest brother. As a result, the army, the clergy, and the universities were filled with these "second sons," whose comparatively privileged birth afforded them education, some financial stability, and good social graces, but whose low position on the sibling ladder forced them to find their own ways in the world. This system worked because it served as a constant feeder of well-born or aristocratic young men into the various institutions that held Britain's hierarchical society together.

Lawrence's path in life led him to Oxford, one of Britain's two college-filled cities. Starting around 1619 (that fated year once again), he was educated there at Brasenose College and then signed on to teach. Somewhere along the line, he also took the orders of the Anglican priesthood. He came of age amid the tug-of-war between Anglican conservatives on one side—with their love of their hierarchical church full of ceremonial pomp and gilded finery—and Puritan reformers on the other, who wanted something far more austere and personalized and freed from the control of prelates, primates, and priests. His choices and institutional association show which side of the conflict he landed on. He was assigned to the post of proctor, with the specific task of maintaining King Charles I's

[12] Over the centuries, biographers have offered creative speculation including that the two met in Barbados (they did not) or that Washington had already visited Virginia (he had not). Matters have been confused by there having been *another* John Washington who was a cousin and also was involved in the Atlantic trade during the same time period. This second John did in fact travel to Barbados and even lived in Virginia, although there is no evidence that the two cousins had anything to do with each other in the colony. Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 144–37.

preferred Anglican orthodoxy in Oxford's many colleges and silencing any Puritan rumblings among the students and staff. He did his job well enough that in 1632, he was rewarded with the comparatively cushy post of rector of prosperous and quiet Purleigh in Essex. There he married Amphillis Twigden, and together they would parent six children, with John being the first, born sometime around 1632. Neither the exact year nor the place of his birth is entirely clear; no record survived. Later in life, in 1674, Washington testified in court that he was then 45 years old. But that would have him born in 1629, an impossibility as this was years before Lawrence had met Amphillis and while he was still at Oxford, living under rules that prohibited matrimony for serving clerics.[13]

But the same conflict that advanced Lawrence's career and drove Richard Ingle to sack Maryland would radically change the lives of the Washington family of Essex. When the Civil War divided the kingdom, ascendant Puritans had not forgotten the role that Lawrence had played in maintaining Anglican High Church control in Oxford. With the king out of power and the church's hierarchy in disarray, it was a small matter to dream up some fake charges (the same fate faced by hundreds of Anglican priests) and drive Lawrence from his comfortable parish to the backwater of Little Braxted, a posting so impoverished that Amphillis and the children did not even accompany him there, instead staying frequently with her family. The Washingtons' change in fortunes seems to have deprived John of the kind of education that so benefited his father (a compelling echo of his great-grandson George's story). Instead, John probably learned the basics of reading, writing, and mathematics at a local grammar school.[14]

A Merchant's Trade

Seventeenth-century England did not have much in the way of formal education. Sons of elite families had access to an array of academies, schools, tutors, and universities. But there was little in the way of formal or universal education for the masses. Children learned to read or write within their families, for religious reasons or as required for a specific trade. Many of the skills that are now part of a regular American public school curriculum were rather specialized in John Washington's day. Writing, mathematics, and some practical law were essential skills for an apprentice merchant to master and constituted the bulk of the training. Writing was more than learning to draw the letters of the alphabet in a clear and legible hand; it was something vital for success in business. It also entailed mastering the various forms of letter writing, from the formal to the more commanding. The written word was the

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[13] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 142; Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 18, 20.

[14] Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 20.

life's blood of commerce, so addressing others in an appropriately polite and forthright style was essential to success in the marketplace. A good apprentice merchant needed to have a reasonably grammatical written voice and be able to navigate the rigid social hierarchies that structured English society: an impolite merchant was a poor merchant.[15]

Mathematics was also essential. Basic sums were central, but a far more complicated skill was mastering the arts of double-entry bookkeeping. This 16th-century financial innovation revolutionized European finance because it allowed a merchant to quickly see their relative credits and debts within each account. Listing money—or value of goods—coming into the firm on one side of a ledger and the same going out on the other made for a previously unavailable level of precision. True, a careful merchant might know the ins and outs of his own finances down to the penny at any given moment and all off the top of his head. But double-entry bookkeeping systematized accounts, making them easily comparable between merchants (vital for settling debts fairly and peacefully) and making it possible for employees to see the workings as well. Double-entry bookkeeping was already entrenched in English practice by the time Washington apprenticed as a merchant, and there were a few different textbooks explaining the skill. Precision in bookkeeping made for reliable and sharable accounts, which made business manageable and appealing. True, the system itself was a specialized skill, but it was one people could learn and drew ambitious young men to the trade while creating the predictability that investors then, as now, most cherished. All of this was part of the business boom that benefited from and fueled colonization. Although not as dramatic as firearms or as romantic as sailing ships, new and sophisticated accounting techniques were essential tools in the English colonial arsenal and were ones wielded by merchants.[16]

An apprentice merchant also would have to learn the rudiments of English property and contract law. Drafting contracts and dealing with bills of sale, and even deeds and wills, were regular parts of commerce, and it was up to the merchant and his apprentices to make sure documents were accurate and usable. There also were simple issues of character. A merchant's visible honesty and trustworthiness were vital to success. Business in this period relied heavily on handing over sums of money or goods to people who, should they be so inclined, might very easily run off with the loot, never to be seen again. Trusting the

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[15] Alison Games, *The Web of Empire: English Cosmopolitans in an Age of Expansion, 1560–1660* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2008), 87–88; Edmond Smith, *Merchants: The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire, 1550–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 16–20.

[16] Edmond Smith, *Merchants: The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire, 1550–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 16–20. Although focused later, Peter Coclanis's essay is still helpful. "Bookkeeping in the Eighteenth-Century South: Evidence from Newspaper Advertisements," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 91, no. 1 (1990): 28. For understanding how early account books worked, see Christopher Densmore, "Understanding and Using Early Nineteenth-Century Account Books," *The Midwest Archivist* 5, no. 1 (1980): 5–19.

people with whom one did business was essential, and that in part was why merchants in both England and Virginia were so quick to take matters to court. No one could risk a reputation as a cheat.[17]

Geography was part of the training as well, particularly for overseas traders. Because the tobacco trade was about moving crops from Virginia to British and European markets, some rudimentary mastery of the arts of navigation would also be of great use. Knowing the basic workings of a ship would have been helpful too, although becoming a skilled sailor was out of the question as the complex and physically demanding training for that was its own way of life, one precluded by the amount of time it took a young man to master bookkeeping in a London trading house. But having an armchair sailor's understanding of tides, navigation routes, and times between ports was part of running a profitable venture.

All told, this meant that an apprentice merchant learned a wide set of valuable and transportable skills and bodies of knowledge while developing the habits of a person who would at least aspire to being upright and honest. These values—those of the countinghouse and merchant firm—and the sense of self they engendered in that small but influential subset of people would centuries later be called "middle class" and would come to dominate Western societies that were increasingly devoted to the workings of the marketplace. In Washington's day, though, merchants and their apprentices were a loose confederation of friendly rivals that served as a vital sinew in England's empire of commerce.[18]

So instead of following his father's path of divine letters, by the middle of 1650s, Washington was in London with both of his parents now passed away, Lawrence in 1653 and Amphillis two years later.[19] Washington's London was the center of the British Atlantic tobacco trade, with well over 90 percent of all the merchants involved in the trade operating out of the capital city.[20] The city was also filled with young men from the hinterlands apprenticing themselves to every imaginable vocation now that the chaotic Civil War years were over and a new Cromwellian order was settling in. It is possible that Washington might have had the help of the Sandys family, a clan with long-standing connections to the world of London merchants and to Virginia specifically. There is no record revealing to whom Washington might have apprenticed himself, but his youngest brother, William, joined the Drapers Company of London, so there is good reason to think that John might have taken a similar path to the tobacco trade, which eventually saw him move from

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[17] Nuala Zahedieh, "Making Mercantilism Work: London Merchants and Atlantic Trade in the Seventeenth Century," *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society* 9 (1999): 143–58.

[18] Robert Brenner, *Merchants and Revolution: Commercial Change, Political Conflict, and London's Overseas Traders, 1550–1653* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1993).

[19] Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 22.

[20] Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 24–28.

importer in England to exporter in Virginia.[21] Washington was not unique in following this path. Many successful 17th-century English immigrants to Virginia also passed through merchant houses before shifting from the buying and selling side of the tobacco trade to the growing and selling side.[22]

This was more or less the situation in which Washington found himself when he received Prescott's offer to meet him in Danzig and from there sail to Virginia on a tobacco voyage.

The Merchant Fleet of 1655

Paying his own way, Washington set off to meet his new employer in Danzig and then from there set off for Virginia in Prescott's *Sea Horse*. Records usually list it as being "of London" so as to distinguish it from other vessels bearing the same name, a common practice for ships with popular names. The name of the vessel's stern, though, simply would have been *Sea Horse*. Prescott's *Sea Horse* was a *ketch* and, as such, was on the smaller size of oceangoing vessels.

Merchant vessels were categorized by the intersection of three different attributes. The first was size, measured by the amount of cargo a hold could carry. There was no precise way to measure hold capacity, but shipmasters knew how much cargo their hold could carry, and ships were often built to similar sizes. No one worried, though, if two vessels differed in capacity by a ton or two. The size of the hold obviously corresponded with the overall size of the vessel by the simplest mathematics, with larger holds meaning longer, wider, and deeper hulls. The *Susan Constant*, which was one of three ships bringing the Jamestown settlers to Virginia, was rated at 120 tons and was just over 100 feet in total length. By contrast, the *Godspeed*, which was part of the same flotilla, rated 40 tons and was just over 60 feet in total length. Likewise, the *Dove*, which helped settle Maryland, was of a similar size.[23] Modern people are understandably a bit shocked at how small and cramped these vessels were for the five-week-or-longer ocean crossing, but ships of this size made up a considerable proportion of the vessels in the Atlantic trade.[24]

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[21] Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higginbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 2.

[22] Martin H. Quitt, "Immigrant Origins of the Virginia Gentry: A Study of Cultural Transmission and Innovation," *William and Mary Quarterly* 45, no. 4 (1988): 630–55; Emory G. Evans, *A Topping People: The Rise and Decline of Virginia's Old Political Elite, 1680–1790* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2009), 6.

[23] "Maryland Dove," https://www.marylanddove.org.

[24] Roger Morris, *Atlantic Seafaring: Ten Centuries of Exploration and Trade in the North Atlantic* (Auckland: International Marine, 1992), 89–159.

During the first decades of the tobacco trade, the average merchant vessel tonnage was about 104 tons, but by midcentury, vessels in the trade had more than twice the carrying capacity, averaging at about a 250-ton burden.[25] Some vessels were even larger. The *Mayflower*, which made several Virginia trips, carried 400 tons, for example. Another vessel, the *Alexander*, also carried 400 tons and was large enough to require a crew of 25.[26]

The second descriptive attribute was the rigging—a word that referred to both how the ship's sails were arrayed and the arrangement of the miles and miles of ropes that worked them and held them in place. For centuries, Europeans only knew of a square sail that would run across a ship's hull. Such sails were excellent at catching winds that came from behind but had a harder time in other winds. European shipbuilders' adaptation of *lateen*-rigged sails from India and the Arab world added to their repertoire a fore-and-aft rigged sail that could catch more winds in more conditions. The combination of the two—square-rigged sails and fore-and-aft, or *gaff*-rigged, sails—created ships that could harness the wind power to cross the oceans but could still tack and turn close to shore and in deep rivers. The English vessels moving between Europe and America were all in this category. There also were smaller vessels that had only gaff-rigged sails. These plied the river trades and would make the comparatively short runs between mainland colonies and from the mainland to the West Indies.[27]

The third attribute was hull design. Merchant vessels were a vernacular form of building; that means they came from plans in the minds and hands of their builders as opposed to formal pattern books or instructions. Shipbuilding demanded highly skilled artisans who could think trigonometrically on the fly. Such skill was passed on through the same artisan–apprenticeship system that governed all early modern trades. As a result, different ports—and even different shipbuilding firms—developed their own styles and designs. Some builders worked to maximize the amount of cargo a hold could load, while others worked to make the fastest hull possible. Some experimented with wide low-draft hulls that could handle shallow water, while still others stylized a long, deep, boxy hull that would maintain its direction and stability in heavy mid-Atlantic seas. There were as many ever-changing hull designs to contend with as there were builders and watery conditions. All the while, brilliant artisans, whose names are lost to history, introduced innovation after innovation, and these in turn were copied, modified, and fitted into different building traditions. Shipbuilding was always more art than science.

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[25] Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 67; Edmond Smith, *Merchants: The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire, 1550–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021). 208–24.

[26] Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 70–71.

[27] Roger Morris, *Atlantic Seafaring: Ten Centuries of Exploration and Trade in the North Atlantic* (Auckland: International Marine, 1992), 89–159.

The three attributes come together in the most idiosyncratic part of vessels: the names of their various styles and forms. A square-rigged vessel with two masts might be a *pink* or a *flyte*, depending on where it was built and the shape of its stern (the back of the vessel). If on a two-masted vessel the foremost mast was shorter than the rearmost, then the vessel was a *brig*; if it had the right type of puckered stern end, it was a *brig-rigged pink*; but if the same vessel had a square-rigged mast to the front and a mostly gaff-rigged mast at the rear, it was a *brigantine*. If a vessel had three square-rigged masts with a single gaff-rigged sail on the rearmost mast, then the English would likely call it a *ship*, or perhaps a *hagboat* if there was high enough rise in the woodwork above the waterline. If either was fitted with guns poking out of the sides and stern, then it became a *frigate*. A wide but shallow vessel with only gaff-rigged sails was a *schooner*, but if it had a square-rigged sail as well, it was a *sloop*.[28] The names and variations are dizzying, but Virginians living on the Potomac's south shore would know these differences as intimately as modern Americans know the difference between a pickup truck, a minivan, a hatchback, and a city bus.

Prescott's *Sea Horse* was a *ketch.* That meant it had two masts, with the forward one being located at about the middle of the vessel and a far smaller one set far at its rear. Even though there is no record of the size of the vessel, the rigging configuration of a ketch would not provide the kind of power needed to move a vessel of 100 tons or more. Most likely, the *Sea Horse* was in the range of 40 tons and perhaps even smaller. Ketches, though, were easy to operate and required a crew of only around a dozen men, a fact that made the small vessels less cramped than it might seem.[29]

John Washington Travels to Virginia, 1656

Washington got himself to Danzig, where he met his new employer. After the *Sea Horse* was loaded in Danzig, she and her crew set sail for Lubeck, a former Hanseatic League port living through similar ups and downs and changes to trading routines. Washington had performed the work asked of him, all of which was typical labor for a man of his station. He "did take halfe watch night and day and assisted ye sailing" of the *Sea Horse* "to Lubeck there remained aboard by Mr. Prescotts ordr in his pticular business" and "did business for him there ashoare."[30]

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[28] Henrik Willem Van Loon, "The Full Rigged Ship Makes Its Appearance," *Ships and How They Sailed the Seven Seas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 167–214; Roger Morris, *Atlantic Seafaring: Ten Centuries of Exploration and Trade in the North Atlantic* (Auckland: International Marine, 1992), 89–159; Edwin Tunis, *Oars, Sails, and Steam: A Picture Book of Ships* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1952), 20–40. See also Steven J. Pitt, "Building and Outfitting Ships in Colonial Boston," *Early American Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 13, no. 4 (2015): 881–907.

[29] Henrik Willem Van Loon, "The Full Rigged Ship Makes Its Appearance," *Ships and How They Sailed the Seven Seas* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1935), 167–214.

[30] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 148.

The next stops were Copenhagen and Helsingør, Danish cities made wealthy by being at the bottleneck joining the Baltic to the North Sea and the wider Atlantic. Foreign merchants were nothing new here; in fact there had been a significant Scottish presence in Denmark and Sweden generally since the early 16th century, and Helsingør in particular had its own Scottish enclave where the expats even had their own churches.[31] While the *Sea Horse* was at anchor at Copenhagen, Prescott sent Washington on an overland trip to "sell some tobacco" at Helsingør at the top of the Øresund strait that separates Denmark from Sweden.[32] After passing northward through the Øresund and picking Washington up along the way, the ketch sailed westward for what was on average a two-month crossing to America.

During the crossing, Washington performed the typical duties of a supercargo. He "did take halfe watch" when called upon and "assisted as second man" as needed.[33] The whole party arrived in Virginia in late 1656 and found their way into the Potomac. Prescott knew Virginia, but we have no records of what sort of arrangements he might have made, just which planters' tobacco he planned to bring back to the Baltic. But the ship rode at anchor in the waters near the mouth of Mattox Creek not too far from Nathaniel Pope's estate, and in all likelihood, the plan was already in place to deal with Pope and the network of smaller planters who relied on him to sell their tobacco and import their goods. The planned arrival dates of the so-called tobacco fleet, though, were always well known along every river and creek, that vital information having been posted in every church and courthouse so that planters could make sure their crops were packed and ready for shipment in time (which will be discussed in more detail shortly). If everything had gone to plan, the *Sea Horse* would have found the buyers for its cargo of commercial goods; refilled its empty hold with casks of tobacco; stocked up on food, water, and wine for the return trip; and sailed out of the Chesapeake soon after arriving, as did hundreds of other vessels. Things did not go to plan, though.

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[31] Thorkild Lyby Christensen, "Scots in Denmark in the Sixteenth Century," *The Scottish Historical Review* 49, no. 148 (1970): 125–45.

[32] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 148.

[33] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 148.

The Sea Horse *Sinks*

The *Sea Horse* unloaded its imports and loaded as any ship would, and during the few weeks it took to conduct its business, its crew and masters were able to visit with Nathaniel Pope and his family. This was Washington's introduction to Virginia life, and even though we know nothing about just what occurred during that indeterminate time period, it is safe to say that Washington liked what he saw.

The Potomac itself, though, was less hospitable. By February of 1657, the *Sea Horse*, "being full laden" with tobacco, was ready for its return voyage, and so Prescott, Washington, and the crew set off down the river. But on the 28th, a mistake of navigation or changes in the shifting sandbars in and along the river got the better of them, and the ship ran "upon a middland ground or shole" and was left to settle on its keel. Ships are designed to float, and all the effort and material put in to keep them watertight only worked when they were afloat. But when the full weight of a loaded vessel pressed down on itself, the pressure opened up all the seams between its many wooden planks. When that happened, water poured in, and when that happened, carefully packed cargoes were ruined. The investors in those cargoes were ruined too, albeit in a different way.[34]

While the briny Potomac was soaking casks of dried tobacco, a winter storm settled in to make any attempt at salvaging the ship and cargo even harder. The record of the incident conveys the scale of the loss: "There came such a terrible and violent storme or tempest that sanke ye said ketch and Theire she lay sunk having as much salt water in her hold as it could containe and ye whole ladeing of tobco lay under water for certaine dayes till it was all spoiled and afterwards flung overboarde as being no good for nothing."[35]

With their rowboats covered in ice, Prescott, Washington, the crew, and some well-intentioned Virginians worked to save the *Sea Horse,* and "after much paines and charges ye said ketch was gott up and repaired."[36] The effort even saved some of the goods in the hold; a small store of "speckled stuff" that Washington had bought from the *Sea Horse*'s carpenter made it back to shore.[37] The ruined tobacco casks were all marked with the names of Prescott and William Meares; only two were marked as belonging to the crew, the sale of which was intended to be their share of the journey's profits.[38] Tellingly, none of the barrels bore Washington's name, testimony to the less-than-advantageous arrangement Washington had as the *Sea Horse*'s supercargo. He also had no wages then in hand to show for his efforts and no promise of a portion of the value of a cargo sold at

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[34] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 10.

[35] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 10.

[36] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 10.

[37] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 148.

[38] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 10.

market. This disadvantageous position somewhat blunted the loss of the tobacco, but it also highlighted that the entire venture's financial future was rather in doubt. Washington might have become a wizard at writing the perfect letter or adding up sums, but nothing in a London apprenticeship had fully prepared him for this side of the perils of a merchant's life. Either with that in mind or perhaps having now endured for himself the worst realities of a life at sea, Washington announced his decision to stay in Virginia and not return to Europe.

Initially Prescott agreed to the change of arrangements, perhaps seeing some advantage to having a young associate staying on the Potomac shore. Larger merchants were already in the habit of having an agent live in the colony in order to market goods and secure good hauls of dried tobacco. But when Washington demanded a settling of accounts while the two men were ashore at Pope's house, things fell apart. Washington had transported himself to Danzig, attended Prescott's affairs through the Baltic and over the Atlantic, and was entitled to money for all of that effort. Prescott fired back that it was *he* who was owed money, suggesting that Washington had been less than forthcoming with the money from the sale of the tobacco at Helsingør. Angrily, Prescott stated that he would provide no "note" of debt until his own losses on account of Washington were made whole.[39]

Prescott would have been under considerable stress at this moment. As the purchasing merchant, the loss of the cargo was a loss he had to bear. Had the shipment been a consignment, then it would have been the planters who would have lost their money. But the then-current arrangement meant that once the tobacco was packed, loaded, and paid for, it was now the merchant's sole property. Planters would have watched with sadness as the cargo was ruined, but they could return to their ledger books and feel relief that the loss was someone else's. Washington certainly understood this, and that is why he picked this moment to try to salvage what money he could from a sinking venture. In Prescott's eyes, though, this was kicking a man when he was down.

Prescott's demand for money, though, was probably more bluster than anything else, and it is hard to see how the young Washington was anything other than just in his request. Pope, who was there for the argument, called Prescott's bluff by offering to pay Washington's alleged debts himself—in beaver furs, priced at "eight shillings per pound."[40] Only a few years earlier, Pope had brought suit in court that he was owed "ten pounds of beaver," and here he was now offering a form of payment that spoke loudly of Pope's own 20-year-long career in Potomac trading.[41] Prescott returned to sulk in the *Sea Horse* for about a week before sailing away from the area, perhaps to see if he could locate planters

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[39] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 10.

[40] GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 9.

[41] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia County Records: Order Book Abstracts of Northumberland County, Virginia, 1652–1657* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 12; GEWA Westmoreland County Records, 1, no. 9.

with some leaf still in need of shipping. But it was winter, and it would have made sense to pass the cold weeks along another Virginia shore. William Meares and at least two of the ship's sailors remained close enough at hand to appear in court a few months later.

In the spring, though, Washington's plight helped make his name in Appamattucks society. Probably at the behest of Pope, Washington brought the entire matter to the Westmoreland County Court. Pope would help preside over the case itself. It was not every day a ship sank in the river, especially not one engaged in trade with the prominent Pope. Nor was it every day that an exciting legal battle between outsiders landed in the local court. This was the first—and only—case of its kind in the Westmoreland County records, and it had to have been the event of the season. Washington was represented in court by Richard Ingle's Maryland royalist nemesis Thomas Speke, a man of considerable influence who in 1656 was to Nomini Cliffs what Nathaniel Pope was to Appamattucks. The case was recorded by Thomas Wilford, the lay reader of Appamattucks Parish Church and the man from whom Washington was probably already hearing sermons in the little church Thomas Baldridge had built. It is easy to imagine the curious filling the court to hear the tales of Baltic voyages and partnerships gone bad. Settling matters like this was exactly why Virginians wanted their courts, but in the slowly moving agricultural cycles that governed life, court days were as much entertainment as they were legal necessities.[42] The story of the sunken ship and the resulting lawsuit also touched on the thing that all planters cared most about—the shipping of tobacco—and therefore was more than just a good story or gossip; it was of deep professional interest. There is no evidence that either Washington or Prescott got what he wished for from the other. Prescott, though, did continue in the Atlantic trade, and the two men were not quite yet done with each other. There is also no evidence at all, though, that Washington set foot on an oceangoing vessel ever again in his life.

John Washington and the Pope Family Tobacco Business

Washington got something better than a supercargo's wages at the end of his voyage to Virginia. He had landed in the lap of one of the area's most influential men—and did so in dramatic fashion. Pope brought the young man into his household and then, through the marriage to his daughter Anne, into his family. As a father-in-law, Pope was an entirely different character from Washington's father, Lawrence. The latter was an Oxford-educated cleric and vocal partisan for his king, whereas the former could not write his name but knew how to play both sides of a disagreement well enough that he could come

[42] A. G. Roeber, "Authority, Law, and Custom: The Rituals of Court Day in Tidewater, Virginia, 1720 to 1750," *William and Mary Quarterly* 37, no. 1 (1980): 29–52; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790*, reprint edition (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012), 88–94. Both of these are 18th-century studies, but the observations pertain to earlier decades as well.

out untouched. Whereas the father was a martyr to his causes, the father-in-law was a survivor.[43] For his part, there were many reasons for Pope to see Washington as an asset. Understanding these requires understanding how the tobacco trade and the Potomac's tobacco economy worked at midcentury.

During the company period, the exporting and marketing of Virginia tobacco was in the hands of the company's London backers. Maryland had a similar arrangement through the Calverts. Controlling sales was in fact the very point of such companies. These were boom-and-bust years; the early prices plummeted as the market became overloaded thanks to increases in production.[44]

The company phase of the trade, though, never occurred on the Potomac because the company had been replaced with royal governance well before English settlement on the river had begun. The model of company monopoly yielded to what has come to be called the adventurer system. Under this barely organized system, planters established what relationships they could with English merchants, shipowners, or small groups of investors who would buy their tobacco and then market it in Britain. There was no single pattern governing these relationships, and they varied as much as the participants did. The norm was for the merchant to purchase the tobacco directly from the planter and then market it himself in English or European markets. The advantage for the planters was that they were paid (in goods, money, or credit) right at the point of sale, and it became the buyer's responsibility to handle the next level of sales. But that put the merchant in a risky position. If something happened to the cargo during shipment, it was the merchant's loss and not the planter's. Likewise, if the merchant could not find a secondary buyer at a price he or she liked, the merchant had to absorb the loss.[45]

On the other hand, English merchants had the upper hand in controlling the prices they paid and the dynamics of shipping. They, after all, were the ones living in port towns filled with ships whose masters were always looking for a way to make a profit. English merchants would hire ships (unless they owned them outright) and sail or send them to Virginia with orders to return with tobacco. Likewise, planters were at the mercy of whatever goods the merchants sent their way. Not being fools, merchants paid close attention to the needs of their market and sought to ship out the kinds of things Virginians wanted and

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[43] This is the assessment of Martin Quitt in "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higginbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 24.

[44] Russel R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10. For the dynamics of this phase of the trade, see Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 38–43, 46–48.

[45] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 155–59.

needed. For example, in the mid-1650s, word went out that there was an "absolute necessity in Virginia for supply of shoes, powder and shot," and in response, at least 49 ships loaded their hulls with shoes.[46]

Merchants like Prescott were small-scale independent actors, with maybe one or two partners, who owned their own vessels and often personally conveyed their cargo port to port. They might have a regular tobacco supplier in Virginia with whom they corresponded and visited, or they might float into the Chesapeake with a hull full of commercial goods at the right time of year in full confidence of finding someone ready to trade tobacco for plates, cloth, and other items. Once the merchant had loaded up with tobacco, he would sail back to England to sell what he had to other contacts there. Prescott and Meares were very much the norm. One study of the period identified 1,304 individual traders sending ships to Virginia to load up with tobacco.[47] Fifty-five of those traders were women, a few of whom shared vessels. A total of 1,130 tobacco shippers were London based, showing the dominance of the capital city in the trade. More than 90 percent of these merchants conducted only three or fewer voyages, whereas about 30 individuals conducted as many as 25 voyages.[48] What all of this shows is that a few firms of merchants made tobacco importation the centerpiece of their activities, whereas the far larger majority of shippers did not stay long in the venture. In contrast to the tight control of the great merchant houses of the early part of the century, the midcentury tobacco trade was open to anyone who could raise the money to commission a ship, load it with goods, and head off to Virginia.

Washington had been on the buying and selling side of all of this, the English merchant side of the equation. But now, by having almost literally jumped ship on the Potomac, he entered the production side of the tobacco business with Pope as his mentor. Washington's London background and possible connections also explain why Pope and others of his stature embraced Washington from nearly the moment he landed. Having friends or family on both sides of the ocean offered considerable advantage. This is how the Popes conducted their affairs.

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[46] Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 46.

[47] This work comes from Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 24–28. There is a weakness in Hillier's data, though, and the records do not cover the 1650s, an unfortunate hole for study of the Washingtons. Nevertheless, her data do show the general trends in the trade into the middle of the 1660s. See also April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 118–123.

[48] Susan E. Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606 to 1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 24–28. See also Jacob M. Price and Paul G. E. Clemens, "A Revolution of Scale in Overseas Trade: British Firms in the Chesapeake Trade, 1675–1775," *Journal of Economic History* 47, no. 1 (1987): 3–4; Edmond Smith, *Merchants: The Community That Shaped England's Trade and Empire, 1550–1650* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2021), 208–24.

There are few surviving records to guide us, but we can still infer something of the shape of Pope's business when Washington stepped into the family firm. William Hardich had acted as Pope's attorney in some of his Maryland affairs and had also married Pope's younger daughter, Margaret. Hardich had made the move to Virginia as well and lived near Nomini Bay. Around the end of the 1650s, the couple moved to Bristol, which the Maryland-born Thomas Pope would later do. There was a strong and useful family connection to the city, which, although still a thriving port, was a distant second to London in the tobacco trade.[49] Bristol, though, was a major exporter of indentured labor so that even if it was not the primary tobacco market, the port nevertheless was a significant one for Virginians.[50] One study of clay tobacco pipes archaeologically recovered from Potomac River sites showed that pipes from Bristol were used all up and down the river but that there also were large numbers of locally made pipes in the mix as well. They were not glamorous, but they were ubiquitous and easily broken and discarded, meaning the market for them was almost bottomless. Dutch manufacturers, other British makers, and local producers all competed for a piece of this market, but the prevalence of Bristol pipes may be a clue to the kind of business the Popes and others were doing with that port city.[51]

Pope also was selling tobacco through Nicholas Hayward, merchant of London.[52] An excerpt from a letter Hayward sent in 1652 to his "loving friend Mr. Pope" (*friend* being the common term business associates used for one another in the trade) provides a unique glimpse into the fates and fortunes governing the trade between London and Appamattucks:

> Sr. I have writ you several l[ett]res that I had sent you some goods in Mr Webber by the way of New-England and that I would send a good cargo of goods by my man Richard Nichols; and I sent another by another servant of myne name Beniamen Stoane; you have heard I know of the casting away of Mr. Webber's ship in the Coast of New-England and I have heard of the death of my servant Beniamen Stone, but thanks be to God I heare that Richard Nicholls is safe

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[49] Bristol was suffering a long decline as a port, and that would carry in into the 18th century. Kenneth Morgan, "Bristol and the Atlantic Trade in the Eighteenth Century," *The English Historical Review* 107, no. 424 (1992): 626–50.

[50] James P. Horn, "'The Bare Necessities': Standards of Living in England and the Chesapeake, 1650–1700," *Historical Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1988): 75.

[51] Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley, ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 287. See also Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 484–93.

[52] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 248–49.

> arrived.… I hope that you and the rest I deale with all did keep your tobacco for Richard Nicholls and did desire you and them to doe in my former letters P Mr. Webber, the w[hi]ch l[ett]res I hope you have received by M; Thurston's shipp.[53]

The almost bewildering number of ship captains, servants, and agents in even this short section helps show the busy and even precarious nature of this international trade.

Bringing Washington into the family business meant adding to the fold a young man with the most up-to-the-moment understandings of and connections to the workings of not only London's vast tobacco trade but also the increasingly large and lucrative re-export trade to Europe. Washington also would have had a solid English grammar school education, and even if he had not been schooled any further, he at least came from a home that prized literacy and learning. Literacy was a practical and useful skill for a merchant planter, and having a good letter writer attached to the Pope family enterprises was a huge advantage. The same 1652 letter from Hayward inadvertently revealed the situation in which the barely literate Pope found himself and exactly the shape of the gap John Washington would soon fill: "I have sent you in Mr. Butler's [ship] a young man w[hi]ch I would desire you to take into yor house and let him have meate and drink and lodging and to employ him in the best imployme[n]t that you shall see him capable of. I conceave that he wilbe fit to teach yor children for he can write a very good hand sifer very well and is able to keepe yor Acc[oun]ts, if you conceave it meete."[54]

Thanks to Hayward, we can see that finding a tutor for the children of wealthy families was no simple matter in Westmoreland County. For the poorer sort, this was an irrelevant impossibility. Hayward also revealed that Pope's written and mathematical skills were poor enough that having a servant in the household to conduct these specialized tasks would have been a great help. We cannot tell from the solitary letter if indeed Pope had requested such assistance or if the need was inferred by Hayward. The "young man" in question, though, was named Samuel Mottershed. He was 22 years old when he sailed into the Potomac and presented his letters of introduction, but he would eventually settle into colonial life, patenting land, growing his own tobacco, and maintaining his London trade connections.[55] Mottershed might be just another largely forgotten Virginia settler colonist, but in many respects, his path looks very much like that of his peer John Washington.

The Potomac's south shore was still rather a backwater when compared to the James or the York, where men of learning and lineage lived in larger numbers. Mid-17th-century Appamattucks was a place where the biggest man could not write his name and the

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[53] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 272.

[54] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 272.

[55] Nugent 1, no. 512. Rootsweb.com has done an excellent job compiling the citations relevant to Samuel Mottershed. http: //freepages.rootsweb.com/~jcat2/genealogy/samlmh.html.

county clerk had to come by to read the Sunday sermon. In such a place, the literate John Washington, son of a cleric and so recently cruising the Baltic to sell tobacco, was something of a worldly intellectual.

The Tobacco Market, 1658–1660

The beginning of the Pope–Washington alliance took place against a backdrop of fluctuations in tobacco prices. The expansion of the Chesapeake settlement increased the quantity of dried leaf entering English markets, and that steadily forced prices down. The first significant drop took place in the 1630s, when there was still no real English presence in the Potomac. Prices rebounded somewhat in the 1640s and reached a peak later in the 1650s right at the time that the Marylanders were making the move to the Potomac's south shore. Increased prices for their crops no doubt informed their desire for new acres and less Calvert meddling in their businesses. By the middle of the 1660s, prices were again dropping. At the same time, though, the cost of production, the risks of settlement, and the time it took to get to or from England were all dropping, all of which kept tobacco economical even as the price per pound dropped.[56]

Potomac tobacco growers countered their crop's habitual low prices by simply producing larger crops each cycle. Although English smokers sought out tobacco produced along the James and York Rivers, there was a growing market in Europe for powdered tobacco, and Oronoco was just fine for that delivery.[57] By the end of the century, that was becoming the norm, but Prescott's and Washington's ventures in the Baltic were a harbinger of the sort of market path much of the Potomac's tobacco would follow.

Anne Pope

It is always difficult to locate details about 17th-century Virginia women's lives. Not being able to hold office or sit on the vestry eliminates them from two of the largest bodies of records. Seventeenth-century English women did appear in court regularly, though, and despite a popular misunderstanding, women were able to own land and sue to protect their property. It so happens that Anne Pope did not appear in the records in any of those concerns, and apart from a few references to life events, she has no real documentary presence. But that does not mean we can ignore how vital she was to the Washington story and to that of the GEWA park.

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[56] Russel R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10.

[57] Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1999): 53–59.

Her date and place of birth are unknown, but she was probably born around the mid-1630s, thus putting her in her early twenties when Washington arrived in Virginia. It also would mean that she was born in Maryland. It is also notable that her younger sister, Margaret, married before she did—quite at odds with common practice. We know nothing about her disposition toward the new arrival her father took into their home, but in the total absence of records, later biographers have imagined romance and attraction. Marriage in this era, though, was often more a vehicle for family alliances and less a vehicle for personal romantic fulfillment. Anne's younger sister, Margaret, had married the widower William Hardich, making her an important family link between her father and his longtime associate.[58] Being a Pope meant that Anne would have expected a similar marriage toward a similar end. It is easy to imagine her anticipating a future arrangement like the one her sister had and starting a family somewhere in the county. Her goal would have been to marry into a household that would be able to maintain her standard of living. She might have married Samuel Mottershed, but she did not. The dramatic arrival of John Washington was certainly an unforeseen disruption, but their marriage in 1658 made perfect sense for all the parties involved: Anne, her father, and her husband, John. Washington settled in Virginia, perhaps in debt and certainly with no more possessions than the clothes on his back, the bit of cloth he had recovered from the *Sea Horse*, and whatever else he might have had in any luggage he had managed to get ashore. His connections, skills, and perhaps some other set of traits made him the man, and not Mottershed, to step in and join the Pope family and its commercial ventures.

Anne Pope Gains Land and a Son but Loses a Father

Within a year after her marriage, Anne gave birth to the couple's first child: a boy they named Lawrence in honor of John's father and perhaps, as well, his younger brother, who had recently joined John in Virginia. While she was still carrying the child, Nathaniel Pope gave to his "daughter Ann Pope alias Washington" a 700-acre tract of land near the head of Mattox Creek.[59] The bulk of this parcel had been originally patented in 1650 by John Hallowes, the same former Marylander who had built a protective earthwork around his post-in-ground home near Nomini Bay.[60] By 1658, this parcel of land was owned by Pope's London associate Nicholas Hayward, who signed it over to the Virginian, who in turn

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[58] Details come from "Anne Pope," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22492&tree=Tree1.

[59] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 280.

[60] D. Brad Hatch, Barbara J. Heath, and Lauren K. McMillan, "Reassessing the Hallowes Site: Conflict and Settlement in the Seventeenth-Century Potomac Valley," *Historical Archaeology* 48, no. 4 (2014): 46–75.

deeded it to Anne "and her heires for ever."[61] Pope's other son-in-law, William Hardich, was designated one of the "feeoffs" to administrate the handling of the land. In the 1920s, a romantic story evolved holding that the land was a wedding gift to Anne and John and that the couple took up residence there. But the land records are clear that the gift was specifically to Anne and not to the couple. The only evidence of the land being a wedding gift is the timing of the transfer—and even that is not very persuasive.

The late 1650s was seeing the passing of the generation of Marylanders who came to the Potomac's south shore. Pope was in his late 50s and was thinking about the disposition of his estate after his eventual death. It certainly was a common practice for landowners to begin to redistribute their property late in life. Furthermore, Anne was newly married, but in the 17th century, that promised no real security. Her husband was still a new arrival, and newcomers had a reputation for dying at a higher rate than native-born English Virginians. The gift of 700 acres might have been a manner of security for Anne should things not work out as hoped.[62]

Pope also was in the early stages of planning a return to England, perhaps for business, perhaps for good. Five days after gifting Anne her acres, Pope made clear his "resolucon to goe for England this present shipping," and "knowing ye dangers of the seas as affaires now stand and ye uncertainty of mans life," he set about drafting his will.[63] Pope's health seemed to be failing, and he was in his last months. Washington was in the county court several times acting as attorney for his father-in-law's affairs, just as Hardich had done in Maryland. Both sons-in-law were on hand to witness the drafting of the will.

Later that year, Pope passed away, leaving Lucy a widow with a dowager's inheritance, allowing her to spend the rest of her life on that land. He left the acres and home at the Clifts to Thomas. This land is now part of Westmoreland Park and Stafford Hall's property.[64] Pope left a second estate—one he described as being "whereon I know live and seated"—to Nathaniel Jr. as well as the old 1,050-acre patent on Mattox Creek (although the two references may be to the same land).[65] The age of the two Pope boys is unclear, but

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[61] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 280.

[62] Martin Quitt, "The English Cleric and the Virginia Adventurer: The Washingtons, Father and Son," in *George Washington Reconsidered*, Don Higgenbotham, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2001), 27.

[63] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 281.

[64] Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Clifts Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," *Northern Neck of Virginia Historical Magazine* (December 1978): 3096–3128.

[65] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1970), 53.

the will stated that sundry goods were to "bee equally divided between them both to bee divided when ye eldest of them shall come age."[66] That means that both boys were under the age of 21 in 1660.

John received "one mare" and was exempted from the "eighty pounds sterl[ing]" he owed his father-in-law's estate.[67] More importantly for Washington, though, he became the guardian and effective surrogate father to Pope's two nearly mature brothers-in-law. In all but name and titles, Washington stepped into the gap left by the death of his father-in-law and, for the moment, took management of his affairs.

Nathaniel Pope was dead. The crafty survivor who'd threaded the needle of Maryland's conflicts and with generous grants of Appamattucks land made himself one of the most influential men in his neighborhood lay buried near his home overlooking the Potomac, where the *Sea Horse* had once ridden at anchor. The location of his gravesite is unknown.

Not Done Yet with Edward Prescott

Prescott's connections to the Potomac were deep. In addition to having business connections that included Thomas Speke and Governor William Berkeley, he also owned land in Westmoreland County, which he'd occasionally acquired as payment for goods.[68] In 1668, planter Stephen Norman, for example, ceded 600 acres to Prescott in exchange for "English goods and merchandizeins to the vallue of 4,400 pounds of tobacco."[69] That same year, Prescott sailed into Maryland's waters. Among his passengers appears to have been Lawrence Washington, John's younger brother, who had also been learning the merchant's trade in England before following John to the colony. Prescott chose to let his ship, the *Sarah Artch*, ride at anchor on the Maryland side of the river, far from the Westmoreland County Court where Washington's suit against him was both still fresh in local minds and, officially at least, still largely unresolved. Staying in Maryland waters meant that Virginia bailiffs would not be able to drag Prescott off to stand in court, something he was threatened with on his last trip.

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[66] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 282.

[67] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 282.

[68] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1970), 62, 84.

[69] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1970), 31.

What was quite unusual were the events that took place upon his crossing. The middle of the century saw a large increase in the numbers of English people coming to Virginia.[70] Most came as servants, though a few, like Lawrence Washington, came to slide into family connections. No matter their path and reason, these new arrivals came with each tobacco shipper sailing over to the colony. The extra revenue from the passage fare sweetened the deal, just as did the headright some planter would receive. On one crossing was a woman named Elizabeth Richardson. There is no record to tell us what her intentions were, but statistically, the safe bet is that she was coming as a servant. She did not make it to Virginia, though.

Prescott had brought aboard a master sailor from England named John Greene to handle the running of the ship (perhaps as a precaution after the winter sinking on the Potomac). This left Prescott free to attend to other affairs and have an otherwise peaceful crossing. Somewhere in the West Indies, though, Greene and the rest of the ship's sailors fixed on the idea that Richardson was a witch. Exactly what engendered this suspicion is unknown, but it was bad enough that the men insisted that Richardson be hung. The men were so convinced of their claim that when Prescott protested, they threatened him with mutiny. Faced with an unwinnable situation, however halfhearted he might have been, Prescott did not intercede, and Greene and the crew executed Richardson for being a witch.[71]

Britain of this era was in the midst of a prolonged witch panic, and English people in America were not immune to these fears. Virginia alone had seen at least a half-dozen witch accusations before the mid-17th century. In general, Virginia's colonial courts made up a skeptical lot, but accusations still emerged, and sometimes in clusters.

In 1654, there was an almost identical incident to Prescott's but this time aboard a Virginia-bound ship run by a man named Bennett. When the ship ran into a tempest, the passengers blamed it on a woman named Katherine Grady, who had to have been a witch because such women were known to invoke storms to punish their enemies. Who knows what sort of interpersonal dramas were being played out through this medium? The name Grady and its strong suggestion that Katherine was an Irish Catholic may be a clue as to what made the poor woman seem a fitting scapegoat for the fears of people unused to life at sea. Unlike Prescott, though, Bennett agreed with his passengers, and the crew hung Grady

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[70] Aaron S. Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 85, no. 1 (June 1998): 45–48.

[71] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 153.

without challenge. The inquest upon Bennett's arrival in Jamestown did not seem to think he had done anything wrong.[72]

When Prescott arrived in the Potomac, word got out about Richardson's execution at sea. Washington might well have learned of it directly from Lawrence. Enraged at the story—and clearly still nursing hostility toward his former employer—Washington wrote to Maryland's governor, Josias Fendall, "accusing the s[ai]d Prescott of ffelony" and "alleaging how that hee the s[ai]d Prescott hanged a witch in his ship."[73] The felony was more in the procedure than the outcome, but nevertheless, Washington demanded that Prescott "bee arrested" and that a bond of 40,000 pounds of tobacco be held to ensure that the merchant showed up for his court date. Fendall replied with almost courtly grace and assured Washington that Prescott would be brought to court (no word about the rather remarkable bond demand, though) in about a week and that Fendall would "also exspect" Washington "to not fayle to bee" in court as well "to make good" his accusations. Maryland's top man also took a moment to offer the accuser a little lesson in the prerogatives of provincial power, stating, "witnesses examined in Virginia will bee of noe valew here in this case, for they must bee face to face wth the party accused, or they stand for nothing. I thought good to acquaint you wth this, that you may not come unprovided." Washington might have been impressing wealthy men on the Potomac's south shore, but Maryland stood ready to remind him that he was not yet so grand that none would dare treat him with condescension.

For all of his outrage over Richardson's killing, when the time came to "make good" the charges, Washington had other priorities. He wrote to Fendall, apologizing that "extraordinary occasions" would "not permit" him to make Prescott's court date. The October 4 session was on the same day that the infant Lawrence was to be baptized, "and all the company and gossips [godparents]" were "already invited," and it was just too late to change the celebration. Besides, he added, "in this short time witnesses cannot be gott to come over."[74] If Fendall would delay the hearing, then perhaps that would give Washington the time to "provide evidence."[75]

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[72] Carson O. Hudson, *Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia* (Atlanta: The History Press, 2019); "Katherine Grady," Kindle edition. For more on witchcraft and witchcraft accusations in British North America, see Keith Thomas, *Religion and the Decline of Magic* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971); John Putnam Demos, *Entertaining Satan: Witchcraft and the Culture of Early New England* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1982); Carol F. Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (1987; repr. New York: W. W. Norton, 1998); Richard Godbeer, *The Devil's Dominion: Magic and Religion in Early New England* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992); Matthew Dennis and Elizabeth Reis, "Women as Witches, Witches as Women: Witchcraft and Patriarchy in Colonial North America," in Thomas A. Foster, ed., *Women in Early America* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 66–94.

[73] *Archives of Maryland*, 4.1, no. 327.

[74] *Archives of Maryland*, 4.1, no. 328.

[75] *Archives of Maryland*, 41, no. 328.

But for reasons known only to him, Fendall saw no reason to have the delayed merchant "bound over to the next court," so Prescott appeared in court as planned. He told the assembled that since Greene was the master of Prescott's ship, the whole matter of killing Richardson was really in his hands, and besides, as there was "noe one coming to prosequute," the case against him should be dropped.[76] The court agreed, and when the gavel came down, Prescott was acquitted of any wrongdoing, and like poor Elizabeth Richardson, the matter died. It also was the last time Washington and Prescott had anything to do with each other.

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[76] *Archives of Maryland*, 41, no. 329.

CHAPTER SIX

John Washington, Virginia Merchant Planter, 1660–1670

Nathaniel Pope's Estate, 1660

For the first several years of their life together, Anne and John Washington and their children would have lived at Nathaniel Pope's estate. They also might have lived in a home a previous owner had built on Anne's gifted 700 acres, but there is good reason to think that they continued to stay at Nathaniel Pope's home after his death. John was managing Pope's business affairs, and the papers, account books, and principal wharf were all at the Pope estate on Mattox Creek. The two Pope boys were not yet of adult age and were in John's care as well. After little Lawrence's birth in 1659, Anne also now had a young child to care for and would soon have a second, John Jr., as well as her widowed mother and her two underaged brothers to help manage things. Anne had every reason to stay close to her parents' home.

Multigenerational households like this were more than the norm for English people—they were the ideal, and having productive family members on hand to share the labor and childcare and to consolidate the family's wealth was a good practical survival strategy. Add to that the common practice of housing servants in and about the family home, and we can see the English elite household of the period as a crowded and socially complex place—just the way English people liked it. Pope's estate fit this bill perfectly and had more than enough furnishings for two adult married couples and two minor sons. The estate had 15 English servants living in and around it, and the home itself contained four bedsteads and two extra mattresses. A bedstead was a piece of furniture associated with gentry adults; children would sleep either clustered in a bed or on mattresses on the floor. Servants would sleep on pallets of straw or mattresses. There also were two card tables, a dozen "leather chairs," three chests, an expanding table, dozens of yards of cloth, nails, hoes, and various tools, and notably, "one boate and cannon."[1] An inventory of Pope's home shows a large, substantial, and well-stocked estate filled with people.

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[1] GEWA Transcribed Court Records, 2, no. 7–9.

John Washington Rises in the Community, 1660–1664

After Nathaniel Pope's death, John threw himself into the affairs of his county. Apart from representing neighbors and associates in court, John's first act of public service was in being a founding member of the Appamattucks church vestry and, in July of 1661, signing his name to the Oath of Supremacy. This act also applied to all public offices, so his willingness to sign it opened other doors as well. During the 1650s, years of Cromwell's Parliamentarian rule, Virginia in general, and the Potomac more specifically, provided a comfortable haven for supporters of Charles I. The return of the oath must have been a happy moment for these Englishmen, and John's signing it soon after it was reinstituted placed him in the mainstream of Virginia royalist politics. There is little to reveal John's religious sensibilities, but given his family background, it is reasonable to assume that he was something of a traditionalist in matters concerning the Church of England. It might be that his father's having stood for the church order and then been punished for it gave the son some sort of special Anglican credibility in the eyes of his neighbors. It is also significant that his first community service was helping form the vestry and ushering the church back into the royal establishment.[2]

In 1662, John became a justice of the peace and also took the militia rank of major, something reflecting his social prestige more than any actual military aptitude or experience, of which he had none. Serving as a justice of the peace gave him a seat on the county court, where he could weigh in on everything from land deals to business disputes and crime. One of John's first acts as a justice of the peace was to help value and close the estate of Dorothy Baldridge, the benefactrix of Appamattucks church.[3] To avoid legal disputes and to assess value, the county court was responsible to conduct an appraisal of all the goods, furniture, livestock, and servants on the estate of any planter who passed away. The resulting inventory was recorded by the court and was useful in settling any outstanding debts the estate owed. John's first job as a justice of the peace was to select reputable men to assess the Baldridge estate and then to formally swear them in to their task.

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[2] GEWA Records Book, Part 2: 10; George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 154–56; William H. Sellier, "The Anglican Parish Vestry in Colonial Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 22, no. 3 (1956): 313; William H. Sellier, "The Church of England as the Established Church in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 15, no. 4 (1949): 492–93.

[3] GEWA Transcribed Court Records, 3, no. 1.

The "Self Murder" of William Freake's Servant, 1661

William Freake was one of Mattox Neck's first English settlers. Like many of his neighbors, he was a Marylander who had made the crossing during the early 1650s. Like his neighbors, as well, he had paid some debts to John in the form of land, but on the land he still owned, he grew export tobacco using servile labor. There are no records to tell us who these servants were or what life was like on the Freake plantation. For one man, though, it had become unbearable. We will never know what personal sorrow or dilemma so plagued this man that he saw no way forward other than to end his life. But around August 24, 1661, he drowned himself in the creek near the plantation that was his home and workplace.[4] Drowning oneself was not a simple act; it required grim determination. This was no impulsive choice.

Today, suicide is illegal, but our understanding of that fact in relation to the law—and to the cosmos more generally—is that apart from the possibly illegal participation of others in the act, the law really brings very little to bear on the victim/perpetrator, as that person is now dead. We are likely to see a failed suicide (minus any other criminal actions) as being more a concern for psychology than for the courts. Likewise, a coroner's inquest into a case would be a medical matter meant to make medical and physiological determinations about how a death took place.

This was all entirely different in the 17th century. Such a death was at once unusual, illegal, and filled with spiritual peril. The English legal term for what we now called suicide was "self-murder" or "self-murther," terms that hint at where this act resided in the English legal mind.[5] This was a crime first and foremost, and as such, any instance had to be investigated as would any other crime. Even though the criminal was dead, that did not mean that they and their action ceased to be a threat to the legal and spiritual order of the community. Therefore, it fell to the county court to impanel an investigative body to determine if in fact a suspicious death was self-murder, accidental death, or even murder. The head of that committee was called the coroner. The investigation, of course, involved examining the deceased's body, but as the concerns were legal and not medical, there was no expectation of expert knowledge of physiology or any real mastery of one of the several then-competing theories of medicine. A coroner was cast more in the role of detective than that of medical doctor. The deceased's mental state was also crucial to determining guilt

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[4] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 167.

[5] Michael MacDonald and Terrence Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 15–20. See also Donna Merwick, "The Suicide of a Notary: Language, Personal Identity, and Conquest in Colonial New York," in *Through a Glass Darkly: Reflections on Personal Identity in Early America*, Ronald Hoffman, Mechal Sobel, and Fredrika J. Teute, eds. (Chapel Hill: North Carolina Press, 1997), 122–56.

because evidence of madness, mental incompetence, or possession would mitigate the act's criminal nature.[6] If the panel determined the death to indeed have been self-murder, it was then empowered to take appropriate action under English common law.

When the body of Freake's servant was found in the creek, the county court immediately moved to begin the investigation. It pulled together a panel of 12 freeholders in good standing and had John serve as the coroner leading the inquest. Englishmen took this work very seriously. Medieval Englishmen took a somewhat forgiving view of self-murder, connecting it to a larger cult of martyrdom and suffering enshrined in Christianity. But during the early modern period, law became tighter and more punitive in these cases in the same way that fear of witches was far more powerful in the 16th and 17th centuries than it had been in centuries before.

Coroners in this era issued punishments for the deceased in more than 95 percent of the cases for which they determined guilt.[7] Severe judgment stemmed from a belief that in committing self-murder, a perpetrator either succumbed to or was a willing participant in Satan's enticements. The death meant that this power was singularly active in the community and was exploiting some social or spiritual weakness in the neighborhood. For that reason, the perpetrator's body had to be disposed of in a manner that made clear that the community itself was rejecting them and their horrid act. In English practice, the two most common forms of postmortem punishment for self-murder were to order the body buried at a crossing in the road and to have a stake driven through the body. The former was to symbolize that the perpetrator was on the path to damnation. Such a burial kept self-murderers separate from community and family members otherwise gentle in their long repose in properly designated and maintained graveyards and family cemeteries. The suicide's body would have a stake driven through it in part to make it more difficult for the corpse to reanimate or to haunt the perpetrator's former neighbors. In the case of a servant's self-murder, there also was an act of theft on top of all the other issues as the deceased's labor was a property right of their master.

John's inquest panel met and drafted their report on August 25 and submitted their findings to the court. They found that the unnamed man "hath willfully cast himself away," and for that reason, they "hath caused him to bee buried at ye next cross path as ye law requires wth a stake driven through ye middle of him in his grave."[8]

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[6] Terri L. Snyder, "Suicide, Slavery, and Memory in North America," *Journal of American History* 97 (2010): 39–62.

[7] Michael MacDonald and Terrence Murphy, *Sleepless Souls: Suicide in Early Modern England* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 16.

[8] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 167.

Where exactly this poor man ended up is unknown, but the nearest public road to William Freake's land approximated the current run of the James Monroe Highway. His remains may still be there to this day.

John was called upon once more to perform the role of coroner in a suspicious death, this time the drowning of a young man named Edward Chubb. On May 15, 1669, Chubb invited a group of friends to accompany him swimming in Mattox Creek near John's land and the home of Margaret Hardich, a member of that extended family.[9] Chubb leaped into the water twice, but the third time into the creek, he "leaped from a boat" and suddenly "cryed for help."[10] His friends, including James Hardich, "did what they were able to save his life but ere they could come to his assistance he sunke and was drowned."[11] The following day, John and a panel that included Thomas Pope and John Hardich interviewed the swimming friends, but as Chubb's body was lost in the water, there could be no examination of the deceased. The panel quickly determined that "ye death of ye said Edward Chubb was accidental."[12]

The Great Pope–Washington Land Acquisitions of 1660–1664

After his father-in-law's death, John set off on a land acquisition spree, sometimes in league with his brother-in-law Thomas Pope, sometimes on his own. In a very short time, an enormous amount of land in the area became part of a single extended family holding. Acquiring land was a constant in John's Virginia career, and by the time of his 1677 death, he had amassed more than 10,000 acres up and down the Potomac. Thomas Pope was John's partner in all of this until he moved to Bristol after John's death. But even in a career filled with land acquisition, the acreage growth spurt that followed on the heels of Nathaniel Pope's death was a significant standout.

In 1660, John received 150 acres on the eastern shore of Mattox Creek from Christopher Butler.[13] The next year, he and Pope added 1,200 acres to the main Pope family holdings.[14] That also is a strong indication that Pope had come of age around that time. That same year, they also took claim of the 10 small islands that sat at the mouth of Popes

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[9] Arthur L. Keith, "The Hardwick Family," *William and Mary Quarterly* 3, no. 2 (1923): 97–112.

[10] GEWA Transcribed Court Records, 5, no. 1.

[11] GEWA Transcribed Court Records, 5, no. 1.

[12] GEWA T Transcribed Court Records, 5, no. 1.

[13] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1970), 62.

[14] Nell M. Nugent, ed., *Cavaliers and Pioneers: Abstracts of Virginia Land Patents and Grants, 1623–1800* (Richmond: Deitz Press, 1934) 1, no. 449.

Creek. In 1664, John had acquired 300 acres on Mattox Creek not too far from Anne's land, and also built up a huge 1,700-acre parcel near the head of the same creek.[15] That year, Pope took title to a whopping 2,454 acres along the Potomac waterfront running between the mouth of Popes Creek and the Clifts estate willed him by his father.[16]

In 1664, John put together a new patent of 320 acres that ran along Bridge's Creek, incorporating some of the land from the original Henry Brookes patent and bits once owned by David Anderson and Daniel Lisson. At the end of his life, though, John recalled the place as having been bought from Anderson. It also bordered land then owned by the "Widdowe Brookes" and that of Richard Hill. This new patent was a combined one in which John brought together parts of a few purchased tracts and 195 acres claimed from four headrights. This sort of combined patent was quite typical of the period's land deals, when people sold or swapped land to settle debts, left tracts to friends and neighbors in wills, and sold headrights as a sort of informal currency.

The timing of these acquisitions aligned with the Pope brothers coming of age and Lawrence Washington (John's brother) settling in the area as well, although no patent of his has survived. This meant that the two pairs of Pope and Washington brothers, linked together thanks to Anne Pope and her marriage to John, constituted one interconnected extended family interest that dominated the areas around Mattox and Popes Creeks. The scale of the collective enterprise was such that all important local affairs would inevitably involve a Pope or a Washington, and likewise, smaller planters would become increasingly dependent on the networks and commercial reach of the Pope–Washington alliance. By the end of 1664, about four continuous miles of Potomac waterfront were owned and operated by a single extended family business interest. The Washington family move to Bridge's Creek meant that only the narrow strip of the Brookes land on Popes Creek kept the Pope–Washington empire from extending uninterrupted nearly from Nomini Bay to Mattox Creek. It was around this time that Fishing Creek became known as Popes Creek—and one can see why.

The John and Anne Pope Washington Site

The same amateur excavations in the early 1930s that located Henry Brookes's home also uncovered features in the area of the Washington homestead on Bridge's Creek. Likewise, the 1977 excavations exposed and explored those features, as they did at the Brookes site as well.[17] This was still early days for the field of historical archaeology, and even though the

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[15] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1, no. 448.

[16] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1, no. 447.

[17] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 8.

work was in line with then-current professional standards, some of the techniques and inferences would be quite different if the work were done today. Fortunately, large parts of the site were left intact and could be reexamined in light of nearly five decades of intensive high-quality scholarship.

A 1683 map of this part of Mattox Neck leaves no doubt that the buildings were in the right place to be the Washington homestead, and with the discovery of a small set of telltale objects—wine bottle seals embossed with the letters JW—the team hit a bull's-eye.[18] Questions remain, though, about the specific purpose-based identifications for the three excavated structures. One of the buildings was labeled an outbuilding by local residents who found it in 1930, and Park Service officials continued that designation. Indeed, that hasty identification remained the prevailing assumption in the 1970s, and it has been passed on again since then. There also was less of an awareness of site sequence phasing (reconstructing a site's chronology based on its features) in the 1970s, and it was common practice to strip a site down to the subsoil level with a backhoe at the start of excavations. Current practice would do the same grading work by hand and retain and contextualize the hundreds of artifacts lost to "blading" the site. Site sequence phasing is related to taking greater care with plowed soil layers just below the topsoil and paying close attention to how habitation changed over time on a given site. In the 1970s, it was common practice to assume that features all coexisted rather than that they came and went, one on top of the other.

The site itself is located next to the reconstructed Washington family cemetery. The creek has silted in, but in the 1660s, it was open to smaller boats, although oceangoing vessels loading there would have had to ride at anchor at the creek's mouth. Shallow or not, the home was very close to the river, with the creek being more a shelter from the river's occasional intensity and less a vital waterway. Nevertheless, it was a small matter to row a lighter craft from the creek's mouth to the home site. The landscape, though, still shows the small rise on which the home sat. The home lot was oriented on the landscape so that it faced northward over a small frontage of about 1,000 feet and directly onto the mouth of Bridge's Creek. Standing at the doorway in the middle of the 1660s, one would see the Potomac to the front, very much the view a visitor gets today at the GEWA beach. On the left would be Bridge's Creek, and to the right would be tobacco fields and the Widdowe Brookes's home visible in the distance. John had enough acreage that he could choose where to put his family seat, but the advantages of this sheltered but nevertheless accessible location are immediately obvious.

The building identified as the Washington home was a post-in-ground structure measuring 40 feet by 20 feet, with a brick chimney on its eastern gable end. It would have been a single story in height with a loft above that. Walls of these homes, and often the roofs, typically were wooden clapboard with the outside being painted with a thinned-out

[18] The 1683 map is in the GEWA on-site collection and will be discussed in much greater detail in a later chapter.

tar for waterproofing. The inside walls might be carefully split wood or even lath and plaster in the finest examples. The Washington home was long enough to have multiple room partitions, and that meant, in all likelihood, that there was at least one other chimney on the western side, but no remnant had survived to the time of excavation. The remains of the east chimney showed plowing damage, so it may well be that any other chimney bases were carried away by a plow sometime in the 19th or early 20th centuries, when the land was still used for commercial farming.[19]

There was an additional room added onto the north face at the western corner that changed the building's overall plan from being a rectangle to being L-shaped. John himself made mention of a "ye new parlour" in 1668, and this square room, added on and sitting on its own posts, could be that addition.[20] There are problems with the building, though. The south side's line of posts showed post molds (dark stains where the rotted post once sat) that aligned well with one another, a good indication of a wall built in one episode. Excavators found green glass case-bottle fragments in one of these post molds.[21] These finds were a strong indication that this building was built well before John owned the land. That means that if this was the Washington home, it was not one he had built for himself but rather was one that he bought with the land from Anderson. That land deal included "all edifices thereunto belonging," and this home could easily have been among them.[22]

The northern-side wall's postholes do not line up well and do not align well with the southern wall either. A bigger problem, though, is that there is a slot trench for a domestic palisade fence line that runs through the home roughly on a line with the northern wall. The home and the fence could not have existed at the same time, but there is not enough evidence to show which preceded which. If nothing else, the two overlapping features reveal changes in land use over the period of habitation.

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[19] Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (1981): 135–96; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 451–522. See also Cary Carson, Joanne Bowen, Willie Graham, Martha McCartney, and Lorena Walsh, "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 1 (2008): 31–88.

[20] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 8.

[21] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 79.

[22] Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 98.

The excavated Washington home is comparable in size to the John Hallowes site on Nomini Bay. But it is considerably smaller than the Clifts's "Manner House," which excavators associated with Thomas Pope.[23]

The excavators also located two other structures sitting to the south of the home. One of these was the cellar, found in 1930, but the second was a new find. Although identified as dependencies coexisting with the post-in-ground building, the surviving foundations do not appear like most utilitarian buildings of the day, especially those associated with a post-in-ground home. The already-discovered Outbuilding A contained a partial brick wall and a brick-lined floor with a drainage sump. Bricks were missing at its corners, perhaps suggesting that this was a framed structure infilled with brick, a common material-saving but sturdy construction technique. This structure's floor was only about three feet deep in the ground, somewhat shallow for a residential cellar but not impossibly so.[24] Outbuilding A also was the location for some of the most personal finds on the site, such as the collection of JW bottle seals, a 1679 silver coin, and a copper tavern token bearing the inscription "Foxall-Dublin."[25]

Outbuilding B was a new find and had been untouched. It also was a brick-floored and brick-lined cellar, but in this case, it was of a far nicer build and employed more expensive materials than Outbuilding A. At least 10 "courses," or horizontal rows of brick, had collapsed into the cellar, and the bricks were yellow imported Dutch bricks. Similar walls have been found at Jamestown, and even though loads of these bricks were shipped out to America as ballast to compensate for light cargoes, Dutch brick is generally considered to be a specialty import item.[26] It would be unusual (but by no means impossible) to use these in a utilitarian building. But more to the point, why would someone who could acquire nice bricks still live in a post-in-ground home and not one either on a brick foundation or made entirely of brick? The discovery of a glass windowpane also attests to the quality of the architecture above this cellar. On the other hand, most of the artifacts retrieved from Outbuilding B are consistent with the sort of ceramics expected from a

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[23] Fraser D. Neiman, "Domestic Architecture at the Cliffs Plantation: The Social Context of Early Virginia Building," in *Common Places: Readings in American Vernacular Architecture*, Dell Upton and John Michael Vlach, eds. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 1986), 292–314.

[24] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 11. This depth came from the 1930 excavation because Blades had already cleared the site to subsoil before he measured the depth from the grade and not from the topsoil surface.

[25] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 12.

[26] Such bricks could have been brought by English shippers, but the Dutch were episodic but important players in the Atlantic trade shaping Virginia and its economy. See Victor Enthoven and Wim Klooster, "The Rise and Fall of the Virgina–Dutch Connection in the Seventeenth Century," in *Early Modern Virginia: New Essays on the Old Dominion*, Douglas Bradburn and John C. Coombs, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 90–127.

utilitarian dependency. These included fragments of an imported milk pan and others from a milk pan made by Westmoreland County local potter Morgan Jones, who ran a pottery near the site of Cople Parish Church from the early 1660s until 1681.[27] There also was the neck of a pharmaceutical bottle, as well as cup fragments and hundreds of nails.

There can be no doubt that the area by the cemetery is the site of John and Anne Washington's home. What remains unclear is if the post-in-ground buildings were, in fact, outbuildings or perhaps were parts of a dwelling. Likewise, the dates of the post-in-ground building are unclear, and perhaps it was an abandoned and pulled-down relic from an earlier occupancy by the time John lived on the site. The collected artifacts, though, reveal a habitation period between the 1660s and roughly 1720—perfect dates for the Washingtons' occupancy.[28] The identified outbuildings also require closer study, particularly Outbuilding B, thanks to its imported brick and skilled brickwork. The possibility remains that one of these was part of the Washington home on Bridge's Creek. With its rich mix of building types and materials and artifact range, the John Washington site asks more questions than it answers.

John Washington at the Top, 1664–1666

The year 1664 was significant in John's life. He was already a major in the militia and a justice of the peace, and he had a seat on the vestry. As early as 1659, he was appearing in court, acting as the attorney for people in the community. This might have been a shrewd move on the part of the people who'd selected as their representative a man closely associated with stalwarts like Speke and Pope, who often sat on the court's bench. By 1664, John also owned outright at least 2,300 acres in the county, co-owned at least another 1,250 acres nearby, and had partial benefit from an additional 5,000 plus acres owned by his Pope relations by marriage—and that did not include the 700 acres Anne owned, from which John also benefited. All of this made him the largest landholder in the immediate area and gave him a considerable income. The year 1664 also saw the division of Westmoreland County's Anglican Church into three separate parishes. What had been Appamattucks Parish now became Washington Parish—a powerful statement of the prominence the man had gained in less than 10 years.[29] John had, in effect, become a new

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[27] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Investigations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites" (Philadelphia: Office of Planning and Resource Preservation, Mid-Atlantic Region National Park Service, March 1979), 77; Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 311.

[28] Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 218–22.

[29] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County Records, 1661–1664* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1972), 55.

iteration of his father-in-law thanks to his own talents and his background, but aided also by a good marriage and a well-timed passing. Much of what John had, he'd received through good fortune and the benefit of the Pope family. A less able man would have squandered these advantages, whereas John built on them.

By 1664, he sat at the head of a tobacco growth-and-export business that had him dealing with huge quantities of dried leaf and importing goods for himself and his neighbors in exchange. He had become a locally significant Virginia merchant planter. Apart from his land dealings and debts owed to and paid by him to his neighbors, there is not much surviving documentary evidence of the shape of John's tobacco business. There are hints, though. Nicholas Hayward, the London merchant who sent Samuel Mottershed to Pope's estate in 1652, stayed associated with the Popes and John. In fact, around 1677, his own son Samuel moved to Virginia, where he married John's sister Martha (the third child of Lawrence and Amphilis Washington to move to Virginia), thus adding family ties through marriage to the extended Pope–Washington family enterprise.[30]

John also had business dealings with the London firm of John Jefferies and Thomas Colclough, which was one of the larger companies buying tobacco from Potomac planters. Their business in Northumberland County was so extensive that Colclough's brother George moved to the county and settled in, much as John had done in Westmoreland County. Among Jefferies and Colclough's activities was the importation of labor. Jefferies was a royalist, but under parliamentary pressure, he agreed to ship Irishmen—people rounded up during Cromwell's wars to bring the island fully under English control—to Virginia to serve as bound laborers.[31] In the mid-1650s, the firm also began to send its own vessels to the West African coast to purchase enslaved labor to sell to Virginia planters—a connection that would soon transform life on the GEWA acres and all along the Potomac.[32]

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[30] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 272.

[31] Susan Hillier, "The Trade of the Virginia Colony, 1606–1660," PhD diss., University of Liverpool, Liverpool, UK, 1971, 60. I am grateful to John C. Coombs for sharing with me a chapter called "Servants: The Original Mudsills" from the soon-to-be-published book version of his dissertation, "Building the Machine."

[32] John C. Coombs, "Servants: The Original Mudsills," unpublished book chapter in *Building the Machine*.

John Washington, Burgess

In 1666, John attained the highest honor his neighbors could bestow. He was elected to the House of Burgesses—a position that Nathaniel Pope never received.[33] The body he joined reflected the governmental restructuring that Governor Berkeley ordered had in 1643, which broke the previously unified burgesses into separate houses: the Governor's Council as a sort of upper chamber and the House of Burgesses as a popularly elected body.[34]

The year that John entered the legislative house, their primary business was working to control the shape of the tobacco trade. Their legislation during John's early years as a burgess reflects a government struggling to control the economy at a time of decreasing prices for the colony's principal commodity. The burgesses moved to create a sabbatical year to keep markets from being glutted with tobacco. They also set rates on commodities other than tobacco so that things like peas, corn, and oats could function as currency in place of tobacco.[35] They moved to reduce the price of wine and liquor in response to innkeepers charging inflated rates, and they passed an act to adjust the fees surveyors were charging for their services as the current rates reflected a time when "tobacco bore a greater value then can now be expected."[36] Relations with the Native population were also a concern. The burgesses allowed courts to set the fee paid by Englishmen to Algonquians for hunting wolves, but it also gave the militia of western Henrico County a green light to kill any Native person entering the county.[37] Policing the servile population was always a concern as well. One act mandated that servants without an indenture but under the age of 16 should serve until they turned 24 years of age, while another act levied a fine of 60 pounds of tobacco for those who "do harbour and give entertainment to loitering runaway servants" and encourage them "in such lewd courses."[38]

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[33] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60–1693* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1914), 32.

[34] Brent Tartar, "Bacon's Rebellion, the Grievances of the People, and the Political Culture of Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 119, no. 1 (2011): 9.

[35] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 233.

[36] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 235.

[37] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 236–37.

[38] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 239.

John Washington and the Evolution of Virginia's Laws of Enslavement

Some of the most significant acts of which Burgess John Washington was a part pertained to defining the then-still-uncertain status of enslaved Africans living and working in the colony. The first Africans brought into the colony were in something of a legal netherworld. Although they were understood to be enslaved, there was very little in the law itself to define that status. The only applicable laws were those outlining the rights and status of servants. Into the 1640s, some Africans were able to use those laws to their advantage. In one famous case, Anthony Johnson of Accomack County became an Anglican Protestant and was a freeholder with 250 acres of land after a term of service.[39] But even this seeming success story was swamped by changing laws that steadily made clearer and clearer the legal distinctions between white servants and Africans.

Rather than having a slave code spring up fully formed, Virginia created its legal version of slavery in fits and starts, one law at a time.[40] By the second half of the seventeenth century, many of the burgesses were themselves also the planters leading the shift to enslaved African labor. This change in the labor force was not rooted in failings within the system of British servitude, even though availability was always fluctuating. Rather, the shift was tied to elite planters' trade networks and larger Atlantic world trends making enslaving imported people more and more cost effective.[41] The number of enslaved Africans in the colony was still small by the time John joined the burgesses, but it was growing, particularly on the larger plantations of the wealthiest planters—precisely the kind of person most likely to be in the burgesses. One observer in late 1640 noted that Virginia had about 300 to 500 enslaved Africans. But at the end of the 1660s, Governor William Berkeley recorded a total of "two thousand black slaves" working in Virginia's fields. His phrasing notably reflected two important decades of evolution in law that

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[39] T. H. Breen and Stephen Innes, *Myne Owne Ground: Race and Freedom on Virginia's Eastern Shore, 1649–1676* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004). By the 1660s, though, Johnson's family had to leave Virginia, and after Johnson's death, the burgesses ruled that his land had to revert to the crown since, being black, he had no ability to pass property on to his children. See also Joseph Douglas Deal III, *Race and Class in Colonial Virginia: Indians, Englishmen, and Africans on the Eastern Shore in the Seventeenth Century* (New York: Garland Press, 1993).

[40] Edmund Morgan in *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, reprint edition, 2003); Anthony Parent Jr., "The Laws of Slavery," in *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: North Carolina University Press, 2003), 105–34.

[41] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 141–43; John C. Coombs, "Building the Machine: The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia," PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2003; John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery, *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 332–60.

created the legal framework for enslavement.[42] The lack of a clear legal definition of the nature of enslavement created an ambiguity that the enslaved could at times exploit to their advantage. But the developmental nature of the law stemmed primarily from an informal certainty on the part of the English about exactly what it was to be enslaved and to whom the status should apply.[43]

Following the lead of their fellows in Barbados, midcentury Virginia lawmakers began to formalize the legal cage that conditioned life for enslaved Africans.[44] By the time John joined the burgesses, they had already taken a few crucial defining steps. Courts had already sentenced an African man named John Punch to a lifetime of servitude—something that had never happened to an English servant. In the interest of colonial defense, in 1640, they required "all persons except negroes to be provided with arms and ammunition."[45] In 1660, the burgesses noted that Africans were "incapable of making satisfaction [for running away] by addition of time," showing that lifetime service was the common practice even though not yet fully enshrined in law.[46] In 1662, the burgesses held white servants financially liable for any African with whom they ran away. The fine was 4,500 pounds of tobacco.[47] This law helped codify the practice that Africans were property, unlike white servants. That same year, the burgesses decreed that "all children borne in this country shalbe held bond or free only according to the condition of the mother."[48] This vital step marked a broad line between the legal statuses of white servants and enslaved Africans.

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[42] John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 333.

[43] John C. Coombs, "'Others Not Christians in the Service of the English': Interpreting the Status of Africans and African Americans in Early Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 127, no. 3 (2019): 212–38; Jonathan A. Bush, "Free to Enslave: The Foundations of Colonial American Slave Law," *Yale Journal of Law and the Humanities* 5 (1993): 417–60; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, reprint ed., 2003); David W. Galenson, *White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis* (New York: Cambridge University Press 1998). See also Russell R. Menard, "Making a 'Popular Slave Society' in Colonial British America," *Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 43, no. 3 (2013): 377–95; Warren M. Billings, "The Law of Servants and Slaves in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 1 (1991): 45–62.

[44] Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 108.

[45] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R. W. and G Bartow, 1823), 1: 226.

[46] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 26.

[47] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 117.

[48] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 170.

Soon after John joined the burgesses, they drafted a 1667 law declaring that "the conferring of baptisme doth not alter the condition of the person as to his bondage or feedome."[49] This law was a vital step not only in the creation of slavery but in the creation of the idea of race itself. Early justifications for enslaving Africans and Native Americans used the language of religion: enslavement was legitimate because the enslaved people were heathens. But the new 1667 law removed that logic by making a slave's religious profession meaningless in regard to their status. Without a religious justification, the only meaningful distinction between a white Christian servant and a black Christian slave was the color of their skin.[50] From then on, skin color would serve as the primary marker of difference and different status, and over the next centuries, theorists, scientists, clergymen, politicians, and others would transform a degraded status that had been imposed on people into one that instead emerged naturally and logically from the very essence of the same people. That intellectual sleight of hand was the driving force behind the category of race—a division of human beings that stemmed from one group's desire to enslave another.

The year 1669 saw the next important—and perhaps the most frequently referenced—step in the process of closing the door on the possibility of African freedom in Virginia. In the first act of its September session, the burgesses passed what it called "an act about the casuall killing of slaves," the word "casuall" here not being in its modern usage but rather meaning something more like "resultant." The act held that "if any slave resist his master (or other by his masters order correcting him) and by the extremity of the correction should chance to die, that his death shall not be accompted ffelony, but the master (or that other person appointed by the master to punish him) be acquit from molestation, since it cannot be presumed that prepensed malice (which alone makes murther ffelony) should induce any man to destroy his owne estate."[51]

The law already held that Africans were to serve for the duration of their lives, that their religious professions had no bearing on their servile status, and that enslavement would automatically flow from a mother to her children. After September 1669, their masters could legally discipline enslaved Africans even to the point of death without facing legal consequences. By contrast, British servants in the colony had strict legal limits to their terms of service, retained the right to sue masters in court for breaches of contracts, and frequently faced fines and extended terms of service for infractions rather than physical violence. As a member of the burgesses, John played a small role in creating the bold line that separated servants from the enslaved and white people from black in the eyes of the law.

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[49] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 260.

[50] John C. Coombs, "'Others Not Christians in the Service of the English': Interpreting the Status of Africans and African Americans in Early Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 127, no. 3 (2019): 212–38.

[51] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 270.

The First Enslaved Africans at GEWA

Enslaved Africans had been part of the Westmoreland County population since its founding and possibly even before that. Headright records are one useful, if somewhat imprecise, record. They show that Giles Brent Jr. and Francis Smith both had claimed three African headrights apiece in 1654.[52] In 1658, Richard Wright claimed land for bringing "James and Patience, Negroes" into the colony as well.[53] In the 1660s, the population of enslaved Africans in the GEWA area, and the colony more broadly, was still small. A person traveling across the colony was unlikely to see an African person working in a home or in the fields. But on those plantations where our imaginary traveler *did* encounter enslaved Africans, they would have been working in comparatively large numbers. During these years, enslaving laborers was a luxury that only the wealthiest and the best connected could afford—a fact that dated all the way back to 1619. The defining trait here was access. The tobacco trade was a rather free-form world involving sellers, growers, and shippers, large and small, working in a variety of modes and combinations and exploiting opportunities as they arose. The trade in human beings functioned completely differently.

As was the case with the people sold in 1619, the first few hundred enslaved people arrived in Virginia having been confiscated along with Spanish, Dutch, or Portuguese vessels. In this way, war helped facilitate the shipment of enslaved Africans. Privateers preying on the Spanish Caribbean were the primary sources of people, and their availability was sporadic and dependent on the success of maritime theft and governmental rules alternately allowing or prohibiting preying on ships.[54] The English Guinea Company held the royally granted monopoly on the African trade into the 1630s, but the company's focus was on gold and not human beings. In the 1640s, planters on Barbados adopted intensive sugar cultivation, and their need for servile labor ballooned, far outstripping that of the mainland colonies. It was easier, faster, and more rapidly profitable for a privateer to bring stolen human cargo to Barbados than to the North American coast, so the island became the main destination for Africans who ended up in English hands.[55] The high profitability of sugar and its increasing dependence on enslaved labor (a key part of its profitability)

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[52] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1, no. 315.

[53] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1, no. 375.

[54] Mark Hanna, *Pirate Nests and the Rise of the British Empire, 1570–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2017); Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004).

[55] John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 341; Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014). See also Philip D. Morgan, "Virginia's Other Prototype: The Caribbean," in Peter C. Mancall, ed., *The Atlantic World and Virginia, 1550–1624* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2007), 342–80.

created an incentive for English merchants to regularize the flow of enslaved Africans and remove the element of chance and politics built into privateering. A few London-based merchant firms in the early 1650s chartered vessels to bring enslaved people from Africa to Barbados. Virginia, though, was still not a priority destination for the captains of these vessels or their backers. That meant that enslaved Africans brought to the colony at mid-century were both rare and costly.[56]

Most Virginia planters had not the money, connections, nor even the actual need for enslaved labor. The system of servitude was working fine, and there was no crisis due to lack of labor, especially as the worst years of servant mortality receded.[57] Only the wealthiest planters had the resources and connections to make enslaving Africans even a possibility. It is no surprise, then, that county officeholders—justices of the peace, county surveyors, and so on—led the way in bringing enslaved labor to the colony. Likewise, this explains why defining slavery's terms in law was a recurring issue for the burgesses even at a time when Africans constituted a very small proportion of the colony's population. It was they who were the owners of enslaved labor. Therefore, it was they who had the most interest in securing their rights in the law.

Wealthy planters had two principal ways to acquire enslaved Africans. The first was to be actively involved in the trade to Barbados. Sugar was so valuable that planters there put every viable acre of Barbados land into its production. That meant the colony was dependent on everything from barrel staves to boiled beef being shipped in from elsewhere.[58] Opportunity-minded Virginians stepped in to fulfill those needs, so much so that in the last part of the 17th century, planters on the south side of the James did more business in Caribbean provisioning than in tobacco. Doing business with Barbados planters

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[56] John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 356–58.

[57] The question over a possible shortage of servants and how that effected the move to enslaved labor has a long history in the scholarship. The idea was most influentially stated by Edmund Morgan in *American Slavery, American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, reprint edition, 2003), and has been echoed repeatedly. The expansion of the scholarship on enslavement over the last two decades has challenged that idea. See Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 141–43; John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 332–60; John C. Coombs, "'Others Not Christians in the Service of the English': Interpreting the Status of Africans and African Americans in Early Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography*, 127, no. 3 (2019): 212–38; Aaron S. Fogleman, "From Slaves, Convicts, and Servants to Free Passengers: The Transformation of Immigration in the Era of the American Revolution," *Journal of American History* 85, no. 1 (June, 1998): 45–48; John Coombs, "Servants: The Original Mudsills," unpublished book chapter in *Building the Machine*, forthcoming from University of Virginia Press.

[58] Richard Dunn, *Sugar and Slaves: The Rise of the Planter Class in the English West Indies, 1624–1713* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1972); Russell R. Menard, *Sweet Negotiations: Sugar, Slavery, and Plantation Agriculture in Early Barbados* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2014); Alden T. Vaughn, "The Origins Debate: Slavery and Racism in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 3 (1989): 311–54.

added human beings to the list of ways to pay debts for provisions shipped from Virginia. The shores of the Potomac, though, were deeply committed to Oronoco tobacco production, and Caribbean provisioning played only a small role.[59]

The other way to access the slave trade was to be trading with a merchant (or merchant firm) who himself was trading in human beings. Those Potomac planters importing Africans did so through their merchant connections. One of those firms working the trade was John Jefferies and Thomas Colclough of London. Colclough's brother George had moved to Virginia and had become a large planter and a Northumberland County officeholder, making him an on-site agent for the firm. In 1655, he married John Mottrom's widow, Ursula, thus merging—after some contentious court wrangling—his own affairs with that of the area's original and most prominent Englishman.[60] As was often the case, this example of social climbing through careful marriage vaulted Colclough to the top of Northumberland society. He soon had the largest single number of servants working his land—40 people—in the whole colony, and at the time of his death in 1662, he also enslaved 13 Africans, this being the largest number of any planter on the Potomac at that time.[61] Anyone trading either with George Colclough or through his brother's London firm was in a prime position to gain access to enslaved labor.

There are no records to reveal exactly how or when the first enslaved Africans were brought to GEWA's acres, but the settling of John's estate after his death showed that he enslaved at least eight Africans on his land.[62] Their path to GEWA is unclear, but there are at least two possibilities. John had some dealings with Jeffries and Colclough, meaning that this connection provided the link that brought the first enslaved Africans to GEWA. John also had some small but perhaps significant connections to Barbados through Thomas Wilsford, the county clerk and Appamattucks Parish lay reader. In 1660, Barbadians Richard Leader and Edward Bowden assigned Wilsford to act as their attorney in Westmoreland County Court. In 1663, Wilsford's wife, Margaret, left in her will that she wanted John to be guardian to her minor daughter Sarah and arrange for her to move to Barbados to live with an uncle named Richard Romney. Why she did not want her own husband to serve as Sarah's guardian is a mystery (though certainly a curious one), but for reasons lost to us, she saw John as the better choice for the task. Wilsford himself certainly agreed, as it was he who approached the court asking that this odd clause be enacted. Sarah also owned some cattle, and Romney was to convey to John how they

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[59] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[60] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia County Records: Order Book Abstracts of Northumberland County, Virginia, 1652–1657* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 60.

[61] John Coombs, "Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 350.

[62] *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1675–1688/9*, Montross, VA, 25.

should be "disposed of."[63] Apart from being an interesting family issue brought to court, this case at least shows some very real connections between Appamattucks residents and Barbados. Large-scale provisioning and the slave trade might not have been the primary reason for the link, but they did constitute a path of least resistance for John to have acquired enslaved people.
This link to Barbados probably facilitated the arrival of the first Africans living and working on GEWA acres.

There also were Westmoreland County planters and officeholders who brought Africans into the county and claimed headrights for those transportations. Thomas Gerrard, for example, claimed 15 African headrights in November 1664.[64] In 1665, Anthony Arnold claimed three African headrights and in one interesting, imperfect record showed that councilor of state and Westmoreland landholder Richard Lee claimed 80 African headrights in an unspecified year in the 1660s. There is no reason to think that all of these people came in at the same time or ended up at the same destination. Likewise, these enslaved people did not have to even all be in Westmoreland County itself.[65] The surviving records do not show John claiming any African headrights, but he might have been able to acquire enslaved Africans through the same Wilsford family connections and shipmasters who linked him to Richard Romney. The Gerrard family was another possible connection as John would eventually marry two Gerrard sisters sequentially. What is clear, though, is that by around 1668 (one year before the Act on the Casual Killing of a Slave), John had enslaved people working on his land.

In either case, Barbados played an important role in how enslaved Africans made it to any Virginia plantation in the 1650s and 1660s. Before the last few decades of the 17th century, there were only two shipments of enslaved people coming to Virginia directly from Africa. One group was aboard the *Sarah* in 1657, and the other was a group of people loaded on the Loango coast, in what is now the Republic of Congo, onto a Dutch vessel listed as the *Wapen van Amsterdam* in 1663.[66] No record has survived to tell us how many people were on these ships or where they ended up once in Virginia. It is highly unlikely, though, that either the *Sarah* or the *Wapen van Amsterdam* would have made it as far north as the Potomac. Instead, a small but steady flow of vessels carried enslaved Africans from Barbados to Virginia ports, along with sugar from the island. Because these were mostly coastal vessels, these people came to the colony in fairly small numbers. Cargoes of as many as 650 people came to Barbados directly from Africa, but the largest documented group of Africans making the trip from the island to Virginia were the 39 people whom ship

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[63] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County Records, 1661–1664* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1972), 43.

[64] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County Records, 1661–1664* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1972), 69.

[65] Nugent, *Cavaliers and Pioneers*, 1, no. 404.

[66] https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database.

captain Edmund Scarborough brought to the colony in 1655.[67] Between 1645 and 1670, there were only eight such voyages to the colony. Most if not all of these people were transshipped on the island from Africa.

This means that rather than being adjusted, naturalized, and even English-speaking people, they were what were often called New Africans: people directly from Africa, unfamiliar with the languages, disciplinary habits, and labor demands of their new overlords. The transatlantic voyage itself was frequently understood in spiritual terms and represented, with some measure of reason, an end of life and transportation to the world of the dead.[68] At the height of the slave trade, rebellions in African waters and suicides on the open sea were concerns enough that ships' crews kept a constant lookout. On average, a slave journey expected to lose about 20 percent of its people during the passage; that was twice the expected number of casualties for an ocean crossing with English servants and paying passengers.[69] Most of the Africans shipped to Virginia in this period would have been on Barbados for only a few days or weeks before being sold again and reloaded on a ship, this time bound for Virginia. It would have been only months since they had been on the African coast, and only a short time before that, they would have been in their home communities before they were captured by slavers. These are the memories, sorrows, traumas, and expectations newly arrived enslaved Africans brought to GEWA when they became John Washington's human property.

Anne Pope Washington's Diamond Ring, 1668

Anne bore five children with John. Two boys died in their infancy, but three children—Lawrence, John Jr., and Anne—survived to adulthood.[70] As was often the case for 17th-century English women, the surviving records reveal little of who Anne was and the details of the course of her life. What we see of her largely comes from her interactions with the men in her life—the gifting of land from her father and mentions of her in relation to her husband, for example. This means that small details are of special interest.

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[67] These numbers come from the SlaveVoyages.org database, itself a project that absorbed and built on the Elizabeth Donnan collection of slave trade documents.

[68] The concept of their having been a so-called charter generation—a first wave of enslaved people who had already become somewhat Anglicized in Barbados—has had ups and downs. See Ira Berlin, "From Creole to African: Atlantic Creoles and the Origins of African-American Society in Mainland North America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 2 (1996): 251–88; Ira Berlin, *Many Thousands Gone: The First Two Centuries of Slavery in North America* (Boston: Belknap Press, 2000); John C. Coombs, "Building the Machine: The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia," PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2003. See also Stephanie Smallwood, *Saltwater Slavery: A Middle Passage from Africa to American Diaspora* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008).

[69] Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship: A Human History* (New York: Penguin Books, 2007).

[70] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 220.

The English Common Law was not very accommodating of women's property rights. At the statutory level, women were either subject to a father or a husband and, as such, faced considerable obstacles in handling their own affairs and property. A woman could not—officially, at least—draft her own will, own or manage property, enter into contracts, or appear in court without a father's or a husband's permission.[71] But in the Chesapeake region, fathers and husbands were more willing to grant that permission than in English courts, and many women served as executors for their husbands' estates. Seventeenth-century Virginia courts were often more accommodating of women's property rights than were their parallels in Britain.[72] In Anne's case, Nathaniel Pope gifted *her* 700 acres, and that gift was all the male permission she needed to own that land.

Anne passed away in 1668. No record shows the circumstances of her death, and it was not common practice for women to leave certified wills behind when their husbands were still alive and could manage their estates. But it was very much within a woman's power to direct how certain parts of her estate were to be allocated. When John died nine years after Anne's death (and after two more marriages as well), one part of his will contained the details of Anne's bequest to her own daughter, Anne (II). Her will was filtered through his and thus made legally binding. In his will was a reference to one of the most remarkable objects in Virginia. The section of the will was in John's voice and read, "I give unto my sayd Daughter, wch was her mothers desire and my promise, yt cash in the new parlour and the diamond ring and her mothers rings and the white quilt and the white curtains and vallians [i.e., 'valance' or bed curtains]."[73]

Ornamental jewelry was a rare, but not entirely unheard of, possession in Virginia. It almost goes without saying that the vast majority of planters and servants had only the smallest ability to own such things. Nevertheless, many free Virginians did have affordable adornments made from pearls; semiprecious stones such as garnets, quartz, or carnelian; and quite frequently cut glass or pastes. Rings of gold or a less valuable metal were also, if not common, then not impossibly rare either. Westmoreland County wills from the same period are filled with bequests for livestock, clothing, and of course land. But in close to 100 contemporary wills, only two mentioned gold rings. Wedding rings and mourning rings were the most common form of ring. The custom of wedding rings has carried through to today, but mourning rings have not. These were usually made of thin gold or a cheaper plated metal and might carry a black stone or the name or initials of the person they commemorated. Wealthy planters, of course, could afford more expensive

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[71] Lindsay R. Moore, "Women, Property, and the Law in the Anglo-American World, 1630–1700," *Early American Studies* 14, no. 3 (2016): 545.

[72] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[73] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 206.

materials than poorer planters could and would acquire, or bring from England, fashionable accessories such as broaches, hair combs, gold lace ends (aglets), or cuff links. Fine jewelry and highly valuable precious stones were specialized items that required very specific skills to make and equally specific trade links to acquire. A diamond, though, was a rare object indeed—perhaps the rarest—and even more so on the shores of the Potomac, which remained something of a backwater until the early 18th century. The fact of there being a diamond here in the first place says quite a bit about the family's buying power.[74]

Anne's diamond probably came originally from India; the South African diamond mines that vastly enlarged the gem's availability were not discovered until the late 19th century. One contemporary English visitor to the Indian mines was impressed with the stones miners found. He noted that diamonds came out of the ground "well shaped" with "many of them pointed, and a good deal lively white water."[75] Anne's diamond, like others in its day, was probably not cut before being placed in its setting, but rather was presented in its natural condition as it was found. Thanks to its Eastern connections, Venice was the medieval European center of the diamond trade. By the 17th century, though, the Portuguese and the ever-present Dutch had garnered much of the Indian diamond trade, making Amsterdam and Antwerp (in Belgium) perhaps the most significant diamond cities.[76] In all likelihood, Anne's rock passed through one of those two cities before, somehow, making its way to the GEWA acres.

It is not clear if the ring was something that Anne got through the Pope family or if it emerged during her time married to John. What is clear is that it was special. Anne's diamond was also socially guarded. John had recalled his promise to Anne for nine years and through two subsequent marriages to prominent widows Anne Broadhurst Brett and Frances Speke, neither of whom seem to have made a claim to it as the new mistress of the house. Anne (II) was only about 17 at the time of her father's death, so although the diamond could have been in her possession, the reference in the will suggests otherwise. Instead, it appears that the diamond was understood by everyone to be Anne's and intended for Anne (II) and so was left on its own.

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[74] Marilyn S. Melchor, "Aesthetic Appeal" *Colonial Williamsburg Journal* (Spring 2003), https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/Foundation/journal/spring03/appeal.cfm; Christiane Holm, "Sentimental Cuts: Eighteenth-Century Mourning Jewelry with Hair," *Eighteenth-Century Studies* 38, no. 1 (2004): 139–43; John Hayward, "Eighteenth-Century Jewelry," *Antiques Magazine* (April 1955), https://www.themagazineantiques.com/article/eighteenth-century-jewelry-1. James Horn found no probate record evidence of jewels of any kind in his study of Northumberland and Lancaster County records. James P. Horn, "'The Bare Necessities': Standards of Living in England and the Chesapeake, 1650-1700," *Historical Archaeology* 22, no. 2 (1988): 22.

[75] A Description of the Diamond Mines, as it was Presented by the Earl Marshal of England to the Royal Society, 1677, *The Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society of London*, volume 2 (London: C. and R. Baldwin, 1809), 406.

[76] Isharat Alam, "Diamond Mining and Trade in South India in the 17th Century," *Proceedings of the Indian History Congress* 59 (1998): 311–28; Saskia Coenen Snyder, "'As Long as It Sparkles!': The Diamond Industry in Nineteenth-Century Amsterdam," *Jewish Social Studies* 22, no. 2 (Winter 2017): 38–73.

The diamond was also physically protected. During the uprisings in the 1670s (more of which I will discuss soon), the Washington home was occupied by rebels. The diamond was either well hidden during these events, or, more likely, John took it with him when he fled his land for safety elsewhere. In either case, Anne's diamond did not end up being looted during a time of chaos.

Anne's diamond is perhaps one of the clearest indicators of how wealthy the Pope–Washington family network had become in Virginia. Tempting as it is to read John's words and actions through a modern romantic lens and infer deep marital affection, the mores of the day suggest that what we are seeing is better understood as John's respect, both for the wishes of a deceased wife and for the family that took him in and set him up in such a fashion that he was able to ensure that his daughter could inherit a diamond ring. Anne's diamond, as well as her 700 acres from her father, both show that even though 17th-century elite women were not full players in the workings of church and state, they were nevertheless able to wield wealth and influence in other ways and even protect their interests at times.

Anne was buried in the cemetery near Bridge's Creek, presumably near the site of the two children she lost. The current cemetery and the arrangement of its stones are products of the 1930s, when all the human remains therein were excavated, drawn in place, and then reinterred mostly in the large stone tomb marked with Augustine Washington's name. All the stones in the cemetery are from the 1930s.

Sequential Sister Widow Wives Anne Gerrard Broadhurst Brett Washington and Frances Gerrard Speke Peyton, Appleton, Washington

John was not a widower for long. But rather than marrying the daughter of a friend or neighbor and bringing a young woman into his household, he married first one prominent widow, Anne, and then, on her passing, her equally prominent widowed sister Frances. Both sisters had married locally notable older men while they themselves were still in their

late teens, a common practice and demographic reality that would ensure that if they lived (by no means a guarantee in their day), they could become the vehicles for the transition of considerable wealth.[77]

The complicated status of widows was one part of a larger concern on the part of men to control women's power and authority. Thanks to a long-standing demographic imbalance that made women rare and therefore powerful, women often had somewhat more social influence than they had in England. But female power was always a challenge to an otherwise strongly male-dominated society. Controlling women's speech and actions became a growing concern for husbands, county justices, and burgesses alike, and over the course of the 17th century, women became less and less a presence in county courts protecting their property rights or defending their reputations from slander. In 1662, the burgesses enabled husbands to have their wives "ducked" (forcibly immersed in water) rather than pay a fine resulting from a slander ruling. It is not accidental that this law came about at the same time the burgesses were also drafting laws that defined and confined the growing number of enslaved Africans; Virginia's patriarchs were using their power over the law to make sure it served their ends and not those of others.[78]

Widows were in an awkward position in British law and in early America more generally, but they had a unique role in Virginia society. The fact that they often had property—sometimes considerable property if they were from a gentry family—made them something of a threat to an established patriarchal order. It is no accident, for example, that property-holding widows were disproportionately among the accused during New England's late-1600s waves of witchcraft trials.[79] That was less a concern in Virginia, where witchcraft was invariably more a matter of slander than execution. Widows with property, though, often found themselves in very good positions on the marriage market because a

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[77] For the roles of widows in early America and propertied women's power more generally, see Linda Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge, 2002); Vivian Bruce Conger, *The Widows' Might: Widowhood and Gender in Early British America* (New York: NYU Press, 2009); Martha Saxton, *Being Good: Women's Moral Values in Early America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 165–70; Mary Beth Norton, *Founding Mothers and Fathers: Gendered Power and the Forming of American Society* (New York: Knopf, 1996), 138–40, 157–55; Cynthia Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700–1835* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 22–23, 38–39, 96–100; Lorena Walsh, "'Till Death Us Do Part': Marriage and Family in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society,* Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 126–52; Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "The Planter's Wife: The Experience of White Women in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly* 34, no. 4 (1977): 542–71. See also Carol Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987).

[78] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996); Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 67–88.

[79] Carol Karlsen, *The Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1987), 80–84; Matthew Dennis and Elizabeth Reis, "Women as Witches, Witches as Women: Witchcraft and Patriarchy in Colonial North America," in Thomas A. Foster, ed., *Women in Early America* (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 66–94.

new husband would have access to the wealth gleaned from the property a widow bride would bring into a new marriage. Much depended on how wills had been written, but as with Anne Pope's 700 acres, once a significant male figure placed control of property in a woman's hands, it was often hers to manage. Widows often remarried quickly and, on top of that, frequently had multiple suitors from which to choose. Once a widow had remarried, the new husband benefited from the sudden increase in the property supporting his household, and if the newly married widow were to die, her property generally went to her husband—provided, of course, the original will and deed did not specify another path of ownership upon her death. In Virginia in particular, widows like the Gerrard sisters were the vehicle for conveying property and building family fortunes.

The Gerrard family were Marylanders but made the trip to the Potomac's south shore a bit later than the first wave. The family's patriarch, Thomas, was a surgeon and man of considerable standing as well as being a Maryland officeholder. But he threw his hat in with Josias Fendall (the on-again, off-again Puritan-leaning governor of the colony who had acquitted Prescott) during his 1660 attempt to overthrow Calvert family rule. Gerrard's reward was being declared a traitor and banished.[80] But the Potomac's south shore offered a welcoming home among many others with anti-Maryland establishment pasts. The family, including marriage-aged daughters Anne and Frances, settled near Nomini Creek, where they carried on growing and shipping tobacco and, on this side of the river, built better alliances. Gerrard was also one of the area's early importers of enslaved Africans.

In marrying the Gerrard sisters, John carried on his link to the Maryland migrant community that began with his Pope connections. It also did not hurt that Anne was Walter Broadhurst's widow.[81] Like Pope, Broadhurst was one of the county's first justices, and his Nomini Bay home served for a time as the court's meeting place. Eventually, a more formal courthouse was built on his land as well as a jail. With the court being such a magnet for activity, Broadhurst also had an ordinary and a store on hand.[82] In addition to profiting from the lodging and dining needs of people coming to the court, the county paid an annual rent of 2,200 pounds of tobacco for the use of the space to Broadhurst; his widow, Anne; and eventually John Washington. In marrying Anne Gerrard, Washington not only carried on his productive connection to the migrant Marylanders but also benefited from his new wife's lucrative holdings and enterprises.

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[80] Noeleen McIlvenna, *Early American Rebels: Pursuing Democracy from Maryland to Carolina, 1640–1700* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2020), 31–53.

[81] "Walter Broadhurst," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I2720&tree=Tree1.

[82] Walter Biscoe Norris, *Westmoreland County Virginia, 1653–1983* (Montross, VA: Westmoreland County Board of Supervisors, 1983), 111–12.

In a coincidence that shows just how small a world this colonial place could be, Anne G. had already been involved in a lawsuit against Mr. John Washington—the cousin of GEWA's John Washington—who had been trading with Barbados before he settled in Northumberland County. After Walter Broadhurst's death in 1658, Anne G. became the executor of her late husband's considerable estate, the management of which landed her in court, securing debts owed the estate. In 1659, she sued the estate of the also recently passed-away John for "a mare claimed by the s[ai]d Mrs. Broadhurst due from the said Washington."[83] The estate awarded her the "summe of 1200 lb of tobaco" to settle the debt.[84] Anne G. was in court repeatedly, using land to pay estate debts and calling in others.

Broadhurst's death left Anne G. with their three children, Gerrard, Walter, and Elizabeth. Soon after her first husband's death, she married Massachusetts immigrant Henry Brett, with whom she had another three children, Henry, William, and another Elizabeth. It is not clear how many of these six children lived to adulthood.

At the same time, Frances's life was following a similar path. She married the far older Thomas Speke right around the time he was representing the newly arrived John in his case against Prescott. Speke died soon after, and she married Valentine Payton, who soon died as well, and she then married Jonathan Appleton in 1666. Both of these sisters understood the power and limitations of widows and knew how to wield what power they could in a society not designed for women.[85]

The Cole Slander Cases, 1668

Elite women carefully guarded their reputations for propriety and good housekeeping. These were the most publicly visible parts of their identities, so maintaining a good name was vital. This was more than just an issue of bruised egos, since in the highly intermarried network of the region's gentry families, good marriages for children also depended on the larger family reputation. Lacking the sort of external regulators that govern modern people's social and economic identities—credit ratings, criminal records, social media presences, and so on—17th-century English people were far more vulnerable to the damage done by slander and public insults. Women's reputations teetered between two opposite ideas: the "good wife" on the one hand and the "nasty wench" on the other. A woman's secure position as the former assured her the sex-appropriate privileges of society, *good wife* being a sort of female equivalent (though not equal) to the male status of freeholder.

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[83] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia County Records: Order Book Abstracts of Northumberland County, Virginia, 1652–1657* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 77.

[84] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia County Records: Order Book Abstracts of Northumberland County, Virginia, 1652–1657* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 77.

[85] "Frances Gerard, Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties," https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I2723&tree=Tree1.

But being seen as a nasty wench subjected a woman to social ostracization and even physical chastisement at the hands of masters, husbands, or court appointees.[86] For these reasons, certain kinds of allegations could not be allowed to stand because to be silent might be to endorse them, and that carried a host of future problems. Women appeared most frequently in court as executors of deceased husbands' estates, but after that, slander cases were the second-largest source of woman-driven court cases.

For reasons unknown, a planter couple named Richard and Anna Cole put the Gerrard family in their crosshairs. The Coles were no strangers to trouble. Richard had a bad habit of getting drunk and letting fly libelous and profane tirades about everyone from local grandees to Governor Berkeley himself. On one occasion, at Johnathan and Frances Gerrard Appleton's home, Cole announced that Berkeley "durst not shew his face in England" and that Cole "expected" his own "brother to come in governor, who should kick his honor from his place."[87] Other times, he averred that Berkeley had lied to him and that "had it been in another place he would have kicked him."[88] He went on to say that the governor was "a raskall," a "loggerhead," a "puppy," and that a "pimpe was a better man than he" and that Berkeley "had f— —d him out of twenty pounds sterling and that he would neither be kicked nor f— —d out of his money by never a governor of Christendome."[89] Cole's appearances make for a master's course in the "most obsceane and filthy languadge" of his day.[90]

His wife, Anna, was a perfect match. She had been suspected of murdering a woman named Rose Parker, but nothing substantive had come of those suspicions. In 1668, the Coles began to spread around the story that the Gerrard sisters (one married to a second and the other to a third husband at the time) were freely offering their sexual services to other men while their husbands were away, that Anne kept a "bawdy house," and that Frances was a common "whore" and the sometime mistress of Governor Berkeley—another

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[86] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 102–3.

[87] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1973), 31.

[88] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1973), 32.

[89] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1973), 32–33.

[90] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1973), 33.

delusional claim regarding him. These insults cut to the core of elite female identity; indeed, they were calculated barbs. When Frances threatened legal action, Anna Cole dared her to do so, saying of her enemy, "the more she stirred the more she would stink."[91]

The case ended up in Westmoreland County Court, and John Washington, only recently widowered, sat on the bench as the parties told their tales and recounted their calumnies against one another. If the Coles sought an impartial airing of their curious complaints, they could not have been happy to see John on the bench, as only recently, Richard had already accused him of being an "ass-negro driver" and announced plans to have him tried before none other than Governor Berkeley. If nothing else, this odd attack on John helps clarify that he was enslaving Africans as early as 1668.[92] Nothing came of these claims, except perhaps that the county came to see the Coles as irritating cranks.

The Gerrard Mistresses of Bridge's Creek

Henry Brett passed away soon after the slander cases, leaving Anne G. a widow. John had heard all that the Coles had to say about the character of the widow Brett and must not have been all that persuaded since he decided to marry her and bring her home as Bridge's Creek's second mistress.[93] She also brought her youngest children into the family. The marriage additionally merged the Broadhurst and Brett properties with John's. He already had his extensive acreage, involvement with Pope acres, and a grain mill at the head of Rosier's Creek, giving him a small profit from each bag of wheat or corn milled in the neighborhood. Marriage to Anne G. added her downriver land on Nomini Bay with the courthouse, the ordinary, and all the profit garnered from the county and customers.

The taint of slander accusations followed the couple when a planter named Clement Spilman "did out of malicious principals and dangerous corruption endeavor to take away and defame the good name" of the new Col. and Mrs. Washington.[94] Spilman "dropt" two "dangerous libels"—the first in "John Quigley's pasture" and the other "in the face of the court," for which a contrite Spilman on August 26, 1669, in his own humble

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[91] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography, Volume One* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 18–19. The Cole case is very much like those discussed in Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 89–116.

[92] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1973), 33; Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography, Volume One* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 20.

[93] "Historical and Genealogical Notes," *William and Mary Quarterly* 17, no. 3 (1909): 226.

[94] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC. Private publication, 1973), 50.

words asked for "forgivenesses of God and next Lt. Coll. John Washington and his wife and I oblige myself to pay all the charges of court."[95] Sadly, the records do not tell us just what these "libels" were, but they must have been dramatic.

Anne G.'s time with John lasted only about six years before she passed away. Just before Anne G.'s passing, though, Frances's third husband, Jonathan Appleton, died as well, and Frances turned to her new brother-in-law to represent her in court, settling the estate. Then, when Anne G. died in 1675, Frances became Bridge's Creek's third Washington mistress.[96]

Frances brought into the marriage the property she controlled from her earlier marriages as well as three Africans with the English names of Tom, Mary, and Frances, whom Thomas Speke had enslaved at his Nomini Bay land since the late 1650s. Being no stranger to the fates and rights of widows, Frances entered into the marriage with a carefully crafted contract, something we today would call a prenuptial agreement. Her agreement had two effects. One was that she secured something from his estate. By the time she and John married, he was gaining in years and had already drafted a will and laid out the distribution of his property. For that reason, Frances would have to enter the marriage with assurances that she would be provided for in the rather likely event that she would outlive her new spouse. Frances secured for herself the guarantee of 500 acres of her own choice and 30,000 pounds of tobacco as a backup. She would receive one-third of the profits from the Rozier Creek mill and a written agreement that John would not be allowed to sell the mill during his lifetime and thereby cut her out of her fair share. Frances also ensured that she would receive eight enslaved Africans on her new husband's death.[97] These were presumably a portion of the people enslaved on the Washington acres since some of the enslaved people would also be willed to Washington's children.[98] These were all very sensible precautions that insulated Frances against financial ruin should she outlive an older husband who already had adult children who would receive much of his estate.

The second effect of the prenuptial agreement protected Frances from the way English common law handled women's property. England was unique in Europe in its system of "coverture" whereby a woman's property became legally her husband's upon

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[95] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Deeds, Patents, Etc., 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Private publication, 1973), 50.

[96] There is some question about whether or not she left Nomini Bay and moved to Bridge's Creek. See Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley, ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 287.

[97] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 208.

[98] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Biography, Volume One* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 26.

marriage.[99] English litigants had developed a host of ways to circumvent this law through trusts, bonds, and provisions in will that dictated what should happen to property. Each of these superseded coverture and meant that there were in fact many ways that women could control their own property. Nevertheless, wealthy women like Frances went into marriage very much with their eyes open and used the tools at hand to protect themselves and their holdings.[100]

Anne Pope's diamond ring, Anne G.'s extensive landholdings, and Frances's prenuptial agreement all show the ways that elite Virginian women could control their interests within a system that, officially at least, worked against them. It also shows that in Anne, Anne G., and Frances, the GEWA acres were home to some powerful and adept women.

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[99] Amy Louise Erickson, "Coverture and Capitalism," *History Workshop Journal*, 59 (2005): 1–16.

[100] Linda Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge,2002), 20–24.

CHAPTER SEVEN

The Wars of the 1670s

Background to the Wars of the 1670s

While John and Anne Washington were building their empire and raising their children, events far to the north were taking shape. As had happened for centuries, they would send ripples down the Potomac that would engulf its residents, Native and newcomer alike.

The 1652 treaty of peace between Maryland and the Susquehannocks created an alliance and a long peace between the two. Meanwhile, Maryland government secuits control over its Algonquian neighbors and collected the Piscataways, Mattawomans, Nacotchtanks, and Pamunkeys into an established reservation area near the falls of the Potomac. While all this took place, the Susquehannocks—only a few hundred people by 1660—were finding themselves ensnared in imperial politics and its effects across the American woodlands.

The restoration of Charles II also restored large parts of England's colonial rivalries with the Dutch and the French, conflicts in which Native allies played significant roles. In 1661, Susquehannock longhouses were hit with smallpox, and this calamity was soon followed by attacks from the Haudenosaunee (Five Nation Iroquois) to their north in what is now upstate New York and Canada and who were, at the same time, being attacked by the French and their Algonquian allies.[1] Finding themselves at a disadvantage, the Susquehannocks sought a way to escape south and put distance between themselves and their Haudenosaunee enemies, who themselves were already raiding Maryland settlements. In all of this raid-and-counterraid warfare, Maryland's Algonquian allies functioned as a sort of buffer against attacks from the north and as an aid to the Susquehannocks in their plight.

The story looked a bit different to Virginians on the south shore of the Potomac. Maryland had a northern land border that linked it to the rest of the continent, but Virginians—particularly elite Virginians on the county courts and in the assembly—lived on the colony's long peninsulas. They understood that rivers they relied on for commerce, such as the Potomac, also created their own kinds of vulnerabilities and had long offered quick access and escape to raiders. On the peninsulas, east meant down to the bay and the Atlantic and, after that, England.

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[1] Francis Jennings, "Glory, Death, and Transfiguration: The Susquehannock Indians in the Seventeenth Century," *Proceedings of the American Philosophical Society* 112, no. 1 (1968): 28; Matthew Kruer, "Bloody

Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017): 401–36.

West, though, led to where the peninsulas reached the piedmont and where the rivers changed their character. As the ground rises, each of Virginia's rivers changes from being an estuarial waterway pushed and pulled by the Chesapeake Bay and even Atlantic tides, to being eastward-rushing shallow rivers fueled by runoff from the Blue Ridge Mountains. The places where the tidewaters meet the mountain waters are called the fall line thanks to the fact that these are all marked by rocky rapids and waterfalls. These places had been significant for as long as humans lived in the area. For precontact Native peoples, they were the boundary between Algonquian speakers in the eastern down country and Siouan, Iroquoian, and Muskogean speakers westward into the hills. For the English, the fall line was as far upriver that an oceangoing vessel could travel. West of the falls, everything had to move by land or in small boats or canoes, and any settlers wanting to ship goods to England or receive them would have to find their way to the falls to get or send their shipments. In time, Virginians would establish important towns at the fall line: Richmond on the James, Fredericksburg on the Rappahannock, and even Washington, DC, on the Potomac. But during the 17th century's wars, the fall line was a source of great concern for the English because fast eastern-moving rivers allowed Native warriors to quickly sweep down to tidewater settlements.

As far back as the 1620s, Virginians were confident that security rested on getting Native people off their peninsulas and taking their land. The government had long ago consolidated Algonquians into allotments and exercised control over the selection of their leaders. There were small Native reservations on the peninsulas themselves, but tribes south of the James River maintained more autonomy than those living between the rivers. The people on the south side of the James, like Maryland's Algonquians, served as something of a buffer sitting between the colony's tobacco planters and Native people to the northwest who were often eager to raid English settlements. More importantly, these Native people either living under Virginian rule or allied to the colony were key players in a lucrative deerskin trade that stretched down into the Carolinas and Georgia. An ongoing cycle of gifts and tributes between tribes and the governor worked to keep these Native peoples at least nominally tied to Virginia—if not actively supportive then not outright hostile. The nearest of these Native settlements to GEWA's acres was the Nanzatico settlement, straddling the line between Westmoreland and old Rappahannock counties on the east bank of Jetts Creek.[2]

But even these government-granted settlements were no real security for Native peoples living too close to English neighbors. During the 1650s and 1660s, Virginians and their ever-roving and crop-ruining livestock harassed the remaining autonomous peninsular Algonquians and became sources of conflict that frequently led to violence—and

[2] Scott Strickland et al., *Defining the Rappahannock Indigenous Cultural Landscape* (Annapolis, MD: National Park Service Chesapeake Bay, The Chesapeake Conservancy, 2016), 36.

violence served as the justification for removal. The same assembly that granted the land to Algonquians was happy to regrant it to Englishmen, who then created more tobacco fields with almost no Native presence at all.[3]

Virginia's fortress mindset showed itself in an assembly act from 1662 that read, "For prevention and of other injuries to the English from the Marylanders for the future, that the honorable governor [Berkeley] cause by proclamation a prohibition of all Marylanders, English and Indians (which they have alradie done to us) and of all other Indians to the Northward of Maryland from trucking, trading, bartering or dealing with any English or Indians to the southward of that place."[4] Confronted with fears of raiders from the north, Virginia's leaders reacted by trying to bolt the doors closed.

The most worrying Native threat to Virginians, though, was not one that came from faraway Pennsylvania or New York. Instead, it was one close to home that emerged in response to their own policies. The Doegs were something of a wild card in all this colonial interplay. These Algonquian speakers formed themselves into this new community seemingly from fragments of older disrupted Algonquian villages that had reconstituted their polity in light of their new colonial reality. Animosity toward the English was perhaps their principal defining trait. Lacking a traditional territory, the Doegs were hard to locate and therefore hard to fight as they moved quickly between Maryland and Virginia's edges. For that reason, the Doegs were easy boogeymen for Virginians, who blamed every raid or stolen hog on these shadowy people.[5] But Virginians' fears were also based in reality. Raids by Doegs (or at least people credited as Doegs) were a sporadic but recurring threat to English livestock wandering in the woods and to English planters and surveyors alone there as well. In 1666, Virginian planter Colonel John Catlett expressed the view of many of his neighbors when he wrote to Governor Berkeley to get support for his plan to "utterly destroy and eradicate" the Doegs.[6] Catlett had just recently patented 2,000 acres on the Rappahannock, which included the land that would later become George Washington's Ferry Farm home. At that moment, Berkeley did not endorse Catlett's plans. By 1675, events forced a change of the governor's mind, but it would be too late for Catlett, who was killed by unidentified raiders near Port Royal in 1670.[7]

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[3] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 121–29.

[4] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60–1693* (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co., 1914), 15–16.

[5] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 137–38.

[6] Warren M. Billings, ed., *Papers of Sir William Berkeley, 1605–1677* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 284.

[7] Philip Levy, *Where the Cherry Tree Grew: The Story of Ferry Farm, George Washington's Boyhood Home* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 27–28.

The result of this complicated situation was that Marylanders were good at differentiating tribes because the colony's survival and success depended on it, whereas rank-and-file Virginians had a blanket hostility to all Native people regardless of their position or alliances in the larger colonial conflict.

In 1673, things took a bad turn for the Susquehannocks. In the middle of the 1650s, the Susquehannocks had numbered somewhere near 5,000 people, but thanks to war with the Haudenosaunee—and illnesses as well—their numbers had dwindled to less than 400, with almost all of that staggering loss of population happening within living memory.[8] As their Five Nations enemies gained the upper hand, that change in fortune even made the Susquehannocks' Maryland backers contemplate dumping their ally in favor of new direct alliance with the Haudenosaunee.[9] Instead, Calvert brought the Susquehannock remnant into Maryland's borders and settled them on land given to the Algonquians. By 1675, the Susquehannocks were prepared to help protect Maryland as best they could and set up a fortified town on Mockley Point where Piscataway Creek meets the Potomac opposite the future site of Mount Vernon.[10]

Not all Marylanders were glad to have these outlander Native people as new neighbors, however weakened and diminished they might have become. Not only were there lingering memories of the bad old days before the 1652 agreement, but it also did not help that the Susquehannocks spoke a language related to that of the feared Haudenosaunee and had other similarities in habits and lifeways. Many Marylanders saw the Susquehannocks as a sort of Trojan horse with possible French and Catholic allegiances sneaking into their midst to do them harm. There was something to this, even if not what settlers might have thought. Being Iroquoians, the Susquehannock had quite a bit in common with their Haudenosaunee foes, traits and habits that were unlike those of the local Algonquians. One of the more problematic of these was adherence to the Mourning War, an approach to conflict common to all Iroquoian-speaking peoples. Europeans understood war as an extension of national policy and a means to gain territory or control over trade.[11] People like the Susquehannocks understood war as a spiritual and psychological way to cope with the loss of friends and family members. In some cases, raiders might return with captives to fill the place of a lost loved one or village members. Other times,

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[8] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017): 411.

[9] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 144–45; James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 733.

[10] The Mockley Point site is included in the Colonial Encounter Archaeological Database. http://colonialencounters.org/SiteSummaries/SusquehannockFortSummary.aspx.

[11] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017), 411–13; James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 144–51.

killing—either in the field or via elaborate rituals back in the home village—served to redress the imbalance of loss and restore cosmic harmony. When all parties understood war this way, it was self-regulating. When one party did not—as was the case with European colonists—the system ran the risk of spiraling out of control.

In 1675, in the middle of this tense situation, someone stole someone's hog in Stafford County on the south side of the Potomac, and the whole region fell into war. Virginians were already on edge due to what many interpreted as environmental portents of cosmic instability with obvious biblical overtones. A large orange comet hung low on the horizon night after night. A sudden invasion of pigeons in numbers large enough to "brake down the limbs of large trees whereon they rested at night" was particularly alarming because old folks recalled the same thing happening just before the outbreak of the Third Anglo–Powhatan War of 1644. Lastly, "swarms of flyes [probably cicadas] about an inch long and big as the top of a man's little finger" flew up from holes in the ground and began to eat crops.[12] On top of that, news filtered down from New England of Native American plots and attacks putting those settlements on edge. Against this backdrop, a new Native American presence in the area was not welcome at all. When the hogs went missing, locals were convinced that the Doegs and Susquehannocks were the villains, went after them, and lit a match to the tinder. English raiders killed 14 Susquehannocks, who retaliated with a counterraid, killing two Englishmen in Stafford County.[13] Predictably, tempers only got hotter. In treating the Susquehannocks as enemies, the English made them enemies. Marylanders' mistrust of the new arrivals at Piscataway Creek now melded perfectly with Virginians' innate fears of Native people in general, and soon colonists on both sides of the Potomac were working hand in hand to deal with a threat that their own actions and fears had helped create.

John Washington Goes to War (A Thing with Which He Had No Experience)

Governor Berkeley was of two minds regarding his colony's Native relations. On the one hand, he understood the consequences of raiding and did not want to see violence continue or spread. Force was what he and most of his contemporaries understood as the best approach to this sort of problem. But on the other hand, he had a strong interest in the lucrative Native American trade south of the James River. He also had a few influential friends profiting from the movement of goods to and fro along the Occaneechi Trade Road into the deeper south. Berkeley understood, as many colonial leaders did, the

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[12] Charles McLean Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1952), 16.

[13] James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 734.

complicated web of connections that laced through Native America and how rash action could produce all sorts of unwanted and unforeseen consequences as well as disruptions to trade and the general peace. He also understood how the cost of war harmed a colony's economic well-being. But he knew the bloody mood of his colony and that he had to take visible action before things spiraled even more out of control.[14]

On August 31, 1675, Berkeley wrote to two burgesses with militia rank from the Potomac's south shore, appointing them to lead a Virginia force to march on the Susquehannocks. One of these men was Major Isaac Allerton, the New Englander-cum-Virginian who had become one of Westmoreland County's great planters. Allerton was no soldier, but he did have firsthand experience in the kind of grinding harassment conflict between English settlers and Algonquian peoples. Once he had settled on Nomini Bay in 1650, his cattle and hogs plagued the Onawmanients, who still lived in their centuries-old homeland there. They complained to Governor Berkeley that Allerton was "intruding a plantacon upon them."[15] A court-ordered settlement quieted things for a short while, but it was not long before the original residents were simply driven out. Even though it was not through outright violence, Allerton was experienced in Native American removal Virginia style.

The second appointee was John Washington—and despite his rank of colonel, he also was no soldier. Although no Native leader had ever taken Washington to court, he nevertheless was not blameless in the grabbing of Native American land. In 1666, the year he joined the House of Burgesses, Washington received from that same body the right to the land that the government had already allotted as the Nanzatico settlement near Jett Creek. John had put in an anticipatory claim to 400 Nanzatico acres, and the burgesses affirmed it, ruling, "It is ordered according to the said Washington's petition that upon the Indians deserting the said land he the said Washington may be readmitted to enjoy and possess the same by virtue of his former grant and that no other after claim may prejudice him in his right."[16]

By 1666, the blueprint for this process was well known, and John then had every incentive to make sure that the few remaining Nanzaticos living on the land went away as soon as possible, by hook or by crook. Once that was done, the land would be his in perpetuity. His principal experience with Appamattucks's original inhabitants would have been through his interactions with precisely these people or with others in the area living in similar settings and political structures.

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[14] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2017): 401–36.

[15] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 126; "Col. Gerard Fowke and the Indians," *William and Mary Quarterly* 8, no. 1 (1899): 24.

[16] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60–1693* (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co., 1914), 41.

For all that Allerton and Washington had in common, they could not have had more different backgrounds. John was the England-born son of an ardent supporter of Anglican orthodoxy, while Allerton was the Plymouth-born son and namesake of a Mayflower-voyaging Puritan separatist. As much as the two fathers would have been bitter rivals on matters of faith, the two sons were compatriots in the affairs of Virginia and its war with the Susquehannocks.

Colonel John Washington and the Westmoreland County Militia

John Washington's experience with local Native people was even further away from outright violence than Allerton's actions were. Neither was particularly well suited to the charge he was given. The key to understanding Berkeley's choice of these two men was rooted in Virginia's militia system. The colony's defense was entirely in the hands of the settlers themselves, amassed into "trained bands" or militias. An assembly act of 1639 required that every able-bodied man between the ages of 16 and 60 perform military service to his capacity when called upon. This included servants, with only Africans being exempted.[17] This system meant that at the time of the Susquehannock conflict, the colony could count on about 8,000 horsemen and perhaps as many as 15,000 foot soldiers spread over Virginia.[18] Westmoreland County could muster a few hundred able-armed men.

In 1675, Virginia's overall military commander in chief was the governor, and the colony was divided into four districts, with the troops of each commanded by a general, usually a member of the Governor's Council. It was a typically English habit that the military hierarchy would map onto the civil one. Each county had colonels commanding its infantry and captains commanding its mounted troops. These officers had the power to appoint their various subordinate officers and the junior officers responsible for each section of a county. Commanders had to keep an ear out at all times for news of possible Native American raids and servile insurrections and to be ready to call their men together in the advent of either. They were even called upon to ensure that assembly orders, such as those governing the proper building of tobacco storage barns, were enforced. Fortifications across the colony and at its edges were also manned by militia companies of anywhere from

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[17] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume II* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 4–5.

[18] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume II* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 9–10.

20 to 50 men. Local officers also had the power to "make choise of the men and horse before lymitted in their countyes to be raised for their respective fforts" and to "impresse and provide the proportion of provisions and other necessaryes" as they saw fit.[19]

A principal responsibility of officers was to drill their men. Ideally, this took place once a month on a flat piece of ground, most often near the courthouse since that was where all roads led and where arms would be stored. For wealthy officers, militia day was a chance to show off, so they commonly made a fine display of dress and arms. The rank and file generally came as they were. Failure to attend a planned muster meant a fine of anywhere from 20 to 100 pounds of tobacco. All of this practice closely mirrored England's, meaning that both new adult arrivals and colony-born Englishmen could fall neatly in line and know what to expect. Despite these being essentially civilian part-time armies, discipline was quite harsh. Drunkenness at the muster would get a man whipped, while raising a hand to an officer would result in the hand being cut off. If one shot at an officer, the company would return the favor in the form of a firing squad.[20]

A lack of sufficient and high-quality arms and munitions was a recurring concern to colonial officers. While freeholders might have had their own hunting or fowling pieces, these were far from military standard and did not meet the needs of what Englishmen anticipated for war. The lack of belts, bandoliers, swords, horse furniture, helmets, leather jackets, and more was so bad that some counties took it upon themselves to dip into collective funds and buy what they needed directly from their English merchant friends.[21] Militia members were also famous for bringing second-rate gear to musters, not wanting to put their best and most costly things at risk. And, of course, there could never be enough powder on hand to allow anyone a peaceful night's sleep. On top of that, arms issued to militias by the colony had the unnerving habit of disappearing back to settlers' homes. The burgesses had to authorize county officials to confiscate arms improperly possessed, and the miscreant had to pay a 300-pound tobacco fine for every wayward musket and double that for a pair of pistols.[22]

Washington held such a high militia rank because social prestige demanded it. But nothing in his background had prepared him for the task he now faced. He was a merchant planter with considerable experience of the Atlantic tobacco market and had good English connections. He and his brothers-in-law were great landowners, and Washington was quite familiar with the workings of every part of Virginia's governance, from church

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[19] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2, no. 330.

[20] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume II* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 69.

[21] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume II* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 40–41.

[22] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume II* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 43.

vestries to courts of law. These skills, holdings, and responsibilities, and the social prestige they granted him, were what placed him at the head of armed men. Militia rank was just another one of the many titles and responsibilities that were part of gentry identity. Besides, since every able-bodied man was required to be part of his local militia, it would have been an inversion of the social order to have men of standing submit to the command of men of lower social rank. If it happened that a gentry-man militia officer was *also* a good commander or tactician, well, that was a lucky accident—and that certainly happened in some cases. But the militia was about protecting Virginia, and there was no point in having the vehicle of that protection challenge the colony's hierarchy in its operations. The militia's hierarchy reinforced day-to-day divisions of social rank and vice versa. A captain or a colonel did not cease to be so when muster day was over, and the frequent use of military rank titles in other activities only highlighted the degree to which the relationship of masters and servants structured all of Virginians' interactions.

Regular militia drills would have given Washington some considerable experience with leading his armed neighbors—but, of course, only on the parade ground. Facing an armed opponent was a very different matter.

Planning the Siege of the Susquehannock Fort, September, October, and November 1675

Although not eager for war, Berkeley's August 31 appointment ordered that "Coll Jno Washington and Majr Isaac Allerton call together ye several militia officers of ye several regimts in ye No[rht] side Rappa and So[uth] side Potomeck River, and yt [that] a full and thorough inquisition be made of ye true caused of ye several murthers and spoyles and by wt [which] nation or nations of Indians donne and thereupon ye sd Coll Washington and Major Allerton demand satisfaction, and take such further cause in this exigency as shall be thought requisite and necessary."[23]

In case there was some uncertainty about the implications of the charge, Berkeley further noted that the commanders were empowered to acquire the arms and munitions they needed and to "doe such execucons uppon ye sd Indians as shall be found necessary and just."[24] Doing this required entering Maryland as an armed force.

A transcolonial military venture required some care and deference in organizing. Governors were protective of their borders and prerogatives, and high-ranking militia officers were accustomed to being unquestionably in charge. They also were answerable to

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[23] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 190.

[24] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 190.

the community whose men they led. These officers were always inclined to see orders from another colony's authority as more suggestions than commands. John had already been gently reminded that Maryland guarded its rights and laws when he sought Prescott's conviction, and the care he showed in arranging this expedition shows how much more diplomatic the older man was compared to his younger self.

Orders in hand, on September 6, 1675, John wrote to Calvert and his advisors that Berkeley had commanded him to "Certifie our designe to your honr and to request your assistance of men well victualled [supplied with food] and armed and to signifie our purpose to follow the enemy in yor Province of Maryland in the emergency of affairs require it."[25]

Washington sent Major Richard Lee and Captain Thomas Youell (the latter from a family of former Marylanders) to explain the current situation, and he also requested an emissary come from Maryland "to meet us" for a war council to be held 11 days later, on September 17, at John's GEWA home.[26] Calvert was perhaps even less eager for war than Berkeley was, but he faced the same reality of an angry and fearful settler population. Calvert thus ordered Major Thomas Truman to lead a force of 250 Maryland horsemen and more infantry with "arms and ammunition for the expeditious march against the barbarous enemy and to assist the Virginia forces."[27]

Meanwhile, the war council met at GEWA to work out as much of their plan as they could foresee. The Virginians would make their way upriver, either by land or by boat, and meet Truman and his Marylanders at the fort. The Virginia force of about 500 men included Washington's new brother-in-law John Gerrard and William Frizer, who served as the army's "chirrurgion [surgeon]."[28] Outfitting, moving, and feeding the army reached into storehouses and cellars across the county, all with the assurance that the county would make up the considerable expenses. George Horner provided 500 pounds of "poorke," David Wyckliffe gave 259 pounds of the same, Thomas Butler gave 463 pounds of beef, Rice Floyd gave "one steere 3 years old," and Nathaniel Pope Jr. gave 672 pounds of "beefe," 55 pounds of "baccon," and "4 caske of sider."[29] Stephen Mannering went along and provided 56 pounds of bacon, but he would soon find himself on the opposite side of the emerging conflict from his commander. Garrard Slye provided "5 gall[on]s of brandy" and "32 galls of wine," while John Ellis coughed up a full "40 gallons of rume." Nicholas Spencer provided "693 lb. of wheat meale," while John Watts and Edward Franklin each provided "one small boat," and Anthony Bridges rented a shallop (a large sailable rowboat)

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[25] *Archives of Maryland*, 15, 48.

[26] *Archives of Maryland*, 15, 48.

[27] *Archives of Maryland*, 15, 48.

[28] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1667, 1707–1709* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 19), 18.

[29] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1667, 1707–1709* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 19), 19.

to the army for 26 days.[30] John himself provided 146 pounds of gunpowder and 64 pounds of bacon from his own stores at Bridge's Creek. Lest all of this be misconstrued as mere public-spirited generosity, everything donated to the cause was done so in the full knowledge that there would be payment—sometimes at rather inflated rates. Fair price or extortionate, at least two years would pass before the county made good on these debts.[31]

John and Allerton's plan was "first to treat [a meeting under a truce]" with the Susquehannocks, but if the answers and prisoners they sought were not forthcoming, then the Virginians would declare themselves "open enemies and proceed to hostile actions."[32] Maryland's Truman had a somewhat more subtle charge. In John's letter to Calvert and in the governor's orders to Truman, the Marylanders were there to "assist the Virginia forces"—"assist" being a verb that implies subordination.[33] But at the same time, the Susquehannocks were a formal treaty-carrying ally of Maryland (if not of Virginia) and, as such, deserved respect from their ally's official representatives. Truman's charge differed slightly from the Virginians' in that he was to "treat" with the Susquehannocks but "not in any hostile manner" take action against them.[34] This tiny but ultimately vital difference between the two charges, and the perils of the word "assist," would be the rock on which Truman would founder, leading to his trial and conviction in Maryland court the next year for violating Calvert's orders.

Edward "Ned the Indian" Gunstocker and Native Languages

Communicating with non-English speakers was a central and difficult part of the plan. Mattox Neck resident Daniel Lisson served as Native language interpreter. How and when Lisson developed a proficiency in Native American languages is unclear. There were many Virginians who knew at least a smattering of Native languages. Captain George Brent, whose family had generations of close and often unpleasant interactions with the Potomac's Native peoples, knew enough Algonquian to call out "matchacomicha weewhip" at the cabin of a Doeg headman when Brent led the Virginians in search of the infamous

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[30] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1667, 1707–1709* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 19), 19–20.

[31] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1667, 1707–1709* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 19), 19–20.

[32] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 192.

[33] *Archives of Maryland*, 15, no. 48.

[34] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 486.

stolen hogs. The phrase was an offering of a peaceful parlay, but Brent was using it to deceive the Doegs. When the Doeg leader tried to escape, Brent caught "hold of his twisted lock" of hair and shot him dead.[35]

Mattox Neck—and region, more broadly—provided some chances to learn Algonquian language phrases and variants, though not as frequently as upriver in the place where the Brents called home. There were some Native American men even appearing in Westmoreland County Court in John's day. William Possesom, an "Appomatox Indean," for example, appeared there to register the marks on his hogs and cattle so that he would not be accused of theft.[36]

One of the most prominent of these Native Americans was Edward Gunstocker, who in some documents was called "Ned the Indian." Ned sided with his Virginia neighbors and participated in raids against other Native people. In recognition of his service, Governor Berkeley granted him special protections. By 1666, he and his wife, Mary, were living on 150 acres on the Rappahannock River granted him via the headrights system for the transportation of three English servants. Ned and Mary were both Nanzatico people, but the Gunstockers had adopted Christianity and were living a life that looked much like that of their small planter neighbors, growing tobacco and raising cows and hogs.[37] The name Gunstocker suggests that Ned was also making money by repairing firearms. English colonization on the Northern Neck eliminated the possibility for Native community survival, but it did allow spaces for individual survival for those who conformed to English norms. The Gunstockers were just such people. During Bacon's Rebellion, Ned again marched alongside his English neighbors against Native peoples whom he called "my countrymen, the Indians."[38] Given his position and reputation—and perhaps skill with firearms—it is possible that he accompanied John Washington on his expedition against the Susquehannock, but if that were the case, there is no record of his participation. In 1680, two English tenants to whom he rented land brought him to court, and in 1685, Ned was killed by two Native men he held as servants while they were looking for livestock in the woods.[39] His will commended his soul to God and left his land to Mary and their daughter, an act that perhaps hinted at the family having retained a commitment to Native

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[35] Charles McLean Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1952), 17.

[36] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Records, 1658–1661* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1970), 78.

[37] William Montgomery Sweeny, "Some References to Indians in Colonial Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1936): 593.

[38] Owen Stanwood, "Captives and Slaves: Indian Labor, Cultural Conversion, and the Plantation Revolution in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 114, no. 4 (2006): 452–53.

[39] Owen Stanwood, "Captives and Slaves: Indian Labor, Cultural Conversion, and the Plantation Revolution in Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 114, no. 4 (2006): 452–53; Julia A. King, "A Christianized Nanzatico Indian Household in Tidewater Virginia," grant proposal, October 2022.

traditions of matrilineal descent.[40] Gunstocker's story shows the deep divisions English colonization created for Native communities and highlights the ways that adaptation could work as a personal survival strategy.

A land survey from 1678 made mention of "Ned the Indians path" as a landmark between the land of John Foxwood and land that John owned.[41] That would place that path somewhere near the current run of Route 3. Recent work has located the Gunstockers' farmstead on the Rappahannock just below Portobago Bay and near Salem, Virginia. The Nanzatico town itself was just upriver from the Gunstocker acres.[42]

Ned's presence offers a hint of at least one way that Lisson, who lived on the west side of Bridge's Creek, might have developed some proficiency in Algonquian. But even if Lisson was fluent, it is quite unlikely that the Virginians had anyone able to speak the Susquehannock variety of Iroquoian, a totally unrelated language family as different from Algonquian languages as German is from Italian. This language gap would have left them at the mercy of a translator chain of multiple tongues or the skills of some of the tributary Algonquians (men like William Possesom) who would accompany them. The Marylanders had their own interpreter named John Shanks, a man who had once been a servant of the exiled Thomas Gerrard.[43] Shanks had some proficiency with the Susquehannocks' language, perhaps a result of their alliance with Maryland.

All told, about 750 Englishmen and about 100 allied Algonquians—perhaps including Ned Gunstocker—marched on a fortified village housing a few hundred Native people, virtually the entire population of around 100 somewhat traumatized and disrupted Susquehannocks who had survived smallpox, Haudenosaunee raiding, and the move to Maryland to seek safety.[44] The fort also had other Native people staying there—Doegs, Piscataways, and perhaps even Senecas—who were either resting there between travels or had thrown their lot in with these people. All of the fort's residents were tense and on their guard.

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[40] William Montgomery Sweeny, "Some References to Indians in Colonial Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 16, no. 4 (1936): 593.

[41] Virginia Land Patents Book 6, 631.

[42] Julia A. King, "A Christianized Nanzatico Indian Household in Tidewater Virginia," grant proposal, October 2022.

[43] Russell R. Menard, "From Servant to Freeholder: Status Mobility and Property Accumulation in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1973): 54.

[44] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (July 2017): 417; James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 734.

John Washington Drafts a Will, September 21, 1675

Once the battle plans had been completed, the various English parties returned to their homes to prepare themselves for war. In the world of official documents, few were as personal and revealing as last wills and testaments. At their most elemental level, they were a needed legal formula to ensure the smooth disposition of an estate and the payment of its outstanding debts. But on another level, each will represented someone confronting the fact of their own mortality—and often doing so, as the expression goes, with death sitting on their nose. For Nathaniel Pope, preparations for a trip back to England caused him to reflect on his own mortality and draft his will. John was now embarking on something with which he had no experience and that was far more dangerous than ocean travel—and all in a time of frightening portents and great political and physical danger. Facing the very real prospect of dying upriver, John put pen to paper and drafted his last will and testament, witnessed by two captains in the militia, John Lord and Jonathan Appleton, the latter being the then-still-living husband of Washington's future wife Frances Gerrard. Both men were also probably heading upriver in a few days as part of Washington's small army.

The will itself, drafted at this significant juncture, is a small clue to John's mindset that fall. Nathaniel Pope's will from 15 years earlier offers a useful contrast. He began with the context of the will's timing in writing, "Having a resolution to goe to England this present shipping and knowing the dangers of the seas as affairs now stand and the uncertainty of mans life thereon"; he noted the possibility that "this miserable life" would end "as God pleaseth whether by land or water." After that, he added a fairly boilerplate Protestant profession of faith. Pope dictated, "I bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God my most mercifull and loving father hoping through the death passion and resurrection of Jesus Christ my alone savior and redeemer he will receive it into everlasting happiness after this miserable life is ended." Twice the will referred to this "miserable life," but the rest of it was the business of distributing his property to his family. His was a simple, direct, and practical document.[45]

Lawrence Washington's will also makes for a useful comparison. He drafted it on September 27, 1675, six days after his brother John's will and while the latter was at the Susquehannock Fort. That document said even less about faith than Pope's did, but that might be related to the fact that it was written when Washington was "sick and weak in body."[46] Its sole religious content was "I give and bequeath my soul into the hands of Almighty God hoping and trusting through the mercy of Jesus Christ, my savior and redeemer, to receive full pardon and forgiveness of all my sins."

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[45] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 3: 6.

[46] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 137.

John Washington's will dove considerably deeper into spiritual matters, revealing something of the drafter's mind. He wrote, "Thanks be to the Almighty God (for it) and calling to remembrance the uncertaine estate of this trans[itory] life, and that all flesh must yield unto death when it shall please God for to call."[47] He went on in the tone of a dedicated and conversant Anglican seriously weighing the state of his soul and invoking his church's version of the doctrine of predestination, declaring that he was "heartily sorry from the bottome of my hart for my sins past most humbly desiring forgiveness of the same from the almighty God (my savior) and redeemer in whome and by the merits of Jesus Christ I trust and believe assuredly to be saved and to full remission and forgiveness of all my sins yt my soule wth my body at the generall day of ressurrection shall arise againe wth joy and through the merits of Christ death and passion possess and inherit the kingdom of heaven prepared for his elect and chossen."[48]

It is true that John's family background and his role on the vestry of the parish that bore his name bespoke a much greater interest in religious matters than that which occupied his comparatively secular father-in-law. But even so, John's will is revealing in its full articulation of Anglican orthodoxy. The language was not entirely Washington's; others used a similar formula. In fact, John's son Lawrence employed almost the same language in his 1698 will. Notably, perhaps, his grandson Augustine's 1743 will boiled all this complex dogma down to "in the name of God amen," and John's great-grandson George's 1799 will carried only the same brief line.

Theological battles over the idea of the "elect and chossen" defined John Washington's father's life. Anglicans and Puritans largely agreed on the idea that only faith could grant salvation and that God's chosen were those who found the reward of heaven through their faith in Christ. They differed, though, in just who was among the elect and about one's ability to know one's own standing in that grand drama. Whereas Puritans saw the elect as a very small number of people unable to know with any certainty their divine fates, Anglicans were confident that adherence to faith and church was the mark of the elect.[49] John's statement in his will was a fairly sophisticated handling of the official Anglican view of this complicated theological issue. It also was, although written in the third person, a humble way of expressing his own confidence in his salvation through the Anglican Communion. This part of the will contextualized his bequests to the church at the end of the document. He requested that "their may be a funerall sermon preached" in his

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[47] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 205.

[48] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 205.

[49] Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover, NH: New England University Press, 1995), 15–28; Stephen Foster, *The Long Argument: English Puritanism and the Shaping of New England Culture* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012). See also Edmund Morgan, *The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop* (Boston: Little Brown, 1958).

name at the parish church and that "their be no other funeral kept yt will exceid four thousand pou[nd]s of t[o]bacco." [50] Here was a desire to avoid too ostentatious a ceremony when the time came.

More significantly, John would donate two interesting objects to the church. He left to the church at Church Point "ye ten commandments and the Kings armes wch is my desire should be sent for out of wt mony I have in England."[51] These both were probably stone or wooden carvings or perhaps paintings of the type then typically mounted in the walls of Anglican churches. The fate of these objects is unknown, but they were probably moved up Mattox Creek when the Church Point lower church was abandoned sometime after John's death but before the end of the 17th century. Few decorations like this have survived from the 17th century—nor have Virginia's churches of that period, most being replaced in the 18th century. St. Mary's White Chapel church in Lancaster County, though, has oil-paint-on-wood Ten Commandments on its altar wall. Parishioner David Fox bequeathed them in 1702.[52]

Anglican church decoration had been a point of controversy ever since the birth of Anglicanism itself. Catholic churches and cathedrals were filled with devotional statuary, textiles, and paintings serving as teaching tools and objects of direct veneration. Protestant reformers saw these—particularly images of saints and Christ himself—as being idolatrous and therefore having no place in a reformed church. The extent of the need for removal depended on the extent of the change each reformer sought. The most radical reformers argued for a church environment entirely free from any statues, icons, and the like, following the dictates of Exodus 20:4 and its prohibition of graven images. But not all Anglicans saw it the same way. Less radical reformers celebrated the educational nature of many church images; the problem for them only began when these crossed the line from teaching devotion to being objects of devotion.

Despite the disapproval of many radical reformers, the hanging of a copy of the royal crest became common during the reign of Henry VIII. By the middle of the 16th century, a convention had developed for churches to display ornate plaques, paintings, or frescos of the Ten Commandments, the Apostles' Creed, or the Lord's Prayer. The choice of text as opposed to images of people emphasized the written word, which was itself an allusion to the Protestant emphasis on reading scripture for one's self.[53] In 1560, Elizabeth I ordered that a copy of the Ten Commandments appear on the wall of every one of her state

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[50] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 205.

[51] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 205.

[52] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 120.

[53] Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 121–24.

churches "for edification, ornament, and to promote a religious demeanor among parishioners."[54] The following year, she also mandated the hanging of a royal crest. By the time Virginians were building their churches, both a royal crest and some sort of ornamental text would have been as familiar to Anglican churchgoers as the Book of Common Prayer and an altar table.

John's bequest did not necessarily mean that the parish church lacked these items; he might simply have been ordering an upgrade. But whether it was a replacement or a new offering, the symbolism of John's twin gifts cannot be missed. They mirrored the commitment to Anglican orthodoxy he wrote in his will, and they manifested that allegiance in something visible and public. He wanted his legacy to his fellow congregants to be the fusing of his name with the ethics his church taught and loyalty to the king who sat at the church's head. Unlike similar Catholic bequests, these donations were not the acts of a penitent seeking absolution through charitable deeds. Instead, here was a lifelong committed Anglican confident in his salvation through his church and offering bequests to ensure that others would follow his path.

What Happened at the Susquehannock Fort?

On September 25, some eight-odd days after the GEWA war council, Truman's men were at the fort. Truman sent Hugh French and translator John Shanks into the fort to meet with Wastahanda-Harignera, the group's principal leader and diplomat during these hard years. On learning that Wastahanda-Harignera had recently died, though (perhaps on one of the recent raids and counterraids), Shanks requested to speak with other Great Men so that the Marylanders could "tell them of the great injuries that had been done to the country" and that they had come to the fort to "know who they were tht had done them."[55] In addition to the killings on the Virginia side that had alarmed the whole country, there had very recently been a raid and battle at the plantation of a Marylander named Randolph Hanson (sometimes called Hinson) living near Piscataway Creek. The raiders killed some members of the Hanson family, and some of the raiders themselves had been killed as well. All were buried near where they fell—perhaps even by Truman's men. The attack set off terror in the area and seemed to confirm Marylanders' worst fears about the Susquehannocks, even though it was not entirely clear that they were the culprits.[56]

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[54] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 55.

[55] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 481.

[56] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2017): 413.

Five or possibly six Susquehannock Great Men left the fort to parlay with Truman and Shank. They told the Englishmen that the various attacks were the work of Senecas who had been at the fort but now "had been gone 4 days."[57] The Marylanders knew this was probably at least partly true because Haudenosaunee warriors had been probing Maryland's defenses for over a decade. Maryland rangers had captured one of their warriors in the colony, and a party of Piscataway allies captured and tortured two Five Nation Oneida, warriors who told them about large raiding parties coming down from the north.[58] Shank also noted that "Indians from other towns" were in the fort, confirming the presence of other people in the area. Truman suggested that "young men" at the fort come with the Marylanders and "assist as Pilates [pilots, i.e., guides]" to "joyne in the persuite agt the Senecaes."[59] He assured the Great Men that he had "good horses" and that they themselves were "good foot men and might soon overtake" the northbound Senecas, perhaps near Patapsco Creek, only a few days' march away.[60] The Great Men first wanted a formal pledge from Truman that he understood that the killings were the work of the Senecas and not their doing. Truman obliged. This now meant that Maryland and the Susquehannocks were officially in agreement about what had transpired—and it was a version of events that exculpated the people of the fort. In return, the Great Men agreed to Truman's planned pursuit. After all, helping defend Maryland was part of the agreement that allowed them to live in the colony in the first place. They all settled on a nearby meeting place for the next day, when the chase would begin.[61]

A formal diplomatic party of five or maybe six Great Men arrived at the meeting place on the 26th as planned, carrying with them "an old paper," no doubt a copy of the now 20-year-old treaty between the allies, "and a meddall" bundled with "a yellow ribbond." These objects represented "the pledge of peace" and "amity and friendship" between the Susquehannocks and Maryland that was to endure for as long as the "sun and moone should last."[62] The Great Men clearly understood their actions as solemn high diplomacy between two long-standing allies.

But by the morning of the 26th, the Virginian force had arrived, and John and Allerton, who had not been part of the previous day's discussions, now accompanied Truman. The Virginians also understood themselves as engaged in action of the highest import, and they would have been carrying their own finest military arms and ornaments,

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[57] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 481.

[58] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 144–45.

[59] *Archives of Maryland* 2, no. 481.

[60] *Archives of Maryland* 2, no. 481.

[61] Matthew Kruer, "Bloody Minds and Peoples Undone: Emotion, Family, and Political Order in the Susquehannock–Virginia War," *William and Mary Quarterly* 74, no. 3 (2017): 416–18.

[62] *Archives of Maryland* 2, no. 482.

previously only polished up for monthly militia drills. Truman was in an unenviable position: outranked on the ground by Washington with his larger force but at the same time holding a commission from Maryland and not from Virginia. It was here that the Marylanders' and the Virginians' stories began to diverge.

Virginian John Gerrard, John's young brother-in-law (and no friend of the colony that drove out his family), claimed that "as soone as our Virginia forces were landed in Maryland wee found five Susquehannoh Indians under a guard," seemingly because they had tried to escape the fort.[63] Shank claimed that the Virginians immediately laced into the Great Men, repeating the previous day's interrogations all over again, for themselves this time, and pressing "more highly of the injuries done by them."[64] The Great Men repeated that the killings had been the work of Senecas, no doubt in the confidence that their new friend Truman would back up their claim. Virginian translator Daniel Lisson agreed about John and Allerton's interrogation, adding that the officers were not impressed with the Great Men's laying the blame on the Senecas. He claimed Washington scoffed at this defense, pointing out that the Susquehannocks had been eating pork and beef—meat they could have only by theft—and that some of their fellows had "bin taken on the Virginnia side who had ye cloathes of such as had bin murdered, upon there backs."[65] Through Lisson, Washington "demanded satisfaction," or the Englishmen would "storme the fort," a threat that perfectly matched his charge.[66] In Lisson's retelling, while all of this took place, Major Truman became impatient and came over repeatedly to interrupt, saying "gentlemen, have you donne, for I resolve to say nothing until you have donne."[67] Washington and Allerton testily replied, "When we have done we will give you notice."[68]

That same Monday morning, Truman sent Marylander "Mr Cood and two or three rankes of men" off to the Hanson home to "see if the Indians had plundered it and if they [the Marylanders] found any ammunition to bring it away."[69] This recent raid was very much on the minds of the Marylanders, and soon the Virginia militiamen would know the whole story as well, adding more fuel to their rage and fear. When Cood's party returned from the nearby home, Maryland captain John Allen claimed he watched as Washington,

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[63] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 192.

[64] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 481.

[65] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 192.

[66] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 192.

[67] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 194.

[68] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 194.

[69] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 483.

Allerton, and Truman conferred, "sitting upon a tree some distance" from the Great Men and their armed guards.[70] Allen thought that the Virginians were convinced that three of the Great Men "were they that did the murders" in Virginia and were satisfied they had the men they had come for.[71] The three officers rose from their log and ordered the Great Men bound. John in particular was impatient to have rough justice meted out on these captives, declaring, "Why should we keep them any longer, let us knock them on the head, we shall get the forte to-day." Allen claimed that Truman had protested but was "over swayed by the Virginia officers."[72]

Virginian Lisson recalled it differently. He claimed Truman and Shank were the ones losing their tempers while the Virginians remained calm and diplomatic. After a long talk with the now bound Great Men, Lisson claimed that Truman called to Washington, "Are not these impudent rogues to deny the murders they have donne when theire Indians ly [lie] dead at Mr. Hinson's [Hanson's] plantation being killed in a fight there?"[73] John somewhat menacingly replied, "It would be very convenient to carry them up thither and shew them there Indians that are theire buried." Truman said only, "And soe I will."[74] Gerrard added that Allerton inquired of Truman, "What did he intend to doe with them?" after showing them the graves at the Hanson home. The Marylander answered that he "thought they deserved the like," to which Allerton replied, "I doe not thinke soe."[75] Truman and a party of guards set off for the Hanson home, taking the bound Great Men—perhaps still wearing the badge and ribbon symbolizing the eternal bond of friendship between them and the men about to kill them. Gerrard claimed that they only got 500 yards along when the Englishmen turned on them and bashed their brains out. Lisson said it was an "occation that much amaized and startled us and our commanders, being a thing that was never imagined or expected of us."[76]

Who was responsible for killing these men who were taken while trying to cooperate with the English? Was it an angry and impatient John Washington, or was it a scheming Truman? The truth was probably somewhere in the middle. Truman himself was most likely right when he said that "gen[eral]l impetuosity of the whole field" colored English

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[70] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 483.

[71] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 483.

[72] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 191.

[73] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Patents, 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 74.

[74] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Patents, 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 74.

[75] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Patents, 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 73.

[76] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Patents, 1665–1677, Part 1* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 74.

actions. He was also probably right in claiming that the killings were meant to "p'vent a mutiny of the whole army as well Virginians and Marylanders."[77] Militias were capricious things. Even in the best of times, citizen soldiers were always eager to get their duty done and return to their farms and families. The pull of home was even stronger in the late fall, as a mature tobacco crop would soon need harvesting. But the general alarm across the country and the news of the Hanson farm raid on top of that would have put an already twitchy and fractious force in an especially bloodthirsty mood. Few of the 750 Englishmen on Piscataway Creek were adept at understanding the complex makeup of Native communities, the limits of Great Man authority within a traumatized village like the Susquehannock Fort, and Iroquoians' very different ideas of warfare. The five Susquehannock Great Men paid the price.

The killings, though, did one thing no one could debate. They were a clear demonstration to the people in the fort that there was no safe way to deal with Englishmen, no matter what colony they hailed from or what sorts of agreements bound them. The governors of both colonies knew this perhaps better than anyone other than the Susquehannocks themselves. Calvert tried to salvage what it could of Maryland's credibility by later impeaching Truman on the grounds that he had violated his orders (a debatable proposition given the ambiguity of "assist") and, more directly, that his actions had enraged Native allies "with whome the publick ffaith hath been broke" and that "it is not expected tht any faith or credit will be given to any [treaties] we shall have with them."[78] Virginia's Berkeley himself commented about the Great Men, saying, "If they had killed my father and mother and all my friends, yet if they had come to treat of peace, they ought to have gone in peace."[79] John Washington and Allerton were in the assembly for Berkeley's rebuke and quietly accepted it.[80]

But all that postgame analysis came a year or two later. On September 26, with the Great Men's blood still on English hands, the principal aim was to resolve the standoff at the fort. Both the Susquehannocks and the Englishmen settled in for what would become a six-week-long siege, with Washington's army blockading Mockley Point from its landward side. The Susquehannocks might not have understood what had happened to the Great Men, and one participant later recalled that the Susquehannocks would reply to calls for parlay by asking where their leaders were. The Susquehannocks hunkered down into a square double-stockaded enclosure, an unusual shape for such towns and perhaps a sign that it was something they'd inherited rather than built themselves. One observer described

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[77] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 501.

[78] *Archives of Maryland*, 2, no. 500.

[79] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 191.

[80] Charles McLean Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1952), 23.

it by saying, "The walls of this fort were high banks of earth, with flankers having many loop holes, and a ditch round all, without [outside of] this a row of tall trees fastned 3 foot deep in the earth."[81] Over a century later, the new United States would fortify this same strategic bend in the Potomac by mounting brick forts on the high bluffs on the north bank of Piscataway Creek. But the people who built this wooden fort were quite clever in choosing the swampy lowland instead because no besieger could "undermine it by reason of water."[82]

The English matched the fort with a compound of their own. A stockaded enclosure walled in rows of tents housing the men of both colonies, with the officers' tents lined up behind and a camp for the junior officers behind that. They positioned outposts within musket range of the fort along the river and might even have built a medieval-style siege tower, and two small ships sat in the river to ensure no escape by water.[83] Laying out a camp was a skill one could learn from a book, so it makes some sense that the otherwise inexperienced commanders created a precise and well-built encampment. Turning events their way, though, was another matter.

The siege of the fort lasted about six weeks, during which time there was some small-scale fighting and sniping but no major action. The English did not feel that they had much of a chance at taking the fort in an assault, but they also felt that time was on their side. Eventually, the Susquehannocks' supplies began to run low, and they had to take action. Under cover of darkness, about 75 of the most mobile people broke out, leaving behind only those too weak, injured, or ill for the difficult fast move they were going to have to make. On their way out, they killed a number of Englishmen asleep in their tents and then effectively vanished into the night. The Englishmen entered the fort to plunder what they could before breaking camp and heading back to their farms. They had not achieved the goal of subduing the Susquehannocks. In fact, the small army had done exactly the opposite. Killing the five Great Men and then besieging the fort had escalated the raid and counterraid into a full-fledged war.

Bacon's Rebellion, 1676–1677

Despite a colony-wide alarm over raids, the entire band of Susquehannocks managed to slip across the colony along the western upper reaches of the rivers where the falls are and the piedmont begins until they ended up near the James River. There, they met up with the

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[81] Charles McLean Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1952), 19.

[82] Charles McLean Andrews, ed., *Narratives of the Insurrections, 1675–1690* (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1952), 19.

[83] One witness drew a map of the siege showing the location of the fort, the camps, the redoubts, the boats on the river and an odd wheeled tower the artist called "the mont." The map is reproduced in James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 735.

Doegs, a people with whom they now shared an unshakable hatred of the English—*all* English. Together, and in concert with others wanting revenge on Virginia for innumerable reasons, they let loose a wave of violence on Virginia's western and southern edges. The small number of Susquehannocks were not capable of leveling the colony, but the fear of raids did more work to disrupt Virginia life than any raiding party could. Across the colony, settlers began to enclose their homes with impromptu fortifications and spend sleepless night after sleepless night guarding against raiders. One Virginian called this nervous winter "frightfull times" in which "no man stirrd out of door unarm'd."[84] Settlers appealed to their governor and their local courts for aid, but in their view, Berkeley was slow to act, conflicted in what he would do, and overly committed to building forts, which were both costly and did little to address the growing panic. In the midst of this, Native raiders killed a servant on the James River plantation of Nathaniel Bacon, who was a relatively new migrant but a member of the Governor's Council and a kinsman of Berkeley's by marriage. Bacon stepped up as a champion for the western planters, fearing for their lives and well-being. He proclaimed his willingness to lead an unofficial militia, nicknamed the Volunteers, to go kill the Native people whom Virginia's officials seemed unwilling or unable to confront. In contrast to the care John had taken to make sure all his intercolonial Ts were crossed before his march into Maryland, Bacon simply claimed authority he did not have and led men under an impromptu banner.[85]

In the spring and summer of 1676, the Volunteers under Bacon's leadership set about killing any Native American they could find without regard to their being ally, tributary, trade partner, or outright enemy. Whereas Berkeley wanted to fight the Susquehannocks and the Doegs while maintaining good relations with tributary tribes and trade partners, Bacon and his allies wanted to rid the colony of any Native people at all—a view held by many Virginians. As if to demonstrate the gulf between the governor and his

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[84] Wilcomb Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1957), 33. The scholarship on Bacon's Rebellion is extensive. Virginia historians have long seen it as the most significant and even defining political event of seventeenth-century Virginia. Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972), is a good representation of that view. See also Stephen Webb, *1676: The End of American Independence*, (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, reprint edition, 1995). Edmund Morgan saw the revolt as pivotal in the move to African slavery. See Edmund Morgan, *American Slavery: American Freedom* (New York: W. W. Norton, reprint edition, 2003). Recent studies, though, have moved away from focusing on the political side of the conflict and emphasized the devastating effect of the war against the Indigenous population that both created the conflict and was exacerbated by it. See James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ethan Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early America* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015); Matthew Kruer, *Time of Anarchy: Indigenous Power and the Crisis of Colonialism in Early America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2022).

[85] James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ethan Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early America* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015).

clique and much of the colony's rank and file, Berkeley declared Bacon and the Volunteers to be rebels. But Bacon had made himself a hero to the western planters, who in June rewarded their rebel by sending him to Jamestown as the burgess from Henrico County.[86]

The new session of the assembly was divided between Berkeley's allies and reformers led by Bacon and a few others. By the 1670s, Virginia had become a pared-down, distilled version of England, with fragmentary versions of many of the same institutions but accented with heightened levels of inequality and the inherent conflicts that brought. Once Baconite defiance began to show the weakness of Berkeley and his ruling cohort, that fracture brought out every type of grievance possible in a deeply divided society rife with violent coercion and now facing war from a terrifying and unpredictable enemy. Bacon's unofficial force had been created to kill Native people, but it quickly turned on the leaders of the colony itself, capturing Jamestown in July and sending Berkeley and his government in flight to the Eastern Shore. In Berkeley's absence, Bacon declared himself the *real* authority and sent a force to bring Berkeley to heel, while Bacon and his allies set off to wipe out the first Native people they could find. Berkeley briefly retook the capitol in September, only to have Bacon's men siege it, retake it, burn it, and see the governor once more flee to the Eastern Shore. Throughout this chaotic time, partisans switched sides when it was convenient and then switched back again when the wind changed. Baconites tried to establish themselves as a new government and institute reforms, while home raiding was rife across the colony as seemingly masterless men followed their impulses and not the orders of their betters. Quite in opposition to its mission, the chaos Bacon unleashed enabled an unprecedented level of attack against the disorganized colony.[87]

The rebellion was larger and more incoherent than that which had engulfed Maryland 20 years earlier. It also focused on relations with Native Americans far more directly—and violently—than did Maryland's varied troubles. There were almost as many motivations for rebels as there were rebels themselves, with concerns ranging from anger over taxes and the cost of Berkeley's fort policy, to a simple desire to escape—even momentarily—the confinement of a strictly hierarchical, deeply controlling, and usually rather dull daily routine. Bacon succumbed to dysentery on October 26, 1676, right at the height of the chaos, and Joseph Ingram took over leading Bacon's army in the field. Once Berkeley

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[86] Ethan Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early Virginia* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015), 149–76; James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 726–50.

[87] James D. Rice, "Bacon's Rebellion in Indian Country," *Journal of American History* 101, no. 3 (2014): 726–50.

learned this news, he pressed home his attack on Baconites all across the colony, resulting in some vicious battles and slow mopping-up operations that lasted into January, when Ingram surrendered and the rebellion fizzled out.[88]

John Washington Returns Home

John's will was a bit premature. He survived his time upriver—although he hardly showered himself with glory. Upon their return to office, he and Allerton had to sit in the assembly and endure hearing Berkeley condemn the killing of Susquehannock Great Men. Even if they blamed Truman for the killing—which they did—there was no avoiding the fact that Washington had been in charge and that nothing good had come of his expedition. In fact, it was a catastrophe, and any chance to slow the rush to disaster had been thrown away at Mockley Point.

Once back home, John continued life as it had been lived, despite the gathering storm. His tobacco business connections were now not only in London and Bristol but also in Rotterdam in the Netherlands, from where a relocated Englishman named Samuel Tucker empowered Washington to act as his agent in Virginia.[89] Washington was also one of four trustees appointed by the governor and council to settle a dispute between two London merchants.[90]

Sometime in the spring of 1676, Anne G. passed away, leaving Washington once again a widower. John Appleton had also passed away, leaving his widow, Frances, in control of his estate, including eight enslaved people. It is worth noting that that is the same number of enslaved people she'd secured from John before their marriage. On May 10 of that year, Washington agreed to the terms of Frances's prenuptial agreement, which granted her security even though her soon-to-be husband had already divided much of his property in his will, drafted the year before. The agreement had Isaac Allerton and John Gerrard acting as Frances's agents. The circle was that small.[91]

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[88] James D. Rice, *Tales from a Revolution: Bacon's Rebellion and the Transformation of Early America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013); Ethan Schmidt, *The Divided Dominion: Social Conflict and Indian Hatred in Early America* (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2015); Wilcomb E. Washburn, *The Governor and the Rebel: A History of Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1972).

[89] Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1665–1677*, vol. 3, 56.

[90] Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1665–1677*, vol. 3, 61.

[91] Linda Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 24–26; "Frances Gerard," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I2723&tree=Tree1.

Bacon's Rebellion at GEWA

Soon after John and Frances married, the colony erupted into conflict. Westmoreland County itself did not suffer the way the James and York River counties did, but there was still trouble. The rebellion landed at GEWA in the form of an August 4, 1676, order from Bacon in his new self-appointed capacity of protector of the colony. Bacon held a meeting of supporters at Middle Plantation—the area that would later become Williamsburg—and began to form a provisional government and draft plans to continue war against Native people. This required troops, so Bacon reached out to militia leaders colony-wide to secure the forces he needed. Writing to Washington made good sense as John had led the most recent official war party. Bacon ordered Washington to call for "a generall inrolement voluntarily made throughout the country of the housekeepers [homeowners] and freemen capable of bearing arms to serve under the Honble Nathaniel Bacon Esqr: Generall. That all men firmly united may be in a posture ready to prosecute and endeavor the common defence and preservation of his majties country."[92]

The next day, Bacon followed up this request with a slightly more menacing version of the same demand. He reiterated the call for "every respective freeman and inhabitant of this country" to come to its defense under Bacon's banner, to which all should pledge loyalty. This time he added that John was to do the following: "Administer ye oath and take ye subscription of every respective freeholder and freeman in ye country to ye said engagement and advice, and in case any person or persons shall refuse to returne theire and every of theire names to me with all speed."[93]

Anyone who had lived through the late English Civil War knew all too well what was being asked and understood the peril of enemies lists. This was a crossroad: everyone had to pick loyalty to one side or the other, and there was no space for neutrality. What is more, one had to pick sides carefully because should one back the loser in this conflict, the cost could be banishment (just as Thomas Gerrard had endured for supporting another rebellion), confiscation of property, or worse.

With Berkeley and the assembly in flight, Bacon set about reconstituting Virginia's government more to his liking. Again he wrote to Washington with an order: "Forthwith upon sight hereof to summons all ye housekeepers and freemen of ye country att ye usuall place the election of burgesses and there to elect two of the most able discreet prudent and intelligent men to appeare as ye representatives."[94]

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[92] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 195.

[93] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 196.

[94] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 197

Bacon went on to list the penalties for newly elected burgesses who refused to come to Jamestown, no-shows being a real possibility because being elected in this manner effectively cast a man's fate with the rebels. Similar letters and threats were flying all over the colony as person by person, household by household, Virginians of all ranks chose sides and made their moves accordingly. It was a small matter for the humbler sort to quietly stay put or go join the rebels. But John Washington was far too prominent a figure in the county for his actions to go unnoticed. In the choice between loyalty to a royally appointed governor and a self-appointed, if popular, rebel, we do not have to wonder too long about which path John took. There is no evidence that he even replied to Bacon's requests in writing, but soon thereafter, John was packing things at his home in preparation for flight.

The Surrender of the Washington Home at GEWA

By the middle of October, Washington had left his GEWA home, either to join Berkeley on the Eastern Shore or to find refuge, somewhat ironically, in Maryland. By the 21st, he had ordered his overseers to load up movable goods and food stores at GEWA and at his Round Hills plantation up Mattox Creek, and to have them all shipped over the Potomac in a sloop captained by Edward Blagg Jr. Panic was affecting every aspect of life, though, and rather than returning the boat to Mattox Creek, Blagg just left the sloop "halfe in and halfe out of ye water" at the first landing he encountered.[95] All this activity at the Washington home became a concern to Stephen Mannering, who was operating in Westmoreland County under Bacon's authority. Mannering had accompanied John at the Susquehannock Fort. But in the political wake of that campaign, when John chose loyalty to king and governor, Mannering chose his hatred of Native people and the new opportunities that presented.

As John removed the valuables and other supplies from his Bridge's Creek seat, Mannering was preparing troops to join the war then raging, and he wanted Washington's supplies for his own men. Since John was one of the many members of the gentry whose flight made them "delinquents" in Baconite eyes, their goods were subject to confiscation. Mannering sent Daniel White, along with Joseph Hardwich, Richard Barton, Thomas Oakly, William Head, and John Alhill, to Washington's GEWA home with orders to stop John's people from removing any more goods from the Bridge's Creek homestead and

> cease [seize] and impresse all ye corne and p'vision, tobacco, stocke or stockes yt belong to ye sd Washington, either one yt plantacon or one ye other plantacon called ye Round Hills, and to command ye overeeres of both plantacons in his Majts [Majesty's] name not to suffer any corne, cattle horses, mares servants or any other things to be conveyed away by any pson or psons till further order

[95] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 30.

> From ye Generall [Bacon] and to cease ye sloope or sloopes yt shall on any wise attempt ye takleing p'vision, conveying of any pt or parssels of goods yt wither belongs to the said Washington or any other delinquents yt fleed.[96]

White and a small squad of men took control of Washington's GEWA home in late October and occupied it as an outpost. Around the time of Ingram's capitulation, a Berkeley loyalist named Miller confronted Mannering, possibly at GEWA during its Baconite occupation, and asked for his surrender. But Mannering had become a desperate man by that time and refused to give up. He had learned that "his housen was burnt his wife and family robed" by men loyal to Berkeley, and that as a result, "his wife and children forced to ly on straw" and that he himself was "to be hanged if taken," all as a consequence of his choice to rebel.[97] Mannering was prepared to defy to the very end, but the other Baconites at John's home were rather less committed to the cause. In January, two more Berkeleyite officers, William Armiger and Jonathan Deery, arrived at GEWA with an armed force of about a dozen men—and perhaps Frances Washington herself—in tow. By then, word of Ingram's surrender, the collapse of the rebellion, and a general truce must have made its way around the colony. Seven of the rebels holding out at GEWA surrendered without a fight. But when Mannering showed up at the Washington home, he and Armiger began to fiercely argue.

Mannering had his back to the wall and feared for his life and still felt that the general fear of Native American attack justified all his actions. He had planned "to destroy the heathen," and "if it were to doe againe he would due it."[98] He laid into Washington and the other leaders who had "runn away from their commissions," charging them with leading the fight against the Native people. Armiger warned Mannering that even though they were speaking under a flag of truce, he would be wise to watch his words. Mannering fired back that he "already suffered ye law and he cared not a turdd for any man." He went on to curse the now-surrendered Ingram as a "cowardly treacherous dog for laying down his armes," and Mannering even impugned Armiger, saying that if *he* had the "14 gunns loaden" and the men that Armiger had, "he would uphold the house from five hundred men or else die at there feet." Brave boasts at the end of a conflict. Armiger dismissed such bravado, telling Mannering that "he was a foole," to which an enraged Mannering "sta[m]ped his foot" and, in the tone of a barroom brawler, said that only the terms of the general peace protected Armiger, adding "I doe not challenge you, but come out if you please." With tempers flaring, Frances Washington—who either had stayed at the home during its occupation or had returned with Armiger and his men—saw her moment to stick the

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[96] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 198.

[97] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 199.

[98] Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 2, no. 3.

dagger of English male anxiety in just a bit deeper by chastising Mannering with "if you were advised by your wife you need not a come to this passe." Mannering blew his top, exclaiming, "Goddam my wife, if it were to doe again I would doe it againe."[99]

All of this came out in Westmoreland County Court in July of 1677. Despite Mannering's fears, he was not executed for being a rebel—although 24 of the 100 principal rebel leaders were put to death for their actions.[100] Instead, he and two of his companions had to appear before the court in the building John himself then owned, thanks to his marriage to Anne G., and beg forgiveness for their "horrid treasonable, and rebellious practices."[101] The justices granted that forgiveness. John, however, did claim some unspecified portion of Mannering's estate as recompense. Daniel Lisson won 2,000 pounds of tobacco from Mannering for a horse the rebel had taken from him.[102] Soon, the former rebel was back in court, owing and being owed tobacco just like his neighbors. All seemed to have been forgiven.

For his part in occupying the Washington home, Daniel White had to stand in court and hear all his lambasting thrown back at him. In the full flush of rebellion, White had said "of the cort that the gentleman of Westmoreland were rebels and rogues" with hardly an "honest man" among them. The potter Morgan Jones related that he had heard White say that "the county of Westmoreland was a pack of rogues."[103] Contrition replaced his former bluster when the same court of "rogues" commanded White to hand over to John Washington as much of his property as the colonel should desire. "I am a poore man," White told the assembled, "and labour hard for my living and ye neglect thereof is much damage to me and my children." John claimed some of White's property but left most of his holdings intact.[104] Member of the Governor's Council and Westmoreland bigwig Nicholas Spencer (a "rogue" whom White had said was "the worst of all") was in a less forgiving mood and saw to it that the rebel was convicted under a new law

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[99] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 199.

[100] John H. Sprinkle, "Loyalists and Baconians: The Participants in Bacon's Rebellion in Virginia, 1676–1677," PhD diss., The College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1992, 53. See also Jenny Hale Pulsipher, "The Widow Ranter and Royalist Culture in Colonial Virginia," *Early American Literature* 39, no. 1 (2004): 41–66, for how the rebellion was recalled.

[101] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 200.

[102] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709,* vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately printed, 1981), 15.

[103] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709,* vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately Printed, 1981), 4.

[104] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately printed, 1981), 14.

condemning rebellion-specific speech and slanders.[105] Assuming the court saw it as a first offense, White's brash words would have earned him a 1,000-pounds-of-tobacco fine and been made to "stand upon the pillory two howers" with the "capitall letters" describing his crime "affixed" to his forehead or bare chest.[106] The whip would have been laid on, though, if it was his second such offense.

Barton, Head, and "the rest of the rebels" who occupied Bridge's Creek were found guilty of damages to Isaac Allerton's estate as well. Mattox Neck locals, GEWA park area residents, and allies of John Washington's David Wyckliffe, Daniel Lisson, and local carpenter Originall Brown were all on the juries that rewarded their friends at the expense of their enemies.[107]

Westmoreland County granted John an additional 6,000 pounds tobacco for his expenses incurred since September of 1675, and the Rappahannock County Court added 3,509 pounds to the ledger. Berkeley's council gave Washington and Allerton together an additional 12,000 pounds of tobacco for their services, and an extra 80 pounds sterling was credited to Washington from colonial funds in England. He would not have much time to put these funds to use, though.

By September 26, 1677, John Washington—the man who had sailed from the Baltic to the Potomac only to have his ship sink, the man who had attached himself firmly and loyally to the Pope family and had built up their fortune with his own, the man who had married remarkable women, the man whom members of the Haudenosaunee would allegedly remember for a century as "Town Burner" for the siege of Susquehannock Fort, the man who was always loyal to his governor, his king, and his church, and the enslaver of at least eight Africans—had died. He was buried, as per his request, in the small family cemetery next to his home along Bridge's Creek.

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[105] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately printed, 1981), 5–6.

[106] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 385.

[107] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately printed, 1981), 4.

CHAPTER EIGHT

The Washingtons of Mattox Neck, The Second Generation, 1670–1698

Remembering John Washington

At the time of his death, John Washington was one of the Northern Neck's most prominent figures. His land acquisitions created the estates that the next four generations of his family would live upon. His role in the growing Native American conflict of the 1670s placed him at the center of war that would end with the near-total removal of Native peoples from Eastern Virginia and, as a consequence, the emptying of land that would be an expanding source of wealth to white Virginians for the next half a century. His participation in the early years of elite Virginians' involvement in the African slave trade helped lay the groundwork for what would soon become the primary labor force in the colony. In these ways, Washington helped establish the world that would produce the next few generations of his descendants. But in all of these affairs, Washington was just one player of many—crucial in his way but not the most significant by far. For understandable reasons, his life story has been vastly overshadowed by that of his famous great-grandson. But the events of John's life intersect with the story of George's at a few specific points.

One was that changing family fortunes in their respective days denied both John and, later, George a chance at complete English educations. Land was itself another connector point. In addition to acquiring the acres that would eventually house George's birth home, John laid claim to an extensive parcel farther up the Potomac and across the river from the Maryland-side site of the Susquehannock Fort. In 1674, he and Secretary of the Colony Nicholas Spencer put in a land patent for 5,000 acres of land in what was the newly formed Stafford County. The patent was for a "necke of land bounded betwixt two creeks," these being "Little Hunting Creek" on the north and "Epsewesson Creeke" on the south, with both creeks running into the Potomac at the end of the neck.[1] It is not clear if John himself even saw this land before he entered into the deal. It would not have been unusual for him or any other landowner to buy up land sight unseen, even though this was the largest single land purchase in his career. These acres, though, were at the heart of the enflaming conflict between Virginia and the Doegs and Susquehannocks. The patent even made mention of the "Piscatoway town" on the opposite shore—the same town that, the following

[1] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 162.

year, John would besiege when it was home to the newly arrived Susquehannocks. All of this meant that John had more than a passing interest in the area; he had land investments within sight of the site of his one and only military engagement.

This land would become more famous nearly a century later as Mount Vernon, home to several of John's descendants. His half of the land would flow through his will to his son Lawrence, who left it to his daughter Mildred. She sold it to her brother, John's grandson Augustine, who briefly moved his family there around 1736 and, on his 1743 death, left it to John's great-grandson Lawrence, who named it for the British admiral under whom he briefly served. Later, another of John's great-grandsons, George, would rent the home and acres after Lawrence's 1752 death and would eventually inherit them on the death of Lawrence's widow, Anne, in 1761, according to the terms of Augustine's will. There is no evidence that George ever knew the dramatic connection his great-grandfather had to the river frontage he looked out upon every day he spent at Mount Vernon. Today, that land is owned by the National Park Service and is preserved so as to maintain an undeveloped vista from Mount Vernon's piazza.[2]

John Washington and the Susquehannock Fort crossed George's life once more, though, and in the most dramatic and coincidence-ridden way. In 1754, George found himself in the woods and hills of western Pennsylvania on his own first military venture. Like those of his great-grandfather, Washington's actions helped enflame an emerging conflict with Britain, her mainland colonies, and their Native allies on one side and colonial New France and its network of Native friends on the other. The summer before, Virginia governor Robert Dinwiddie had sent Washington to the French forts, running from what is now Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, up to the shores of Lake Erie, with messages warning the French to stay out of the Ohio lands claimed by Virginia or face military action. In 1754, George led a small force of Virginia soldiers toward the Pittsburgh area to follow through on Dinwiddie's threats. Along the way, the young, inexperienced commander found himself facing more of a force than he had expected, a harder terrain than planned on, and movement-thwarting weather. During this failed campaign, Washington had his first real experience with Native people. His great-grandfather had known local Algonquians as neighbors, some of whose land he took, and as foes in war. John Washington's associates had known Native languages, and local Native people had still appeared before him in court. George, though, had probably never seen a Native American before his adventures into the western woodlands—such was the extent of the removal that took place between 1650 and 1700.

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[2] "Preserving Mount Vernon's View," George Washington's Mount Vernon, https://www.mountvernon.org/preservation/viewshed. See also John H. Sprinkle Jr., *Saving Spaces: Historic Land Conservation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2018).

The young Washington was fascinated to see these people who, though now more distant, were still very much alive in the minds and fears of Virginians. This was his first experience with Native American diplomacy and oratory, and he included a transcribed version of the speeches in his narrative of the expedition. He also sent a version of them back to Governor Dinwiddie in a letter he signed with the name "Conotocarious," an Anglicized Iroquoian name George later claimed that Seneca Great Man Tanaghrisson had given him during the council. The name was said to mean "town burner" or "town taker" and bears a passing similarity to the contemporary Seneca word *kanotaye* (town) and to *ode:geh* (it has burned). The "-ous" ending, though, seems more Latin than Native American.[3] In 1784, Washington told his first biographer, David Humphreys, that Tanaghrisson had given him this name at their conference, ceremonial naming being a commonplace of Native alliances. But he also noted that the name emerged during "the late war," presumably meaning the Revolution.[4] The name makes sense in this context thanks to Washington's ruthless orders to destroy Seneca towns all across Western New York—events that certainly would have led the Haundoasaunee to label him Village Burner. But Washington clearly knew the name 30 years earlier since he had signed his 1754 letter to Dinwiddie with the name.

Biographers have seen Conotocarious as a reference to John Washington and the Susquehannock Fort. It is true that the refugees from the fort did blend into Iroquois society after the conflict, but that does not explain how or why the Seneca Tanaghrisson would recall the event nearly a century later, nor how or why he would associate it with Washington. What seems more likely is that the name was misheard or misremembered by Washington, who, in an act of youthful bravado, took it on and signed a few letters with it in the spirit of the woods. The idea that the Senecas recalled Washington's genealogy—and did so on their first meeting with a then-obscure Virginian—is far-fetched.[5] There also is no evidence that Washington knew much about John except his and his brother's arrival from England, some lineage information, and some details of his passing down land. Nevertheless, the name and the circumstances of backcountry war make the stories of great-grandfather and great-grandson converge in this one odd way.

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[3] "English–Seneca Dictionary," https://senecalanguage.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/04/SENECA-DICTIONARY-FINAL.pdf. Using a contemporary glossary to determine 18th-century Native meanings is of course full of peril. Nevertheless, these words serve as a rough guide.

[4] Colin Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 69–70.

[5] Colin Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 69–70.

Distributing John Washington's Estate, 1677–1678

The first concern after John's death was his burial. He was laid to rest in a small lot near his Bridge's Creek home. His remains, along with all the others buried near him, were excavated, mapped in situ, and disinterred in the 1930s, and then they all were either reburied or placed in a large stone tomb bearing the name of John's grandson Augustine; the records are unclear. Visitors to the cemetery today see the Maryland-made, Depression-era imaginings of colonial-era grave markers. But for his family, servants, enslaved Africans, and the larger community, the immediate memory of John was found in the distribution of his estate.

When a property owner died, the county court oversaw the recording of the deceased's estate for tax and distribution purposes. These records can be incomplete but are nevertheless often very useful for understanding what was in a home. A will, though, was a more personal document, revealing a property holder's wishes for what should happen to their belongings and lands. Enslaved people were also usually redistributed in this process, making the death of an enslaver a unique tragedy for the people they enslaved.[6]

John's will showed the distribution of his property. It was considerable, containing several parcels of land and a well-stocked household. Daughter Anne got the diamond ring her mother had left for her, but the home also had a full fashionable table setting, including a "silver tankard" and four "silver spoons." John wore glasses at the end of his life, and even his "spectacle case" was worth handing down.[7] He specified that there be no court-ordered "appraisement" of his personal property and instead recognized any and all debts against his estate and requested that they be paid from his crops, thus ending the need for any postmortem lawsuits against his estate and inheritors. He made a few small and specific bequests from his possessions and funds, including his gift to the Washington Parish Church. But he asked that the court appoint "three men of judgement" to divide the bulk of his possessions into four parts, each one equal in "quantitie and qualitie," and allocate one to his "loving wife" Anne (then still alive) and one to each of his three children, all three still being minors at the time of the will's drafting. He included entail provisions ensuring that should one of the children pass away before maturity or have their own children to inherit, their portion would go to the other recipients.[8]

Anne Gerrard had, of course, died by the time of John's death, and he had married her sister Frances. The prenuptial agreement that he and Frances had drafted, though, allowed her to receive the benefit of his estate without his having to revisit the will, those

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[6] Holly Brewer, "Entailing Aristocracy in Colonial Virginia: Ancient Feudal Restraints and Revolutionary Reform," *William and Mary Quarterly* 54, no. 2 (April 1997): 307–46.

[7] Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 4, 3.

[8] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 206.

later agreements superseding in law the terms of the will. The will requested that Anne and Lawrence act as executors, but when it came time to act, Anne was dead and Lawrence, then about 18 years old, was at school in England. Thomas Pope was to act as guardian for the children, and the court instead recognized Frances as executor for settling the estate but also appointed sometime justices of the peace Daniel Lisson (John's neighbor and Native American–language translator) and John Lord to "looke after ye estate of Coll. Jno Washington deceased and provide for ye servts."[9] These included four white servants: Mary Bayle, John Rose, William White, and an overseer named Martin Beach. There were also nine enslaved Africans. Some of these people lived at "the quarter," where Beach oversaw their activities, and the rest were at the homestead, working the nearby acres and doing more domestic tasks.[10] There also was one enslaved person who, for one reason or another, evaded being counted in the estate's valuation.[11] This became an issue while Lawrence was settling his father's estate. A man named Gilhampton, possibly a merchant, sued for payment for "the dellivery of a Negro not appraised un [in] said estate."[12] This brings the total of documented enslaved people living at Bridge's Creek to 10.

In that same round of court activity, Frances also claimed eight enslaved people from the estate, as promised in her agreement. If those eight were to be taken from the nine listed (but not named) in the inventory, then that certainly would have meant the breaking of social, perhaps even familial, connections. The records are silent on this question. Frances had brought enslaved people into the marriage, so it might well be that these were the same people, and they might never have even seen Bridge's Creek, living instead near her previous husband's home near Nomini Bay. This means that while John certainly enslaved 10 people on his plantation at the time of his death, he might have enslaved as many as 18 around that time. Either total would be a noticeably large one for the time and area.

The biggest issue in the will was the distribution of landed estates. Lawrence received the home and land on Mattox Creek. This had been Nathaniel Pope's estate. In all likelihood, this was also the home in which its new owner had been born in 1659. Lawrence also received the mill on Rosiers Creek, in which his stepmother, Frances, had a financial interest, as well as half of the land that would later become Mount Vernon. John Jr. received the land and home on Bridge's Creek. This is perhaps a sign that Frances was

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[9] Charles E. Hatch Jr., *Pope's Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington* (Washington's Birthplace, VA: Wakefield National Memorial Association, and the National Park Service, 1979), 6.

[10] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book, 1667; 1707–1709*, vol. 4 (Washington, DC: Privately printed, 1981), 3.

[11] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Order Book 1675–1688/9* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 53.

[12] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Order Book 1675–1688/9* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 53.

in fact then living there since this would allow John Jr. to carry on with life as it had been and might account for why the second son received what logically would have been the principal family seat instead of its going to the first son.

This distribution meant that the two sons, Lawrence and John Jr., both became underaged landholders, each with a portion of what had been one of the largest estates in the region. Anne received the diamond ring, as her mother had requested, and some other sundries.

Anne and John Washington's Children

At the time of John's death, Lawrence was in England and so was not there to either bury his father or participate in the initial settling of his estate. As the elder son, Lawrence was listed as an executor of the estate, but it would be some time before he was on hand to cover matters, so things remained static or were handed off to Pope relations and other associates.[13]

John Jr. was about 16 at the time of his father's passing and we can assume was living in the family's Bridge's Creek home. There is virtually no documentation to reveal much about their lives before John's death. The same is true for Anne, who, like her brothers, only entered the documentary record through her mention in John's will. But there were patterns to 17th-century English child-rearing, and these would have applied to the Washington children as well. All three lost their mother well after their infancy and would have been under the care and supervision of various servant nurses and stepmothers. The first two years of a child's life were among the most perilous. A host of fevers and illnesses cut children's lives short and led to low average life spans across the colony. But if children were to make it past these most risky years, their odds of making it well into adulthood got better each year they continued to live. English people of the time saw childhood as a very short period of time. Infancy and toddlerhood required careful supervision, but once children—boys or girls—could stand solidly on their own, use their hands well, and account for themselves, they entered the next stage of life. This was a long and usually domestic tutelage in the economic life of their families. In poorer homes, children as young as four would be able to perform some simple domestic or farm chores in the shadow of their parents or siblings. For girls, that entailed the basics of food preparation, gardening, and dairying, and as a girl grew a bit older, sewing and needlecraft entered the curriculum. In elite homes, girls might learn somewhat more esoteric skills such as music, foreign languages, and some literature. Reading for domestic and religious purposes was also part of a girl's curriculum. Needlework would still be on the menu, but in the case of gentry families, the products would often be high-style embroidery or lacework

[13] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 225.

in addition to the more essential skills of making and mending garments. Mastery of these skills was not only practical for the family in the moment; it was also an investment.[14]

Boys would follow a similar path, learning the basics of farming and animal husbandry as called for. In poor families, a son became an additional farmworker or apprentice tradesman as soon as he could hold a tool. In elite families, sons at an early age would begin a basic education that would focus on reading, writing, and mathematics. Depending on the family, specialized skills such as bookkeeping or survey drafting might become part of the exercises, as might basic theology and literature. Some historical knowledge and language abilities were also part of schooling, even when done at home or by a tutor. The ability to read Latin and Greek with some measure of proficiency was a mark of an educated gentleman, and even though it served no practical purpose on a Virginia tobacco plantation, the most elite planters reveled in these sorts of abilities. William Byrd II, who in the early 18th century could count himself as one of the wealthiest men in the colony, routinely added translating Greek, Latin, and even Hebrew texts to a daily routine filled with reading and writing business correspondence and other affairs.[15] There is no evidence that the Washington boys achieved anything close to this level of refined learning, but both Lawrence and John Jr. received the kind of education needed to allow them to perform the tasks and offices of Virginia gentry merchant planters. There is no evidence that John Jr. studied in England as his older brother did. Instead, he was probably tutored at home by someone very much like Samuel Mottershed, the young man Nathaniel Pope had indentured to teach his own sons.

The death of their father, though, forced maturity onto the two boys while they were still legal minors, and they reached maturity sitting at the head of large estates and extended business interests. Instead of enjoying the benefit of hands-on training, provided by a highly skilled father, in the arts of being successful merchant planters, the boys had to learn what they could from their trustee uncle and others appointed by the court and then take the reins as soon as they reached maturity. Whereas John had the benefit of a London merchant apprenticeship, travel overseas, and then a few years learning the Virginia ropes from Nathaniel Pope, his two sons were dropped into the deep end rather unprepared.

Anne's path in life was less disrupted, though. Like all young gentry women, Anne's primary task would be to find an advantageous marriage. Having parents to assist in that process would have been an advantage, but the wealth and influence of her father preceded her, which made finding a fitting match a simple task. In the early 1680s, at about the age of

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[14] Joseph E. Illick, "Childhood in Three Cultures in Early America," *Pennsylvania History: A Journal of Mid-Atlantic Studies* 64 (1997): 311–15; Sidney Mintz, *Huck's Raft: A History of American Childhood* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2006), 7–53; Laura J. Galke, "The Mother of the Father of Our Country: Mary Ball Washington's Genteel Domestic Habits," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 38 (2009): 29–48.

[15] References to his reading are found throughout William Byrd II, *The Secret Diary of William Byrd, 1709–1712*, Marion Wright Tinling and Louis B. Tinling, eds. (Petersburg, VA: Dietz Press, 1941).

18, Anne married Francis Wright, a grandson of John Mottrom (gentry families sought out marriage with other gentry families) and a man holding the same array of county and vestry offices as her father had held. Eventually, they would raise four children in the Chicacoan area. Presumably, she brought with her the diamond ring her mother had left her. It vanished from the written record, though.[16]

The Brothers' Marriages to Mildred Warner and Anne Wyckliffe

The Washington brothers married differently, with Lawrence marrying somewhat above his social status and John Jr. marrying the daughter of a small planter neighbor.

Lawrence married Mildred Warner from Gloucester, Virginia. Lawrence was about 12 years Mildred's senior, and even though he'd returned to Virginia by 1681, it is unlikely that they married before 1685, when Mildred would have been 14. At the time of the Washington–Warner marriage, Gloucester was one of the wealthiest counties in the colony, while Westmoreland County, thanks in part to the Native American wars and removals of the previous few decades, was only beginning to shed its frontier patina. Mildred and Lawrence's marriage represents a departure from the relative insularity of the Northern Neck gentry and was one small indicator of the rising status and value of the area and its families. The Warners of Warner Hall had deep roots in the colony, extending back to Nicholas Marteau, the French Protestant who had come over to help defend Virginia during the Second Anglo–Powhatan War. Mildred's father, Augustine, was speaker of the House of Burgesses, served on the Governor's Council, and was a member of the "Greenspring Faction" made up of those officials with steadfast loyalty to Governor Berkeley during Bacon's Rebellion. Warner, like his new son-in-law, was Virginia born and English educated.[17] By comparison, Lawrence was the son of a new arrival, and although wealthy, well connected, and English educated, he was still very much marrying up, in Virginia terms. This, though, was instrumental in his rise in colonial affairs.

Mildred did not have the couple's first child, John Washington III, until 1692, and then had a second son, Augustine, in 1694. She also gave birth to a daughter, also named Mildred, in 1698, the same year Lawrence passed away. After Lawrence's death, the elder

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[16] "John Mottrom," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[17] John Kukla, *Speakers and Clerks of the Virginia House of Burgesses, 1643–1776* (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1981); "Mildred Warner," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

Mildred married an English merchant named George Gale and returned with him to live out the rest of her life in Whitehaven, England. This marriage and move presented unique challenges for her minor children, including Augustine, George Washington's father.[18]

John Jr. was truer to local Mattox Neck form and married Anne Wycliffe, herself the daughter of Henry Brookes's stepson David, the boy who was later said to have been the first Protestant born in Maryland.[19] Brookes was a respected first settler with a considerable estate that eventually became the homes of his sons and daughters and their husbands. But the family did not rise as the Washingtons did. David Wyckliffe, Anne's father, owned only a few hundred acres of land, at most, in the area of Duck Hall Point and did not hold public office. Whereas Lawrence married into the gentry, John Jr. married deeper into his local community.

The date of the Washington–Wyckliffe wedding was not recorded, but the two married probably about 1684, when the bride and groom were and about 14 and 23, respectively. They did not have children until early the next decade, though, itself perhaps evidence of a later marriage date. This marriage carried on John Washington's pattern of linking to the former Marylanders in the form of the Brookes and Wyckliffe families. These people were still a prominent group in the local gentry, and the marriage served to strengthen the extended Washington family hold on the land between Bridge's and Popes Creeks because so much of the land had been divided up between Henry Brookes's adult children. Marriages into neighboring families were one way to ensure that inheritors would all be kin to the then-current owners. John Jr. and Anne would have four sons—Lawrence, John, Nathaniel, and Henry—before John Jr.'s 1699 death and Anne's remarriage to Charles Ashton, another lifelong Washington Parish resident.[20]

Lawrence's and John Jr.'s Differing Careers: The Ambitious Son and the Homebody

Siblings had unique relationships in the early modern British world. For families of property, the fact of unequal inheritance hung in the air. It was a long-standing British practice for the eldest sons to inherit the bulk of a father's properties, allowing the eldest to prosper

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[18] "Mildred Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[19] "David Wickliffe," *William and Mary Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (1902): 175–77; Charles E. Hatch Jr., *Pope's Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington* (Washington's Birthplace, VA: Wakefield National Memorial Association, and the National Park Service, 1979), 18.

[20] "John Washington Jr.," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/, accessed 5/21/22.

at the expense of younger sons. But this English practice was challenged in the colonies.[21] Rather than leaving a whole estate to the eldest son, many colonists instead divided their properties allowing each son, and sometimes daughters, to have their own stake. The eldest usually inherited the largest and most established share with holdings getting ever smaller down the list of children. But fathers often worked to build multiple viable holdings so that each of their sons could inherit one and be set up for adulthood. This was just what John Washington had done, and that pattern would be repeated by his sons and grandsons. There was a considerable advantage in this evolving practice as it created networks of related landholders rather than single inheritors. In Britain, younger sons of the well-to-do went into the army, the church, and the universities. These opportunities were quite limited, though, in Virginia, and the lack of opportunity for less fortunate younger sons might have been a concern that drove Virginians to divide estates rather than hand them over as complete holdings to a single eldest son.

Siblings were also a sort of primary ally to one another, and it is not surprising that pairs of brothers were common players in colonial affairs.[22] Either at John Sr.'s behest or of his own volition, Lawrence Washington had followed his brother to Virginia and become a useful albeit less prominent ally. Likewise, John Jr. and Lawrence maintained closely linked affairs, even though the former was far more ambitious and publicly active than the latter.

Neither brother dramatically increased his property. Most of John Jr.'s land acquisitions were upriver and not adjacent to his Bridge's Creek home seat.

Lawrence took county offices very soon after coming of age and quickly became the more locally active of the two brothers. He became a justice in 1681, almost immediately after his return from England, and he went to Jamestown four times, representing the area in the House of Burgesses. He also served for a time as sheriff, a county-level office that placed him in charge of dealing with detaining prisoners before court trials and ensuring that witnesses showed up for trials as called. Virginia sheriffs also were empowered to collect the annual "quit-rents" each Virginia landowner was obligated to pay to the crown for the privilege of owning land. The rate was assessed at one shilling for every 50 acres, a far from onerous burden but one that cumulatively became a considerable sum.[23] John Jr., a

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[21] C. Dallett Hemphill, *Siblings: Brothers and Sisters in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 24–26. For more on siblings, see Carolyn J. Rosenthal, "Kinkeeping in the Familial Division of Labor," *Journal of Marriage and the Family* 47 (November 1985): 965–74; Judy Dunn, *Sisters and Brothers* (London: Fontana, 1984); Tamara Hareven, "The History of the Family and the Complexity of Social Change," *American Historical Review* 96, no. 1 (1991): 95–124; and Patricia Crawford, *Blood, Bodies and Families in Early Modern England* (London: Pearson Longman, 2004).

[22] C. Dallett Hemphill, *Siblings: Brothers and Sisters in American History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011), 19.

[23] Warren M. Billings, ed., *The Old Dominion in the Seventeenth Century: A Documentary History of Virginia, 1600–1689* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1975), 69–82; "Virginia Quit Rent Rolls, 1704," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 28, no. 3 (1920): 207–18.

captain in the militia (it would have been below the dignity of a man of his wealth to hold a position any lower than that), led a more private life than his brother. He did become a member of the Washington Parish vestry, though.

Lawrence Washington and the County Court

Of the two Washington brothers, Lawrence was by far the more publicly active. John Jr. appeared in court over debts from time to time and on occasion was asked to serve as an estate assessor or a neighbor's attorney.[24] But John Jr.'s activity was far exceeded by that of his older brother.

Lawrence became active in the court upon his return from England, and his first appearance on the bench was on January 28, 1679, although he was listed as the executor of his father's estate months earlier than that.[25] The courthouse was still the same one John Washington had once owned thanks to his third marriage, and it was no joy to be in. There were attempts to improve conditions: the court paid John Minor to build a 20-foot-by-12-foot stable in 1686 and to do so "with all convenient speed," since this amenity was "absolutely necessary."[26] The court building itself was a bigger problem, being "over cold in the winter seasons for the justices to sitt in" thanks to its having unglazed windows, a flaw the court moved to fix in 1688 by ordering Minor, who apparently had delivered on the stable, to set up casement windows that could "open and shut" and "lett in aire when necessitie requires."[27] By 1691, the court was done with throwing good money after bad and ordered the building of a new courthouse to have a "handsome stair case," a partition to separate the justices from the crowd, "some shelves to lay books," and a private stable for "the justices to put their horses in and secure their saddles and bridles."[28] The court also asked Lawrence to "send to England for the Statutes at Large of the latest edition bound together if possible, if not printed copies of late parliaments" and stated that the county monies would reimburse him for the "cost and for his trouble."[29]

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[24] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 42.

[25] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 224.

[26] Dorman, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1685–1687*, 37.

[27] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 75.

[28] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 46.

[29] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 97.

One of Lawrence's earliest appearances in the uncomfortable old building had to do with the upkeep of the mill on Rosier's Creek. After his father's death and before his return, the mill was in the care of Thomas White, who had had an agreement with John Washington. There had been expenses incurred in keeping it running. White took Lawrence to court in 1681 to recover those costs and was awarded 1,600 pounds of tobacco.[30] This was one of several claims against John's estate. As the principal executor, Lawrence had to be in court to settle debts owed to a tenant on an outlying property—"a young mare" claimed by one James Johnson—and Samuel Brett's suing of the estate for the "value of a boat and oares."[31] Brett was a merchant in Plymouth, England, and the owner of the sloop that John Washington had hired to carry his goods across the Potomac during Bacon's Rebellion. Brett later took Lawrence to court for the cost of the damage the ship sustained when its irresponsible master ditched it on the shore.[32] The jury, though, sided with Lawrence and left the estate blameless.

In September 1684, the court dragooned Lawrence into overseeing "an orderly survey" of John Rosier's land. Rosier had made trouble over this before, and the court "desired" Lawrence "to bee there to see the King's peace kept and that no interruption be made by anny one."[33] In May of 1686, Lawrence announced plans for a trip to England, but there is no evidence that the trip happened.[34] He drafted no will at the time (as his grandfather had done before another planned transatlantic voyage), but Lawrence was also largely absent from court until September of 1687.

In 1691, Joseph Hudson and Peter Skinner came before the court for "continuall absenting themselves" from Washington Parish Church. The two "own'd themselves to be Quakers" but were willing to take the dissenters' oath of fealty. The court appointed Lawrence to ensure that these two—and all other non-Anglicans in the area—adhered to "such matters and things as dissenters are enjoyed to take."[35] Lawrence also acted as coroner in the 1691 death of John Brookes, and he continued to represent the interests of his Pope relations, appearing, for example, on November 26, 1691, on behalf of the

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[30] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 225.

[31] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 226.

[32] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 30; John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 29.

[33] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1685–1687* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 10.

[34] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1685–1687* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 10.

[35] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 39.

younger Thomas Pope in a debt dispute. Things could turn tense as well, as when Lawrence went to court over the elder Thomas Pope's estate.[36] Lawrence argued in 1685 that the younger Pope—and not his brother and their kinsman William Harditch as well, as the will stipulated—should have "the sole management after ye decease of the sd Pope of all the said popes affairs in Virginia." Despite three witnesses supporting Lawrence's view that this was in fact the late Pope's intent, the court stuck to the written word of the will and required that all three men act as administrators. The most interesting dimension of this case is the window it provides into the Washington–Pope business empire. Thomas Pope was on Popes Creek (closer to John Jr. than to Lawrence) and was shipping his tobacco to Bristol that year in a vessel named the *John*.[37] The case offers more evidence of the depth of Mattox Neck's enduring trade connection to Bristol, which throughout this era was falling farther and farther behind London as the principal port and major tobacco market. But a variety of family connections, included but not limited to the Popes, kept local goods flowing to and from the city.

More evidence of the connection came in 1694 when "Richard Gotley of the Citty of Bristol, merchant, and James Freeman of the same citty, apothecary" appointed Lawrence to "manage and lett" the land, "stock, negroes, slaves, cattle, wares, and merchandize" that fell to them through the estate of Thomas Pope "late of the citty of Bristol."[38] One of the things the Washingtons inherited from the Popes was a deep link to Bristol.

The Fight over the Lisson Estate and Frances Lisson: A Mattox Neck Court Drama

The most important (and complicated) of Lawrence's few land acquisitions was his buying of Robert Lisson's (sometimes called Liston or Lysson) 400 acres on the west bank of Bridge's Creek, neighboring the land left to Lawrence by his father. This would also end up being Lawrence's single largest land purchase. In many ways, the long battle over the Lisson estate was one of the most important events in Lawrence's life; it was the legal venture that took up more court time for him than any other. He might even have seen his final acquisition of this land as being one of his greatest achievements since he singled the land out for special mention in his will well over a decade later. He seems to have put some special significance on this land, which he left to his second son, Augustine. The

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[36] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 63.

[37] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 44.

[38] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, 1691–1699* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 10–11.

complicated tale of this parcel in the 1680s and 1690s involves an extended family and multiple spouses going in and out of court for more than a decade to secure properties whose proper ownership was confused by the terms of a will and the early deaths of inheritors.

Daniel Lisson had made this parcel his home at the time he served as his neighbor John Washington's Native American–language interpreter and supporting witness in court. His land was cut out of bits of the old Hercules Bridges holdings, and like most of the people living on what was by the 1680s a set of small parcels, his family was blended with those of his neighbors, most of whom were in one way or another descendants of Brookes. He also had married Bridges's daughter Jane, while her sister Mary married David Wyckliffe, the son of the elder David, who was Brookes's adopted son and a Lisson neighbor.[39] This confusing chain of marriages within the major Mattox Neck families made the Washingtons, the Wyckliffes, the Bridges, and the Lissons all related by marriage. It also meant that each family had a special interest in Lisson's children and estate.

Lisson's 1679 will was the source of the confusion because it contained complicated entail provisions. The land was to go to Daniel's brother Robert, a butcher living in Bristol, in the event that Jane Lisson and the couple's two sons, Nathaniel and William, did not survive. But Lisson's personal estate—his cattle, furnishings, "servants, mony, and plate," and so on—became objects of considerable contention after his death.[40] When Lisson died, Jane was pregnant, and the two boys were still minors. Lisson's will requested that the goods of his estate be divided by the court into three equal shares, one for each of the survivors. On July 30, 1679, the court ordered Sheriff John Lord, William Horton, and William Hardidge to "devide the estate" into the stipulated three portions.[41] Since the Lisson boys were both minors, though, Jane still controlled their portions.

The widow Lisson soon had a baby girl named Frances, and by November 1679, Jane had remarried to another Mattox Neck man, Washington Parish's first minister, William Butler, and presumably Jane and her three children, took up residence on Butler's land a mile or more south of her old place.[42] In 1680, the minister ordered a survey of the Lisson land to make a clear division for the two boys. Neighbor James Baldridge thought that the survey intruded on his own land, so he went to court demanding a new one at Butler's expense to correct the error. That is exactly what the court ordered, and it required the old English custom that the people of the neighborhood be on hand to witness the

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[39] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 46.

[40] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1962), 22–23.

[41] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1679–1682* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 5.

[42] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1679–1682* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 14.

surveyors at work so that in future, there would be no contention.[43] In January, the court doubled down and ordered County Surveyor William Horton to conduct the survey himself in the company of "a jury of the neighborhood."[44] Lawrence and John Jr. would almost certainly have been in attendance, as would have David Wycliffe. Butler was back in court in May of 1681 with a complaint that John Elliot "had built a new house" on land that belonged to the Lisson boys, and the court ordered that Elliot should "pull downe and carry away his new built house."[45]

Soon after this action, Butler passed away, and Jane was again dealing with the estate of a dead husband. The October 1681 sitting of the court recognized Jane as the executor and made sure she got a copy of "Mr Danniell Lyston's [Lisson's] inventory." The justices also ordered three men, including neighbor and GEWA acres resident Originall Brown, to redivide the "children's proportion according to a division formerly made."[46] If anything was found "wanting," then it was to be made up from Butler's estate.[47] In other words, the confusion surrounding Jane's first husband's estate was now a part of dealing with that of her second's.

Managing the estate presented Jane with its own problems. Money was tight for the two-time widow and her three children—so tight, in fact, that she turned to court to force the Washington Parish vestry (including John Jr.) to give her back the 200 pounds of tobacco the late minister had donated for the purchase of a "pulpit cloth and cushion."[48] Since the tobacco was originally part of Butler's salary and the vestry had not closed a deal for the items, Jane argued the value should return to her, and the court agreed. Soon after that, her servant Richard Clerke "absented himselfe fowe days from her service running away to Maryland." The court granted the widow another eight days of his service once his term was completed and an additional six months to make up her expenses.[49]

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[43] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1679–1682* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 30.

[44] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1679–1682* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 41.

[45] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1679–1682* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 53.

[46] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 63.

[47] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 76.

[48] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 5.

[49] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 9.

By 1683, Jane had married once more, this time to James Brownsford, who soon found himself in court to handle debts from his new wife's second husband's estate.[50] The marriage, though, did not last long since Jane died sometime in late 1683. Her two sons also died around the same time. The mother and her two sons were all buried in coffins built for them by their neighbor and local carpenter Originall Browne.[51]

These deaths left the orphaned five-year-old Frances as the last remaining Mattox Neck Lisson. It also left the care for the old Lisson place—its home, outbuilding, furnishings, and so on—in an uncertain state. A fight over who should care for Frances and manage the already contentious Lisson estate began. David Wyckliffe went to court with documents showing that his late daughter, Jane, "did commit the tutorage of her daughter Frances Lysson [*sic*] alias Butler to her sister Mary Whitliffe [Wyckliffe], aunt of Frances."[52] No matter what the will said, Wyckliffe clearly thought that Frances's best future was to be found close to her old home and blood relations. In March 1683, the court agreed with him and allowed Mary the guardianship of her niece. Dealing with the property was far more problematic. With each new marriage, Jane had moved Lisson property to the Butler home and, from there, to the Brownsford home. Reverend Butler had taken up the cause of protecting his wife's children's estates. But the newly widowered Brownsford did not have the same inclination. He asked the court to allow him "continued" use of "much of that estate" until "it may appeare to whome it is due by law."[53] The whole thing had clearly become a muddle, and the court virtually threw its hands in the air, uncertain about exactly who owned what. For his part, and to speed things along, Brownsford supplied a "perfect inventory" of everything he could identify from the Lisson estate, and to keep things balanced, the court ordered Brownsford to hand Butler's estate over to Wycliffe as a sort of compensation for the cost of Frances's care.[54] Wyckliffe became impatient, though, and in March 1684 asked the court to force Brownsford's hand. The justices were willing to intercede but only after stipulating that "Brownsford shal enjoy the fruits of his endeavors for this year"; in other words, he was entitled to crops he had already put into the ground.[55] But by June, Brownsford was dead, and the Butler estate went to Wyckliffe, along with the "care, trust and management of the estate of Daniell

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[50] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 29.

[51] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 74.

[52] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 46.

[53] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 50.

[54] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 50.

[55] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 55.

Lysson [Lisson] committed formerly by order of this court to James Brownsford."[56] The justices made Wycliffe responsible for Brownsford's "Christian interment and funeral."[57]

In September 1684, Wycliffe also had to pay the funeral expenses for Jane and her boys from the value of the estates he was awarded. That charge seems to have touched a nerve because at that point, the Wycliffes demanded "the possession" of all three parts of the Lisson estate as well as the expenses incurred for the funerals and even the "1400 pounds of tobacco payd Dr. Gilbert Huband for phisick for Wm. [William] Lysson in his sickness."[58] Either out of fatigue or some other legal theory, the court granted all that the Wyckliffes had requested.

All of this dizzying court action set in motion quite a complex legal problem. The terms of the will established the Bristol Lissons as the inheritors of the Virginia land and property. But the Westmoreland court had spent years trying to untangle the complicated chain of ownership engulfing the estate. They also thought that the rights of the orphan Frances, born after the will was drafted, and Jane's two subsequent marriages superseded the original will's terms. They were most interested in making sure that Frances was properly cared for and that her father's property would become hers and also eventually by marriage stay in local hands. To protect Frances and to try to keep the Lisson estate cared for and held in trust, the court turned to guardians. In a confusing 1685 ruling, it reversed its earlier decision to place Frances with her aunt Mary and instead ruled that Lawrence Washington would "have the custodye" of young Frances and management of the boy's two-thirds, "but as for her [Frances's] personal estate the same is to remain in the hands of David Wycliffe," to whom they had granted it the year before.[59] It was almost as if the justices were reaching for some Solomonic decision that might please all parties, never mind the fact that poor Frances, now six years old, had lost all of her immediate relations and moved between at least four households in as many years.

This new arrangement was to be in force until some unspecified debt Lawrence owed David, his brother's brother-in-law, was settled. At that point, Frances's share of her father's estate would fall to Lawrence, who was already caring for the other two-thirds. It would seem that the court felt that Lawrence was in a better position to provide for the girl than Wyckliffe was or that after two years of their guardianship, something was deficient. The court's ruling allowed Lawrence to benefit from the property until Frances

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[56] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 61.

[57] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 62.

[58] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 75.

[59] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 59.

reached maturity and could inherit her share of the estate—the standard guardian arrangement. The court also appointed John Lord, William Bridges, and John Jr. to "take an inventory and account of the severall estates and deliver them to Law. Washington and by him bee paid for their trouble."[60]

In the fall of 1687, the court stepped in once again. Wyckliffe was still holding the bulk of the Lisson family's possessions even though the court had given him oversight of Frances's share only, and even that for just a short time. The court required that Wyckliffe hand over "the remaining parte of the estate" to Lawrence and that on Friday, September 30, "come seaven night [7:00 p.m.]," Lord, Bridges, and John Jr. were to "value soe much of the estate" that Wyckliffe held "as shall satisfie him for soe much as there are orders out against Lissons' estate."[61] In short, Wycliffe was finding some of the Lisson property of great use to him in his own life and was helping himself. But there were debts to be paid by the estate, and the items in question needed to be sold or exchanged to pay those debts. Managing those affairs was Lawrence's job, but the court assigned John Jr., Wyckliffe's relation by marriage, to tell Wycliffe that he was going to have to give back some of the goods he was using. It could not have been a pleasant conversation.

News of all of this confusion eventually filtered over the ocean and came to the attention of Robert Lisson, the Bristol butcher. Understandably, he was not pleased, and rightly or wrongly, he held Lawrence responsible for exactly the kind of casual usages Lawrence and the court were trying to stop. Lisson focused on Lawrence's role as the guardian of his only surviving Virginia close relation. Lisson believed that the terms of the will meant that his own children were next in line to benefit from his brother's possessions and that Lawrence was not taking enough care to secure those goods and find a way to get their value to Bristol. Lisson began action against Lawrence, arguing that as guardian for Frances, he was entitled to one-third of the estate's division, the one stipulated for Jane. But the other two-thirds of the divided property (or at least its value) were due to his own children in England. In 1690, Lisson took Lawrence to court, claiming that he was illegally overstepping his role and was essentially robbing the butcher's children in Bristol of the value of their uncle's estate, which they thought should have descended to them upon the death of their Virginia cousins. Being in Bristol, Lisson turned to Lewis Markham—the man whom John Washington contracted to manage the land and ordinary he owned at Nomini Creek—to act as his attorney.

The court heard the arguments, and in the end, it disagreed with Robert Lisson's understanding of the descent of the property. Their ruling was as complicated as the case itself. They reasoned that since the minor sons had died before they could take legal

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[60] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 59–60.

[61] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 9.

possession of their shares of the estate, those instead had descended to Jane, and on her death, all three divisions went to Frances, then in the care of Lawrence Washington. That gave Lawrence full rights to manage the holding and draw wealth from it. The justices summarized their view with a single cryptic phrase: "a gift of chattel [property] for an hour is a guift thereof forever."[62]

In their decision, the court also upheld the idea that women's property rights carried weight. Rather than allowing the Lisson goods to pass to the next male family member, the court instead saw Jane, and later her daughter, as having a legitimate claim to the property—even though it all changed hands quite a bit and, in the end, much of it went to Washington. The case is a useful illustration of how wills could sow considerable trouble when entails and instructions landed on people who themselves had passed away.

This is an example of women—particularly unmarried women—being able to control to some degree their financial fates. In England, a woman's property became legally her husband's at marriage in a system known as "coverture."[63] British colonists brought this common law system with them to the American colonies, but it was far from airtight. As with many habits and practices, colonial realities challenged the way things operated across the ocean. Even in the English common law model, coverture only applied to freehold properties—those that the woman owned outright in her own name. Anne Pope's land given by her father was a perfect example of a female-owned freehold. Property that had an entail on it—terms of a will that guided its succession from owner to owner—was exempted from coverture. The rules of coverture were exactly what Frances Gerrard had sought to avoid through her premarital agreements with John Washington. In the Lisson case, the courts upheld Jane's and her daughter's rights to act as sole property owners.

The matter was once and for all resolved in 1696 when Robert Lisson gave up on trying to control this Virginia property through on-hand attorneys. By then, the old homes were showing their age. If Lisson had built them, they would have been at least 30 years old, and if they were the old Bridges buildings, they would have been almost 50 years old—in either case, considerable ages for the post-in-ground structures of the area. The Bristol Lissons sold the land to Lawrence, in what appeared to be an amicable deal, for 100 pounds of "lawful money of England."[64] Lawrence, though, was a bit put out by the cost, writing to Lewis Markham that "a hundred pound is a great deale of money to lay out on a

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[62] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately Published, 1974), 22.

[63] Amy Louise Erikson, "Coverture and Capitalism," *History Workshop Journal* 9 (2005): 3–5. See also Martha Saxton, *Being Good: Women's Moral Values in Early America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 253–55; Cynthia Kierner, *Beyond the Household: Women's Place in the Early South, 1700–1835* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1998), 23–26, 102, 105, 125–26.

[64] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private Printing, 1932), 1: 237.

peace of land withoutt timber, and houses tumbling downe."[65] Nevertheless, despite all the contention and confusion, when it was all over, Lawrence had acquired a significant part of the Mattox Neck Potomac frontage.

Orphans and Guardians

Frances Lisson's story highlights how complicated it could be to carefully and legally care for orphans and their inheritances. The court always took an active and activist interest in these matters, usually when sitting as a specifically designated "Orphans' Court" for just this purpose. These courts were serious business, and failure to appear when ordered resulted in a fine of 500 pounds of tobacco.[66] Lawrence also appeared frequently in court acting as the attorney for neighbors and associates and as guardian for the orphaned children of neighbors. The role of guardian was becoming an increasingly common one in the colony in the second half of the 17th century. For the first few decades of English settlement, children were a rare thing given the demographic imbalances and the servitude's rules against procreation while in service. But as the population stabilized and women's numbers began to equal those of men, family life became a reality. With that came the same issues of childcare and the care of orphans that were a regular part of English life. In a time of relatively high adult mortality rates, care for orphaned children was a constant concern. Only a few Virginian children made it to adulthood with both of their parents alive, and a third would lose both parents while still minors.[67] Stepparents were as common as genetic parents, and remarried blended families were the norm, a habit that created extensive and often quite confusing kinship networks.

As Jane Bridges Lisson Butler Brownsford's case shows, widows and widowers almost always remarried immediately—and frequently within their extended family networks, as when John Washington married the widowed Gerrard sisters in succession. Stepparenting was the simplest way to restore children's care networks and, in the case of property-holding families, see to it that the inheritances of minor children were protected and cared for. But stepparenting was not an option for children losing both of their natural parents. Orphans from poor families were easily cared for by simply placing them in new

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[65] Charles A. Hoppin. "The Origin of Wakefield, Washington's Birthplace," *Tyler's Quarterly* 8, no. 4 (April 1927): 232.

[66] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 69.

[67] Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 153; Lorena Walsh, "'Till Death Us Do Part': Marriage and Family in Seventeenth-Century Maryland," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 159–61; Daniel Blake Smith, "Mortality and Family in the Colonial Chesapeake," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 8, no. 3 (1978): 403–27.

homes, where they would quickly become part of the workforce. But orphans of freeholders and wealthier planters, particularly those without other relations on hand, presented a unique problem. Not only did they need care, but they also conveyed property that had to be secured and overseen. The House of Burgesses took up this issue specifically in 1679 with "An Act for Securing Orphants Estates." The act mandated that some sort of security be taken from guardians to ensure their good management.[68]

Parents and the court alike wished to see orphaned children well raised, appropriately educated, and prepared to be useful and functional adults. They also were very concerned to ensure that inherited property could be properly tended and held in trust until a minor child reached majority age. Courts, therefore, often placed orphans of property-owning parents with planters whom they trusted to take a guardian's responsibility seriously, and parents drafting wills would look for the same considerations. This led to some men serving as the "go-to" guardians in a given area. Lawrence was one of these men, as was his son Augustine in his day. Part of a guardian's task was seeing to a ward's upbringing, and another was taking care of his or her inherited assets. Lawrence, for example, became the guardian for Jane Hays when she was orphaned in 1683. In language very much resembling an indenture (for in many ways that was what it was), her father willed that "Law Washington take into his tutorage and care the sd child Jane Hays."[69] The court put the Wycliffe orphans in Lawrence's care as well as several others. When the system worked well, it protected children and their inherited property. It did not always work well, though, as in the 1688 case of orphans Robert and William Mason, who their "Godfathers" felt were being "unkindly treated" and "grosely abused" by the "tutors" the court had selected.[70] Children themselves were not entirely powerless in these matters. Orphans over the age of 14 had the right to petition the court to change their guardians and even end their guardianship if circumstances allowed. Nathaniel Pope Jr. had done this when he asked the court to amicably end John Washington's guardianship.[71] After the court removed orphan William Lancitt from the care of John Barton and placed him with Thomas Butler, Lancitt

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[68] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2, no. 444.

[69] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 35.

[70] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 48.

[71] Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, "'Now-Wives and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," in *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad W. Tate and David L. Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 162.

went to the court in 1684 to have the decision reversed on the grounds that Butler used him "unkindly" and was wasting the lad's inheritance. The court agreed and returned Lancitt and his property to Barton's care.[72]

Serving as a guardian mixed altruism with self-interest. It was a socially complicated station that combined care for children with the fact that some children came with valuable assets to which a guardian had temporary access. Child-rearing and estate management accrued costs, and to compensate for time and expenses, guardians were entitled to repayment and remuneration derived from the properties they managed in trust. For example, on March 25, 1692, Lawrence, John Jr., and two other appraisers each were awarded 450 pounds of tobacco from the Lisson estate due to them for the time spent in settling the property.[73] But even though these relationships might seem somewhat mercenary, they could feel quite different to the participants. Frances Lisson, for example, maintained a lifelong relationship with her guardian, continuing to trust his judgment and, as far as the record reveals, seeing him as something of a surrogate father. Frances did not live past 19 years of age, but as she faced her untimely end, she turned to her "friend Law Washington" to close her estate.[74]

The Ducking Stool and State Control over Women

English people brought England's gender norms, concerns, and sense of order to Virginia. England's was a rigidly hierarchical society that placed men above women and saw this order as being divine in origin; to challenge it was to challenge the world as God had ordained it. Women's power out of its proper domestic context represented a threat to this order and therefore was always a concern for men in government and in the clergy and even for ordinary heads of households. Seventeenth-century English people generally saw women as being innately dangerous, overly sexual, and inherently disruptive to men, whom they saw as naturally godly and levelheaded. In this view, women had a unique power to interfere with the social order, with all sorts of bad material and spiritual outcomes possible. Witchcraft, slander, and gossip were the primary ways through which women might become a threat to their husbands, family, neighbors, and the general good. All these worries focused on women's speech, the words they chose, and the people to whom they addressed them. As a result, the county courts heard a large number of slander cases; John

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[72] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 70.

[73] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 85.

[74] https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I030435&tree=Tree1.

Washington was pulled into this reality during his battles with the Coles in 1668. To maintain the gender order, the assembly and burgesses passed many laws to control the speech and sexuality of Virginia's free women.[75]

Ideally, it was a father's or a husband's job to keep the women of his household in line in both word and deed. That included not only wives and daughters but servants as well, whose sexual activity was strictly regulated. Cases involving servants often moved beyond the home and became a public matter. Servant women were particularly vulnerable because their becoming pregnant was barred by law and could not be hidden for long. Lawrence's inability to control the sexual activity of a servant named Mary Brindle became a public matter in 1697 when she was brought to court for "having a bastard child" despite her labor obligations to Washington. Her punishment was two-year extension of service to make up for Lawrence's "loss and trouble" in dealing with her.[76] When Joseph Hardwich's servant Katherine Thomas "absented herself" for 35 days and gave birth to a "bastard child being a single woman," the court added two years' time to her service. But it also ordered that the baby's father—another of Hardwich's servants, David Myles—"pay 450 pounds of tobacco" as soon as he ended his servitude and began to grow his own crop.[77] Margaret Brown's "fornication" and subsequent child earned her master another three years of her labor, and Susanna Williams's illegal child extended her service by two and a half years, even though her master, Robert Lovell, was the child's father.[78]

Extension of service might have been the most common and economically useful form of punishment for servants, but some infractions of either servants or free women called for physical chastisements, either at home or at the hands of the court. For that reason, the burgesses in 1662 required that a "ducking-stoole" be erected by each county court, along with a "pillory," a whipping post, and stocks.[79] All counties already had their own gallows or hanging trees. These apparatuses were for lawbreakers, both male and female, but the ducking stool was only for women. These stools took many forms, but the most common was a seat of some kind attached to a pole in such a way that enabled the seat to be dropped into a pool of standing water (ducked), forcing a woman tied to the seat to come close to drowning before her tormentors would lift her out. The number of repeti-

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[75] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 145–46; Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 67–88; Carol Karlsen, *Devil in the Shape of a Woman: Witchcraft in Colonial New England* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1998).

[76] "GEWA Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA, 6: 124.

[77] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 78.

[78] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 36.

[79] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2: 75.

tions of these duckings that would take place during a session was at the discretion of the court or the person doing the ducking. These stools were also by necessity separate from the other implements of rough justice, which generally were very close to the courthouse, adding a dimension of physical separation to this women-only discipline regime. Ducking stools required water, and given the unpredictability of river tides, Virginia mill ponds were favorite locations for them.[80]

On May 26, 1697, the court ordered "that a ducking stoole bee forthwith provided and fixed in each parish of the county." Lawrence was appointed to set up Washington Parish's stool at "Washington's mill dam" on Rosier's Creek and to assure that the work would "bee well and substantially done." Isaac Allerton received the same charge to erect the second stool at Cople Parish near Nomini Creek.[81] The court would also reimburse the expenses.

These were new builds and not replacements of older stools, meaning that thus far, the county had not found a need to commission such things. It is not clear exactly what created the sudden urgency on the part of the justices; they offered no rationale for their charge. But there had been five witchcraft cases in the colony between 1694 and 1697. Up until that point, there had been 15 Virginia witchcraft cases handled by county courts. The first was that of a woman named Joan Wright, who in 1626 was thought by her Surry County neighbors to have made a local child sick by sorcery.[82] Before 1694, the most recent case had been the 1679 one in which Alice Cartwrite of Lower Norfolk County was brought to Jamestown to be tried for using black magic to bring on the death of a neighbor's child. The court ordered an examination of Cartwrite's body but, finding "noe suspitious marks" revealing her supposed demonic connections, acquitted her of the charge.[83] Given the length of time between these sorts of cases, a spate of five accusations in a short period constituted an outbreak by Virginia standards.

Perhaps informing the Westmoreland justices' desire for a new ducking stool was the fact that two of the five 1690s cases were in their own county. In 1694, William Earle accused Phyllis Money of using black magic to bewitch the horse of her son-in-law Henry Duncan and of teaching John Duncan and her own daughter the dark arts.[84] The justices dismissed the case, and Money's countersuit yielded her nothing. The next year, the

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[80] Edward M. Riley, "The Colonial Courthouses of York County, Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 22, no. 4 (1942): 411.

[81] *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1690-1698*, Montross, VA, 242.

[82] Carson O. Hudson Jr., *Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019), Kindle location 800.

[83] Carson O. Hudson Jr., *Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019), Kindle location 1016.

[84] Carson O. Hudson Jr., *Witchcraft in Colonial Virginia* (Charleston, SC: The History Press, 2019), Kindle Location 1031.

Duncans were back for the second Westmoreland witchcraft trial. This time, it was Henry Duncan accusing Elizabeth Duncan of cavorting with the devil. Again the charge was unproven, and the case was dismissed. Whatever was going wrong in the disharmonious Duncan household, the cases both centered on the actions and speech of women and thus highlighted the need for husbands and the court to maintain the county's gender-ordered harmony. This might have been exactly what was on the justices' minds when they commissioned ducking stools in each county parish. But in general, male heads of households were charged with keeping the women in their homes and families from becoming "disorderly" and thereby risking social harmony.[85]

It is also not entirely clear that the orders were followed since there was no specific line item in the county's ledger repaying Lawrence and Allerton for their efforts and materials, although those costs could have been paid and not recorded. It is also worth noting that the court did not order any women to be ducked in the subsequent years.

Lawrence Washington in the House of Burgesses, 1684–1686 and 1691–1692

One of the first concerns Lawrence encountered upon arriving at the House of Burgesses had to do with rebellion on the part of what the gentry saw as "many evill and ill-disposed persons."[86] Many of the burgesses had lived through the tumult of Bacon's Rebellion, and a smaller number could recall the thwarted 1663 plan to destroy tobacco plants in Gloucester County by servants angered at their poor food supply.[87] But all had seen or heard of the set of riots that swept Gloucester, Middlesex, and New Kent Counties in 1682. Fed up with a long decline in tobacco prices (more on this shortly), small planters and servants took matters into their own hands and concluded, with some reason, that overproduction was the source of their financial woes. They took the next logical step and set about destroying standing crops and burning tobacco barns, all with an eye to creating market scarcity and driving up prices. Apart from the dubious economic logic, unrest itself threatened the fragile colonial order and therefore was something the burgesses could not countenance.[88]

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[85] See Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 67–88. English writers also made matters worse for colonial women by portraying them as innately and inveterately problematic. See Michal J. Rozbicki, "The Curse of Provincialism: Negative Perceptions of Colonial American Plantation Gentry," *Journal of Southern History* 63, no. 4 (1997): 727–52.

[86] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 11.

[87] Timothy Morgan, "Turmoil in an Orderly Society: Colonial Virginia, 1607–1754," PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1976, https://encyclopediavirginia.org/entries/gloucester-county- conspiracy-1663.

[88] Warren Billings, John E. Selby, and That W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), 108–10.

Westmoreland County was spared these travails, but when Lawrence arrived in Jamestown as a new burgess, one of the first acts he voted on was one that declared that any group of eight or more gathering with the intent to destroy any facet of tobacco production could be "adjudged to be traytors, and shall suffer paines of death."[89] Authorizing the use of violence to maintain colonial order was a theme in Lawrence's time as a lawmaker.

But Lawrence was not a burgess during the change in English government known as the Glorious Revolution, which removed James II, the last of the Stewart kings, and replaced him with William and Mary. James II had Catholic leanings and was pushing for a greater role for Catholics—a concern that drove him from office. In Virginia, some feared a Catholic uprising aided by sympathetic Frenchmen and Native Americans in support of the ousted monarch. Rumors of an attack in Stafford County in 1689 led to a general panic. But upon examination, it turned out to all be a hoax perpetrated by a few unrepentant Baconites, who sowed the chaos so as to reignite their lost cause. The instigators were rounded up and stripped of public office.[90] Apart from some anxiety over the appointment of a new governor, 1688 came and went with little trouble—certainly nothing of the kind the Potomac had seen in the 1640s and 1650s. Lawrence was a burgess under the new ruling couple's reign and governor, when the government attempted to tighten up the tobacco trade and reinforce taxation and inspection regimes by requiring that all imports and exports be restricted to a select set of ports, some built, some soon to be built. Like many attempts to force town growth by statute, this effort failed and was soon repealed.

While Lawrence was a burgess, the assembly required that every member of each county's militia adequately supply himself with weapons and powder. Where supplies of munitions were inadequate, the government would provide them. One of the only times Lawrence appeared in the records of the burgesses, it was to recount a tale of how he was unable to send powder to Westmoreland County in 1692. He and two other Northern Neck militia officers acquired the "powder allotted for Patomeck River," but when they "applyed themselves to a master of a sloop bound thither," he "demanded the unreasonable sum of 1000 lbs of tobo [tobacco] for that service." York River agents found themselves confronting the same wharf-side price gouging, and the response from the government was to empower its agents to "impress sloopes and men to transport the powder allotted for Patomack and York Rivers."[91] In exchange for his greed, the unnamed sloop master would seem to have had his ship confiscated for the trip.

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[89] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 12.

[90] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 162.

[91] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659–93* (Richmond: The Colonial Press, 1914), 398.

During Lawrence's time as a burgess, the assembly also addressed the need to assure high-quality tobacco barrels and barred ships from dumping ballast into the water, as the increasingly large piles of rocks at major docking areas were "very dangerous to the passage of vessels, sloops, and boats" and were clogging up waterways.[92] They passed laws prohibiting the casual breeding of inferior horses with larger ones and thus risking ruining the stock, and they mandated a fine for anyone whose free-range horse barked a fruit tree.[93] The burgesses also reinstated bounties for the killing of wolves, an offer that had been repealed but as a result had led wolves to "increase in number" and do "frequent spoil and destruction" on livestock all over the colony.[94] This was a particular concern in Westmoreland County. In 1691, the court took it upon themselves to offer a bounty of 400 pounds of tobacco to any person who could "produce the head or heads of such wolf or wolves by them so kild" and show them "in open court."[95] Lawrence, in fact, made use of this law himself that same year when he hired a Native hunter to kill wolves and presented evidence of that unnamed man's success before the Westmoreland County Court to collect the bounty due.[96] The burgesses additionally increased penalties for "sabbath abusing, drunkenness, fornication and adultery" and mandated the seizure of poorly made leather products, a practice echoing the way Virginia law had dealt with inferior tobacco. Lawrence was part of a committee that reviewed that motion and weighed possible amendments.[97]

The records of the House of Burgesses carried this short foreshadowing comment referencing Lawrence: "Wednesday Aprill the 6th 1692, The House mett. Capt Lawrence Washington a member of the house being ill had leave given to go out of towne for recovery of his health"[98]

Lawrence would die in 1698, but his health was already presenting an issue.

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[92] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 46.

[93] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 70.

[94] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 42.15.

[95] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 15.

[96] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 231.

[97] Hening, *Statutes at Large*, 3, no. 75.

[98] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659–93* (Richmond: The Colonial Press, 1914), 383.

CHAPTER NINE

Tobacco and Slavery on Mattox Neck, 1675–1710

The Washington Brothers and Enslaved Africans, 1675–1699

John Washington was among the elite planters who led the way into a reliance on enslaved labor. Across the colony, most of the enslaved workers were African, but there were enslaved Native Americans as well, albeit in far smaller numbers and usually only in the wake of conflicts.[1] One of the most significant differences between the life of the father and that of his sons was the increasing presence and importance of enslaved labor. Controlling an enslaved workforce dramatically changed English colonial life, economics, and law. Acts of the House of Burgesses in the 1650s and 1660s laid slavery's groundwork, but it was only in the last decades of the century that those began to be daily facts of life across Virginia.

During the years of the Washington brothers' adulthood, 22 shipments of enslaved people arrived at Virginia ports from Africa. Those people came primarily from the West African ports of Gambia and Calabar, with one ship coming from the Gold Coast, one from Ardra, and one arriving with people taken from Madagascar, the other side of the continent—a rare occurrence in Virginia but a principal point of origin for enslaved people arriving in New York during the same period.[2] Almost all the ships bringing enslaved people across the Atlantic hailed from London. One interesting exception was the Bristol-based ship *Society*, which sailed into Virginia waters in August of 1687. *Society* left an unknown African port carrying 162 people, but by the time she arrived in America, 32 of these unfortunates had perished at some point in the crossing. The voyage itself did not work out well for *Society*'s owners, James Twyford and James Hallidge, either. At some

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[1] Alan Gallay, *The Indian Slave Trade: The Rise of the English Empire in the American South, 1670–1717* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2002); James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 87. See also Michael Guasco, "To 'doe some good upon their countrymen': The Paradox of Indian Slavery in Early Anglo-America," *Journal of Social History* 41, no. 2 (2007): 389–411. For more on slavery and Native Americans, see Robbie Ethridge and Sheri M. Shuck-Hall, eds., *Mapping the Mississippian Shatter Zone: The Colonial Indian Slave Trade and Regional Instability in the American South* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2009), and James F. Brooks, *Captives and Cousins: Slavery, Kinship, and Community in the Southwest Borderlands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2002).

[2] https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database. All of this information came from this database via limited searches. See also Lorena S. Walsh, "The Chesapeake Slave Trade: Regional Patterns, African Origins, and Some Implications," *William and Mary Quarterly* 58, no. 1 (2001): 139–70.

point in the crossing, the vessel encountered a natural hazard that rendered the whole ship unsalvageable, and she was condemned as unseaworthy by Virginia port masters. The captive people were then sold at a no-longer-recalled locale, regardless of whatever the original plan had been. What makes *Society* interesting for the GEWA and Washington story is the fact that it was the sole Bristol ship carrying enslaved people to Virginia between 1675 and 1700.[3] Given the strong lingering Bristol connections on the Potomac, there is a possibility that these people were destined for Westmoreland plantations even if they never arrived there.[4]

For enslavers, personal contacts were the routes over which Africans entered enslavement on Virginia estates, having either been brought directly from Africa or transshipped through the West Indies. Having business associations with a merchant, merchant firm, or a planter already active in the slave trade most commonly opened the door.[5] But as the population of imported enslaved people grew, so too did the numbers of people born into slavery. That means that the population of the enslaved was growing both through transportation and natural increase, the latter not being possible for British servile labor. Wills and deeds also distributed enslaved workers as the population grew. The most important change during the Washington brothers' lives, though, was the formation of the Royal African Company in 1672, which promised to deliver "negroes from 12 to 40 years old" to planters for 18 pounds sterling per person.[6] The new company, with its royally granted monopoly on the English slave trade, superseded the efforts of previous smaller companies and dramatically increased the number of Africans sold into the colony. Most of these went to elite planters. One count showed that between 1661 and 1699, a total of 1636 African headrights were claimed, and of those, 71 percent went to county officeholders (a

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[3] https://www.slavevoyages.org/voyage/database. All of this information came from this database via limited searches. See also Walter E. Minchinton, "Characteristics of British Slaving Vessels, 1698–1775," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20, no. 1 (1989): 53–81.

[4] The regional connection to Bristol is a subject covered in Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 20, 56, 244, 285–88.

[5] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 342.

[6] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 351. Virginia's move toward an enslaved African labor force during the 17th century has produced a large literature. See Russell R. Menard, "Making a 'Popular Slave Society' in Colonial British America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 43, no. 3 (2013): 377–95; Edmund S. Morgan, *American Slavery, American Freedom: The Ordeal of Colonial Virginia* (New York: W. W. Norton, reprint, 2003); Barbara L. Solow, ed., *Slavery and the Rise of the Atlantic System* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1993); Herbert Klein, "The Atlantic Slave Trade," in Stuart B. Schwartz, ed., *Tropical Babylons: Sugar and the Making of the Atlantic World* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2004), 201–36; John C. Coombs, "Building the Machine: The Development of Slavery and Slave Society in Early Colonial Virginia," unpub. PhD diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 2003.

reliable way to delineate the gentry from ordinary planters).[7] But at the same time, most enslaved people over the same period were sold to planters along the James, York, and Rappahannock Rivers. For example, there were 893 African headrights claimed in these areas against only 65 claimed along the Potomac. This all means that while the Washingtons were active and early enslavers, they and their neighbors lagged far behind the lower-Tidewater elites in transitioning to an enslaved labor force.

The records are vague, but John Washington had nine enslaved people listed in the inventory, which his friends Lord and Lisson had prepared for the court, and at least one enslaved person not counted in that list. They all lived and worked on the GEWA acres and an outlying quarter, probably the parcel that came to be called Indian Town, on the land between the forks of Bridge's Creek. Washington's widow, Frances Gerrard, claimed "eight good Negroes according to a deed of writing" from John's estate, but it is unclear from where people came or whether they were included in the 10 at Bridge's Creek.[8] Nothing in Washington's will indicated that he was bequeathing enslaved people to his sons, but in leaving the Bridge's Creek estate to John Jr., he made these enslaved people part of the bequest.

In 1691, Lawrence brought three young enslaved Africans to court to have their ages recorded. This was a legal necessity stemming from the 1680 law that made masters pay a tax for enslaved children of 12 years or older and for white male children 14 and older. "Dick a negroe boy slave" was "adjudged nine years old," a "certain negro" boy named Fox was adjudged to be seven, and the court found a "negroe girle" named Sara to be seven years old as well.[9] These children might have been born on Lawrence's Mattox Creek estate, or they might have been recently brought to the colony. In either case, their presence shows that there were other enslaved adults on Lawrence's land who would have cared for the children.

Discipline and Enslaved Africans

In the 1650s through the 1670s, the fear of Native American attack was one of the greatest threats occupying the minds of English planters in Westmoreland County. The wars of the 1670s and the Native American removal they entailed greatly reduced that fear, but the growth of an enslaved African labor force created a new one: slave revolt. This prevailing fear already defined English society on the small Caribbean sugar islands and would soon become a worry for all white Virginians for more than a century and a half. A taste of this

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[7] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 354.

[8] November 27, 1677, *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1675–1688/9*, Montross, VA, 25.

[9] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 234.

fear and the way Virginians dealt with it came in a 1688 case that Lawrence heard while he was a justice. Sam was "a negro servant to Richard Metcalf" of Cople Parish when, according to the General Court at Jamestown, he "endeavored to promote a Negro insurrection in this colony."[10] The extent or even the viability of this plan is unknown, and no coconspirators were charged. The case against Sam must not have been that strong because they chose not to execute him but rather to punish him in the most elaborate manner and make the rest of his life an example of misery "to deter him and others from the like evill practice for time to come."[11] The court ordered that Sam be

> Severely whipt att a cart's tayle from prison round about the towne and then to the gallows and from thence to the prison againe and that hee be conveyed by the sheriff of Westmoreland County to that county and he is ordered to whip him severely att the next court and that hee have a halter about his necke during that time and afterwards that hee have a strong iron collar affixed about his neck and four springs, which collar he is never to take or gett off, nor go off his master's plantation during all the time he shall live and if hee shall go off his master's plantation or get off his collar then to be hanged.[12]

On May 30, Sam—having been whipped, paraded, and shown the gallows—was back in Westmoreland County. At the courthouse on the land his father once owned, Lawrence and the other justices oversaw Sam getting "twenty-nine lashes on the bare back well laid on" and "a halter about his neck, and the collar put on."[13] From then on, Sam would be a living testament to the enslaver's fear of the people they enslaved.

Cases like Sam's helped inspire ever sterner action on the part of the burgesses. John Washington's time in the House of Burgesses saw much of the most significant legislative action creating the legal categories of enslavement. By the time Lawrence was a burgess, most of that work had been done, and attention instead went to shoring up the infrastructure to deal with the growing fear of rebellion. Just before Lawrence's election, the burgesses passed an act "For the Better Preventing Insurrections by Negroes," which made it unlawful for any enslaved people to arm themselves.[14] The 1691 "Act for Suppressing Outlying Slaves" set out to control "negroes, mulattoes, and other slaves" who, at times, "lie hid and lurk in obscure places killing hoggs, and committing other injuries to

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[10] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[11] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[12] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[13] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[14] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2, no. 492.

the inhabitants of this dominion."[15] These people were not runaways; there was already ample law governing that situation. Rather, this law referenced gatherings of people outside the immediate eye of masters and overseers—something like a more modern loitering law. This act specifically empowered county sheriffs to round up, arrest, and return to their masters any enslaved people deemed to be "outlying" in a disturbing fashion—something Lawrence would have done as sheriff when he took the commission in 1692.[16] That office stayed within the family network for a time and had previously been held by his brother-in-law Francis Wright, husband to Lawrence's sister Anne.

That act was soon followed by the "Act for the More Speedy Prosecution of Slaves Committing Capitall Crimes" in 1692. When the labor force was primarily British servants, execution of English people for capital crimes was a rarity—far rarer than it was back in England.[17] The standard punishment for most servants' infractions was a flogging and/or adding time onto their service. But that latter option was not possible for people condemned to serve for life, so execution became an increasingly regular part of Virginia life as the enslaved labor force grew after the last quarter of the 17th century.

Olloo and "Black" Betty

Enslaved people did not usually appear in late-17th-century court records by name. When they did, it was usually in wills and home probates and court-ordered age assessments, or they were facing punishment—most often death—at the hands of the justices' agents. One exception was a woman named Olloo, who in the spring of 1685 found herself the object of contention between David Wycliffe—John Jr.'s father-in-law—and Lawrence Washington. If it was rare for an enslaved person to be named in court records, it was rarer still for them to have retained an African name, a sure sign that they were not born in Virginia, where every enslaved child received some variation of an English name. Olloo is not the most common name but is West African in origin, and the records of Atlantic enslavement reveal others of the same name and several variants, such as Faholloo, Ollookacay, Kolloo, Ollookassee, and Mawoolloo.[18] Olloo might have had to hear her given name simplified to better suit the sounds of her enslavers' language.

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[15] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 86.

[16] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 93.

[17] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century, Volume I* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 612.

[18] https://www.slavevoyages.org/resources/names-database; see also Jerome S. Handler and JoAnn Jacoby, "Slave Names and Naming in Barbados, 1650–1830," *William and Mary Quarterly* 53, no. 4 (1996): 685–728.

The details of the fight over Olloo are predictably sparse, but her fate was related to the contention over who should manage Nathaniel Pope Jr.'s considerable estate.[19] Lawrence and his brother's father-in-law had already developed some tension between them, and whatever that unstated animosity was, it came into play as they battled over Olloo. The law considered Olloo to be an asset of the Pope estate, but for some unclear reason, she was being claimed by David Wyckliffe, the father of John Jr.'s wife, Anne. Something was not right here, though, and on January 6, 1685, the court ordered that Wyckliffe "doe imeadiately deliver ye negro woman named Olloo to Mr Lawrence Washington" either at his estate or at Pope's.[20] This Wyckliffe must have done, but the conversation about just where Olloo should be and under whose rule she should live carried on into the spring. The following May, Wyckliffe complained to the court that "Lawrence Washington as guardian of Nathaniel Pope detains from him a negro woman called Ollo and praying she bee restored to him," and asked the court to intervene on his behalf.[21] The justices declined, however, and "upon full hearing of the business" did "confirme her in the hands of Washington."[22] Lawrence and Wycliffe continued to butt heads after this issue seemed resolved, appearing in court a few times in 1687 over the management of the Lisson estate—that old parcel on the Potomac neighboring both Wyckliffe's and John Jr.'s land that took up so much of Lawrence's time. But Olloo and her enticing story departed from the written record at that point, leaving later generations with many more questions than answers. Who was this woman, and what was it about her skills or traits that made her worthy of two legal actions on the part of white enslavers? There is no way to know, just as we cannot learn more about where Olloo came from originally, the role she played in plantation life, or even just where she lived in Virginia or how she passed the rest of her life there. What we can say is that Olloo is the first recorded named person enslaved by the Washington family.

Clues for understanding Olloo's story are in the will of David Wyckliffe's son Henry and his considerations for another enslaved woman and her children. Henry drafted his will a dozen years after asking the court to return Olloo to his father. Following the clues also returns the story to the GEWA acres and the Washington home at Bridge's Creek as well as to the Wyckliffe home in the vicinity of Duck Hall Point. The two estates were only a short walk's distance apart, and that proximity ensured that father and married daughter would

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[19] The distinct experience of women within slavery has a significant literature. See Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004); Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Rachel A. Feinstein, *When Rape Was Legal: The Untold History of Sexual Violence during Slavery* (New York: Routledge, 2018); Jennifer L. Morgan, *Reckoning with Slavery: Gender, Kinship, and Capitalism in the Early Black Atlantic* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2021).

[20] GEWA, "Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," 3, no. 51.

[21] GEWA, "Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," 3, no. 56.

[22] GEWA, "Transcribed Westmoreland County Court Records," 3, no. 56.

stay active in each other's affairs. In the will, Henry Wyckliffe laid out a complex and fascinating set of instructions for his sister Anne—herself just recently widowed by the death of John Jr. in 1698 and now, less than a year later, about to lose her father.

Wyckliffe requested that Anne "lay out" the "8000 and odd pounds" of tobacco and 10 pounds "old money sterling" she held for him and use the money to "purchase two young negroes." This was a common enough request in wills as many people asked that assets be exchanged to pay for labor. There was a curious hook, though. In exchange for acquiring these two enslaved people, Anne was required to "set two mulatto boys Hughgo and Jimmy (sons of her negro woman Black Betty) free when they arrive at the age of 21." The requests did not end there. Anne was further required to provide both boys with "a young mare when they shall be free" and to make sure that Jimmy was sent to "school till he can read English." This was a remarkable amount of care and concern for a planter to lavish on enslaved children, even if they were mixed race. But Wyckliffe provided for "Black" Betty as well by bequeathing to her his "bed and furniture" as well as some cloth and cookware, and he requested that the rest of his estate "be putt in the hands" of Anne "for the good of 'Black' Betty's children Frank, Nelly, Peggy, Betty, Molly and Rachell," all of whom Anne was to have "baptized and taught the Christian faith."[23] Like Hughgo and Jimmy, these six children were of mixed race, and at the time of John Jr.'s death in 1698, the eldest was eight years old.[24]

Betty seems to have lived and worked at the main home, but her eight children lived nearby in a quarter on John Jr.'s outlying parcel of land between the forks of Bridge's Creek, by then locally known as Indian Town. Betty was old enough to have been one of the 10 enslaved people living at Bridge's Creek when John Washington died, but there is nothing in the records to tell us more about her background. Her family at Indian Town lived there in the company of "two very old negroes," an unrelated young woman whose name was not recorded, and an epileptic "mulatto girl" who was listed as being "troubled with fits."[25] This small enslaved community was overseen by a white servant named Mark Henderson. All told, there were nine young people of mixed race living at Indian Town, all owned by John Jr., and Betty was mother to eight of them. There can be no mistaking the fact that the father or fathers of Hughgo, Jimmy, Frank, Nelly, Peggy, Betty, Molly, and Rachell—as with that of the epileptic girl—were white men of the neighborhood. Viewed as property, Betty's womb was a considerable source of wealth because Virginia law ensured

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[23] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Wills, 1691–1699*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1972), 88.

[24] John Washington Jr.'s Inventory, *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149a. Wycliffe's will did not offer details about the children, but John Washington Jr.'s will did list all of Betty's children as mixed race.

[25] John Washington Jr.'s Inventory, *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149a.

that a child's status would follow that of the mother. The grim economics of sexuality within enslavement meant that for the expense of a healthy and strong woman, white men, whoever they might have been, were able to create more property.

Betty was also singled out for special valuation in John Jr.'s inventory after his death in 1698, a separation on paper that mirrored her physical separation from most of the other enslaved people on the site. She appeared at the end, whereas her children and the other members of her community were listed in association with where they lived and worked. "Appraised the negro wo: called Betty at 5000" pounds of tobacco was how she appeared in the listings.[26] By contrast, the "Mulatto girl troubled with fits and two boys" were valued at 10,000 pounds of tobacco, but "one negro girl" also was assigned a value of 5,000 pounds of tobacco.[27] Betty's monetary value was high given that she was somewhat older than the girl, who clearly was younger yet was seen as having the same worth. Most significantly, though, Betty was given her name in the document—an honor afforded to none of the other enslaved people on the Washington estate and one that shows that she held some special role. James Taylor, John Higdon, and Lawrence Abington, who conducted the inventory for the county court, were neighbors but not daily residents. It is not clear how much they knew about the ins and outs of life on this farm. Their job was to cast a cold eye on all that was there and assess its value in tobacco. The fact that Betty appeared by name meant that someone—probably Anne—who accompanied them on their walk through the estate related her name. Betty herself might have said it, and for reasons lost, the assessors knew to include it. However it happened, the inventory is more evidence that Betty was an important and unique member of the Washingtons' complicated mixed-race household and family.

The status of the plantation's mixed-race children still presented a unique problem for the law. A 1662 law dictated that a child's condition followed that of their mother. In other words, children of enslaved women were to be themselves enslaved.[28] In this way, enslaved women like Betty were reproducers of wealth for the people who enslaved them, giving these women a unique value within this system. Betty's high valuation within the estate cannot be separated from her worth as a producer of more enslaved people, even though of mixed race.[29] It would also be a mistake to overlook the reality that enslaved

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[26] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 150.

[27] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 150.

[28] Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 115.

[29] Jennifer Morgan, *Laboring Women: Reproduction and Gender in New World Slavery* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004), 83, 107–43. J. Morgan's examples are not from Virginia. Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 10.

women were in uniquely vulnerable positions and were subject to sexual violence. That Betty's children were mixed race gives us some clue as to her story, but the silences therein are louder.[30]

Mixed-race children with free white fathers were able to make legal claims to freedom. The 1691 Act for Suppressing Outlying Slaves, which the burgesses passed when Lawrence was a member, laid out clear new terms governing marriages between free whites and enslaved Africans, as well as any mixed-race children that resulted from these marriages. Before 1691, children from these unions (legal and otherwise) would be freed at the age of 30. But the new law stated that any "negro or mulatto" legally "set free" was obligated to "be transported out of the country."[31] The goal of this law was to permanently link status and skin color and thus ensure that everyone of African descent in the colony was an enslaved person. In practice, though, as the mixed-race community at Indian Town shows, this law was easier to write than to enforce. Marriages were somewhat easier to police as they were a function of the church and therefore part of the larger realm of royal authority. Marriages between free whites and enslaved people were rare—but there were some. In 1691, "James Tate son of James Tate a negro slave to Mr Patrick Spence and Hester Tate his wife and English woman" appeared before the court to certify his assigning to "James Westcomb as an apprentice with him to serve until hee bee free according to law."[32] After 1691, the court would not have endorsed such an arrangement, let alone so casually noted James and Hester's marriage.[33]

Henry Wyckliffe's will was a very different story but also swam in the same confused waters governing the most intimate and problematic part of enslavement. It was unusual indeed for a planter to devote so much of his estate specifically to the care of an enslaved woman and her children. His bequests to Betty raised all sorts of interesting questions as well. For example, as Betty was legally property, who then was the actual owner of the goods Wyckliffe left to her? Was it Betty, or was it Anne and John Jr. since they owned Betty? It is hard to miss the conclusion that the relationship between Wyckliffe and Betty was something rather personal and, indeed, even affectionate. Likewise, the terms of the will hint that Hughgo and Jimmy, although enslaved, were probably the nephews of Bridge's Creek's

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[30] Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 64–74, 100–102, 118.

[31] William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 87–88;. See also Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 120.

[32] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Wills, 1690–1692* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 59.

[33] For similar cases, see Anthony Parent, *Foul Means: The Formation of a Slave Society in Virginia, 1660–1740* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 116–17; Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 12.

mistress, who at the same time enslaved them, their six (presumed) half siblings, and their mother. What is more, the Wyckliffes' unusually generous bequests to the two boys and their mother suggest that their parentage may not even have been secret.

Of course, none of this is certain. Wyckliffe might simply have had his heart moved by long contact with these enslaved people and wished to better their lives as his ended. Likewise, there may be any number of other long-forgotten reasons for his actions. We simply cannot know. But the singular nature of Wycliffe's requests and their obvious concern and tenderness powerfully hint at something intimate between Wyckliffe and Betty and certainly reveal the social complexity of the regimes of enslavement as they were emerging at the end of the century. One thing the bequest makes clear is that together, "Black" Betty, Hughgo, Jimmy, Frank, Nelly, Peggy, Betty, Molly, and Rachell are the first named people we can identify as being enslaved by the Washington family living on the GEWA acres. Betty and others at Indian Town would have known the Washington home on Bridge's Creek as the "big house" from which authority emanated. In all likelihood, they had been in and around the home and probably even worked its acres. It is worth noting here that Washington's Mattox Neck neighbor Originall Brown also listed enslaved people in his 1698 will. These people—a man named Coffey, a young woman named Diana, and "negro girl Jenny"—are also among the earliest named people being enslaved specifically within the GEWA acres.[34]

"Black" Betty's story also begs comparison with that of Olloo's just over a decade before. Did David Wyckliffe's concern to have Olloo returned to his charge stem in some way from a similar emotional place that drove his son to care for Betty and her children? Again the questions outnumber the answers. Wycliffe's and Betty's linked stories highlight the complexity inherent in making people into property.

Tobacco Agriculture at the End of the 17th Century

Tobacco was not the only way Virginians made money, but it was the most important. Most planters, small or large, grew the leaf, and all watched with great interest the fluctuations in the market. The biggest fortunes were made from tobacco and land dealing, and since the structure and customs of colonial society ensured that the wealthiest planters would be in the House of Burgesses and on the Governor's Council, their interest drove law and policy. Year in and year out, the burgesses passed laws trying to regulate and control the trade and ensure the highest-quality crops and the best prices.[35]

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[34] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Wills, 1691–1699*, vol. 2 (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1972), 63.

[35] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 424–32.

The routine of seeding, planting, tending, harvesting, curing, packing, and shipping tobacco dominated the pace of life on Mattox Neck as elsewhere in the colony. It did for the Washingtons just as it did for all of their neighbors. For the overwhelming majority of settler colonists, the needs of the crop and its economy set the flow of the calendar. In any society with an economy largely dominated by a single commodity, the production and sale of that commodity comes to shape a variety of thought, action, and culture. The strength of the market, the health of the crops in the ground, the latest improvements in agricultural practice, and the comings and goings of the tobacco ships were pervasive concerns for planters and dominated daily conversation. To be an expert in all of this—to be esteemed by one's peers as a master tobacco grower—was an important part of social prestige and, significantly, one that was not rooted only in wealth and holdings. Even the smallest of planters could be held in high regard for his skill at being a good grower.

The routine of tobacco growing and production was fairly well established by the middle of the 17th century and would continue to set the tone and pace of life for the next 100 years. Tobacco smoking had begun as a novelty in the early part of century, but by the third quarter of the 1600s, it had matured into a well-established part of English—and even continental—life, with Virginia being virtually the sole provider of this commodity. English tobacco users almost exclusively preferred pipes, while snuff was a popular way to take powdered tobacco on the European continent. Subsidiary industries, such as tobacco pipe manufacture, had also grown apace with the spread and regularizing of the habit.[36]

The Chesapeake region primarily produced two different types of tobacco leaf: sweet-scented and Oronoco. Some planters grew a third, rather low-quality variety south of the James River and on the eastern shore of the Chesapeake Bay, but it never rivaled the other two types as a percentage of overall exports.[37] Sweet-scented required very well-drained, sandy loamy soil to thrive and thus did best along the soft, well-fertilized alluvial banks of the James and York Rivers and their tributaries, such as the Chickahominy. The marketability of this delicate crop accounted for the large fortunes planters amassed on the James and York Rivers and the extended influence of the Tidewater tobacco plantocracy in Virginia politics. Growers of sweet-scented could also rely on a steady British demand for their leaf, a demand steady enough to allow them to ride out dips in tobacco price per pound while still maintaining healthy profits. Elite planters—officeholders, for example—also led the way in creating an enslaved African workforce, something they could do thanks

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[36] Lauren McMillan, "Community Formation and the Development of a British-Atlantic Identity in the Chesapeake: An Archaeological and Historical Study of the Tobacco Pipe Trade in the Potomac River Valley ca. 1630–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015.

[37] Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617–1730, and Interpretation," *Research in Economic History* 5 (1980): 110.

to the steady sweet-scented profits and the trade connections they engendered. By the middle of the 17th century, about half the laborers producing sweet-scented tobacco were enslaved Africans. Four decades later, that labor force was almost entirely enslaved.[38]

Oronoco cultivation began in earnest in the mid-17th century and quickly became as common as sweet-scented, although it never garnered the kinds of profits and market stability that sweet-scented promised. Oronoco had the advantage of being a hardier crop, but it produced a smaller leaf than sweet-scented and made a harsher smoke when burned. Planters along the north bank of the Rappahannock, on the Potomac, in Maryland, and on the south side of the James generally grew Oronoco on their acres, but there were planters in the Tidewater heartland who preferred this variety and did quite well with it. Oronoco was always a second-best commodity, and as such, its growers were more vulnerable to market fluctuations, and for the most part their fortunes lagged behind those of sweet-scented planters. Likewise, the transition to enslaved African labor was slower in Oronoco areas than along the rivers where sweet-scented was grown. It was still elite Oronoco planters who led the way, but few planters other than the best off could afford the initial expenses in enslaving people. When the Washingtons and their Mattox Neck neighbors planted, it was invariably Oronoco seeds they sowed.[39]

By the second quarter of the 18th century, tastes were changing, and English people, perhaps long accustomed to smoking, found themselves wanting the harsher smoke of Oronoco leaf. European buyers had always welcomed Oronoco, though, which worked both for smoking and for grinding into powder to make snortable snuff. That means that the Washingtons' tobacco economy depended on the second-best tobacco variant and were somewhat dependent on larger European markets as opposed to being reliant entirely on English buyers. There are obvious echoes here of John Washington's Baltic Sea commercial travels.[40]

Prices for both tobacco varieties always fluctuated season to season and depended on a wide variety of factors and conditions. Overproduction would cyclically drive prices down in a glutted market, while international conflict, and particularly war at sea, would create scarcity and drive prices up. But war at sea also could shut trade down entirely and leave planters in a precarious situation for several seasons as crops languished with no shipper to carry them overseas and no profit gained on effort spent.

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[38] Douglas Bradburn, "The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade and the Purpose of Empire, 1690–1715," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2001): 381.

[39] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 210–17; Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1999): 53–94.

[40] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 405–6.

Leaf quality also mattered quite a bit. The places and planters with reputations for producing the best crops garnered considerable social prestige as well as respectable fortunes. Subregions and even individual planters producing and exporting a poor crop ran the risk of hurting the entire enterprise. The burgesses repeatedly created and altered regimes of inspection and tight regulations governing exactly what was required of a planter in order to put their crop in the marketplace. Despite annual uncertainties, there were overall up-and-down trends.[41]

Growing a Tobacco Crop

The first step of growing a sellable crop was planting the tiny tobacco seeds in raised and covered beds so the seeds could sprout and become seedlings. Preparing the specially made beds began in the fall, and setting seeds in them began in December and January, with 12 days after Christmas being the ideal time according to local folk wisdom. The planting beds would be well manured and could be as large as a quarter of acre, filled with tiny seedlings. Once the seeds were in, they had to be carefully tended and protected from the occasional frost and innumerable pests and fungi that preyed on delicate new leaves. The risks facing each seedling were high, so planters routinely sowed more than 10 times the number of seeds than what they could actually see through to harvesting.[42]

Once the seedlings' leaves had grown to about two inches, by late March or April in most years, it was time to transplant them. This was a high-risk moment in the process and one that required considerable skill and knowledge. Having sowed more seed than the ground could sustain, planters and their workers had to select what appeared to be the strongest and most promising seedlings of the batch for transplanting. Picking the wrong ones could doom a crop, and there was always a risk that the small plants might not take to their new setting. Weather posed a threat too, as an ill-timed torrential downpour risked washing away the new plants. Each plant would be set in a specially raised small planting mound built up using iron hoes on long poles. Rather than being long furrows of plowed earth as one would see with grain cultivation, tobacco fields were lines of mounds. This practice granted 360-degree access to those tending to the growing plants. Grains, once planted, required little handling until harvest time. But tobacco was labor-intensive at

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[41] Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1999): 53–55; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010).

[42] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46–55. Breen offers a detailed and highly useful description of the tobacco cycle. The following review is drawn from those pages.

every stage of its production and was touched by human hands innumerable times during its cycle. A maturing plant might be handled in some way nearly every single day until it was finally harvested.[43]

Transplanting might extend into June, depending on conditions and the size of fields being planted. Once that was done, the entire summer was spent carefully tending to each and every plant as it matured. The largest planters might have somewhere near 100,000 plants in the ground, so summer was a very busy time. There were three principal concerns tenders had foremost in mind. The first was to stop the encroachment of weeds that would steal valuable soil nutrients from tobacco plants. In addition to picking out any visible weeds, laborers would use their hoes to stir up the dirt of each mound but do so in a way that did not disturb the rooted tobacco. The image of laborers—British and enslaved Africans alike—in the tobacco fields with their long tobacco hoes was a staple of Virginia life.

The second summer concern was pests. The most dangerous of these were horn-worms, which would eat ripening leaves. Every plant had to be inspected regularly to locate these large green caterpillar-like insects, which once found were quickly killed. This simple task was often given to children working in the field with their parents. The third task required more skill and care. As with most life forms, reproduction was the primary goal of a tobacco plant's existence. For plants, flowering was the location of reproductive function and, as a result, was a growth activity that consumed a considerable amount of an individual plant's energy. In the case of ornamental flowers, the plant's natural pattern matched its human growers' desires. The same was the case with fruit-bearing plants, for which large and healthy seedpods were the goal of both grower and plant. Tobacco growing, though, was an oddity. The planter's goal was to grow the largest and fullest leaves possible. That meant working against the plant's natural growing patterns and forcing it to focus all of its energy on a few select leaves, usually a dozen or so per plant. Achieving this entailed pinching off smaller unwanted leaves and removing the beginning buds of flowers before they could get too far grown. As with checking for pests, this was a considerable task on large plantations, and even on small ones, finishing only meant starting the task all over again. Each planter would, of course, allow a few choice plants to go through their full cycle untouched in order to harvest seeds for next year's crop.

This sort of monitoring took up the whole summer. As the leaves grew larger and heavier, they also began to get tacky, with naturally occurring tobacco tar making workers' hands sticky and dirty. Tar-stained hands were one distinct mark of a tobacco handler. Another was the large thumbnail workers grew, usually on their right hand. The tar-stained nail helped in scoring leaf stems to break them off from the main stem. After the early 18th

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[43] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 46.

century and well into the 19th, English travel writers made some Virginians' and other southerners' large, hardened fingers and thumbnails into an object of exotic fascination through exaggerated tales of fighters gouging each other's eyes out.[44]

The next big moment was the cutting—the gathering in of the leaves when they had reached their ideal level of growth. As important a moment as this was, there was never any real consensus about exactly *when* this would best occur or what to look for. The process generally began in September as the nights grew colder yet well before the first possible frost. Picking the exact moment was very much in the eye of the individual planter, and even though one would be very conscious of how one's neighbors were progressing, there still was considerable variation. One indication that the leaves were ready was a very slight yellow spotting. Another was that a leaf looked "grayish" or it felt "thick."[45] To wait too long risked having the weather turn, but to pick too early meant perhaps harvesting leaves too moist to properly cure before packing. As with transplanting, cutting was a time of some anxiety for planters.

Once the leaves were in, the next step was to dry, or "cure," them. This was done in the large tobacco barns that, by Lawrence and John Washington's day, had become a set piece of the Virginia landscape. Barns had to be dry enough to shelter from rain but airy enough to allow for airflow. The leaves would be bound together by their stems and hung across sticks set in the rafters. To enter a full tobacco barn was to enter a bower of downward-pointing drying leaves. Curing had its own challenges; one observer called it "an art most difficult of attainment."[46] The goal was to get leaves to where they were dry but not brittle. Perfect timing was essential, and everything hung in the balance. A hornworm could devastate a tobacco plant. But mold, mildew, too much moisture, or a too quick drying heat could all ruin a whole crop as it hung in the barn. If the season was rainy, planters might light fires in the barn to help dry the leaves, but more than a few planters lost their barns and their crops to financially devastating fires. Risks abounded.[47]

Once the leaves attained their ideal state, usually by late fall, it was time to "prize" them for shipping. This entailed packing them into hogsheads, the manufacture of which made up a small subsidiary plantation industry. There was artistry in the packing here as well—yet another skill in which a master planter could take pride. Laying the leaves out radially maximized the space, as did packing tightly. Prizing was aided by a special press

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[44] Jozef Pecina, "Eye-Gouging in Antebellum Popular Fiction," *American and British Studies* 10 (December 2017): 26; Elliott J. Gorn, "'Gouge and Bite, Pull Hair and Scratch': The Social Significance of Fighting in the Southern Backcountry," *The American Historical Review* 90, no. 1 (1985): 18–43.

[45] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 49.

[46] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 50.

[47] For effects of farming on the land as well, see David O. Percey, "Ax or Plow?: Significant Colonial Landscape Alteration Rates in the Maryland and Virginia Tidewater," *Agricultural History* 66, no. 2 (1992): 66–74.

that was a sort of long-handled lever pivoting on a ground-set post. On one end was the pole and on the other a tamp that could be pressed into the hogshead to squeeze as much leaf in as possible. Care had to be taken, though, because a planter who overpressed ran the risk of splaying the staves of the hogshead, making it no longer airtight and thus susceptible to water and other kinds of damage. The goal was to get 1,000 pounds of tobacco into each hogshead, but since shippers charged fees by the barrel and not the actual weight, a smart planter always pushed the envelope of how much leaf he could squeeze into a cask before the barrel broke.[48]

This work was usually completed by early winter when the tobacco ships floated onto Virginia's rivers. The Washington brothers, like Pope and their father, had their own wharves, so most of the packing took place not too far from where the casks would be loaded onto transatlantic vessels. Planters farther inland still had to get their crop to public wharves or those owned by friendly planters. Some growers put their casks in wagons, but many simply attached a harness to the hogshead itself and led a horse as it rolled to the waterside. The importance of the roads to the trade for so many planters made care for the public byways a vital county responsibility.

Tobacco Price Fluctuations and the Cycles of Trade

The effort that went into producing a single hogshead of tobacco remained pretty constant for nearly two centuries. What changed was the kind of labor that went into filling that barrel—from British indentured labor to enslaved African labor—and the price that barrel would fetch in English and European markets. Price is only one measure of how well individual planters were doing economically. Prices might drop, but if a planter was increasing production the whole time, he might be making more money year to year even as the per-pound price of tobacco dropped. Nevertheless, price was always a readily identifiable indicator of the overall health of the market as well as being a documented source of stress for planters themselves.

Tobacco entered the English economy with a boom as the supply could not keep up with the demand for the fashionable new commodity. But those heady days passed quickly, and prices were falling by the mid-1620s. There was a small but steep price rise in the mid-1630s, but that was followed in 1637 by a drop in price as steep as the increase had been a few years earlier. Tobacco prices only started to go back up again in the mid-1640s, largely due to underproduction because of the Third Anglo–Powhatan War. That increase, though, would not have benefited planters because most were not selling enough leaf to see a profit. Once the war was over, prices steadily went up again and reached a peak in the

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[48] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 51.

mid-1650s—and the end of the First Anglo–Dutch War.[49] This was also the time that many of the Potomac south shore planters were making the move from Maryland. The first English planters on Mattox Neck would have patented their land and set into planting amid the optimism created by higher prices than they had been seen for some years.

As was often the case, that promise was short-lived. The end of the Dutch war saw another drop in prices and a depression in the 1660s, the third of its kind. From about 1680 on, prices were low but fairly stable. Historians have labeled the worst of this period, from 1680 to about 1710, as the era of stagnation.[50] Concern over tobacco prices was a preoccupation for many Virginians. The Westmoreland County Court, for example, lamented this situation in 1688, noting that tobacco was "of little value" and the men of the militia could not afford to arm themselves.[51]

There were many factors making for a slow economy, including the simple agricultural dynamics of soil depletion. By the 1680s, repeated intensive single-crop production was taking a toll on some of the most used and desirable tobacco areas. All planters practiced some form of rotation; no planter was so ignorant as to think they could use all their land every year. But even with rotation and fallow periods, many Virginia fields were slowly losing their viability. This was less of a problem in the Oronoco areas along the Potomac, where intensive farming was still only a few decades old. Nevertheless, the Washington brothers ran their tobacco enterprise amid a complicated time for tobacco planters.[52]

Lawrence and John Jr. lived during an era of stagnation and comparatively low prices per pound of tobacco. The Washington brothers grew and sold their tobacco, though, at an important juncture in the functioning of the overall trade. Put simply, their father had participated in one version of the transatlantic market—the same one they were born into—but changes during Lawrence and John Jr.'s adulthood meant that their sons and grandsons knew a marketplace radically different from the ones the early Washingtons had known. King William's War of 1689–97 (and, later, Queen Anne's War of 1702–13) were primary catalysts that changed a trade that was relatively open to all comers, only slightly regulated, and highly competitive into one that was tightly controlled and scheduled, increasingly limited to a fortunate few, and subject to all sorts of political manipulation. In short, tobacco trading went from being a chaotic free marketplace to one

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[49] Russell R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (October 1976): 401–3.

[50] Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1999): 53.

[51] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[52] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 210–17.

solidly under the control of governmental authorities on both sides of the Atlantic.[53] French seizure of tobacco ships in 1689 sent a panic through Virginia's ruling planters, which could be all but ruined by such a calamity. The crown suffered losses, too, from maritime theft—as much as 10,000 pounds lost from each ship taken.[54] Planters turned to the Admiralty in London to provide protection, and that board responded by sending warships into the Chesapeake and, in so doing, garnered a considerable amount of control over the trade's size and timing. Wealthy and influential planters with good contacts in London were able to appeal to well-placed friends, who could tweak a quota here or overlook another there to favor some planters over others.

All of these changes had a far greater effect on planters like the Washingtons than they did on sweet-scented planters. The latter only had to get their crops to English markets to realize a profit, and the protected fleet system that emerged was designed to ensure exactly that outcome. Oronoco planters, though, had to get their crop to European markets, and that could be nearly impossible at times. The frustration inherent to contending with this situation accounts for the Westmoreland court's 1688 observation that their crops were "of little value."[55]

Planters reacted differently to price drops and changes in the market's structure, depending in part on the kind of tobacco they farmed. Sweet-scented growers were in a privileged position. Many had built up considerable fortunes and estates over the preceding decades, and it was these Tidewater planters who dominated Virginia's politics, allowing them to tweak colonial law to their liking. Even as prices dropped, sweet-scented leaf garnered more money than an equal amount of Oronoco would. Thus most sweet-scented planters met price drops by experimenting with leaf refinement, being ever more selective in how many leaves they chose from each plant and packing ever more dried leaf to each hogshead to keep shipping costs low. Sweet-scented growers could afford to be choosy, and the wealthiest among them had the resources to ride out dips in price. In short, because they had an elite commodity, they focused on improving its quality so that they could demand higher prices.[56]

Oronoco growers responded to price drops very differently. These planters devoted their energies to combating low prices with increased production. This meant more time and effort expended on more acres in order to bring in the same profit as when prices were a bit higher. Quality mattered but not enough to slow down production. While

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[53] Douglas Bradburn, "The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade and the Purpose of Empire, 1690–1715," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2001): 363.

[54] Douglas Bradburn, "The Visible Fist: The Chesapeake Tobacco Trade and the Purpose of Empire, 1690–1715," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2001): 364.

[55] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1687–1689* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1974), 34.

[56] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 210–17.

sweet-scented growers became ever fussier about which leaves they would pick—in some cases going as low as eight choice leaves per plant—Oronoco growers moved in the opposite direction by trying to get every viable leaf from each plant into a drying barn. All planters, though, also added production steps to their routine, such as removing leaves' stems since these were not smokable but still added weight to a hogshead and drove up shipping costs.[57]

The often quite dramatic year-to-year price fluctuations were about more than the value of a pound of tobacco in English markets. Tobacco also served as a surrogate currency within the colony, with many debts counted in the leaf and collected taxes tallied the same way. This meant that as prices dipped and rose, so too did the underlying value of any number of personal local exchanges. Debtors would be eager to repay what they owed when prices were low, while creditors would rather get paid back when prices were high.

Tobacco Inspection

The health of the tobacco market and the quality of the crop itself was a matter of public and governmental concern from the very beginning of the colony's tobacco economy. Wars, weather events, and other causes natural or man-made could force prices up or down with little a planter could do to intervene. Ensuring consistent crop quality was somewhat controllable, though.

During the company period, the assembly passed a body of laws designed to control the tobacco market. In 1619, the assembly mandated that all tobacco be inspected before export and that poor-quality leaves be burned in their growers' presence.[58] This was a bit of commercial-guild-style thinking designed to ensure that only the best commodities left the colony for the good of the entire enterprise. Inspection also had the effect of slowing overall production, which prevented a glutting of the market (and a commensurate decline in prices) at a time when tobacco was still something of a novelty. In 1629, the assembly set a limit of 3,000 plants per worker and then quickly lowered that number to 2,000, only to drop it again to 1,500 in 1633, all with an eye toward creating scarcity to keep prices up.[59] The assembly also mandated that there be well-built storehouses at key

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[57] Lorena S. Walsh, "Summing the Parts: Implications for Estimating Chesapeake Output and Income Subregionally," *William and Mary Quarterly* 56, no. 1 (1999): 60–61.

[58] Stacy L. Lorenz, "'To Do Justice to His Majesty, the Merchant and the Planter': Governor William Gooch and the Virginia Tobacco Inspection Act of 1730," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 108, no. 4 (2000): 351.

[59] Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617–1730, and Interpretation," *Research in Economic History* 5 (1980): 130; Russell R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 144, n48, and 425 for later rules governing inspectors.

locations so that careless planters could not jeopardize the colony's main commodity.[60] These oversight regimes were beneficial to the trade itself and to most planters, so they carried on even after the Virginia Company was gone. It is also worth noting that 17th-century Britons could not really imagine a marketplace that was not tightly regulated, this still being an era of royal charters and powerful guilds.

Laws in the 1620s and 1630s appointed tobacco inspectors across the colony and barred the use of poor-quality tobacco to settle debts in an act that was very much like currency regulation. This was an important issue since many planters quickly figured out that they could send their best crop to market while using low-quality leaf to settle their local debts. A persistent problem along these lines was the growing of "seconds," which were small and poor-quality leaves allowed to grow on plants already stripped of their better leaves. Virginia legislators periodically tried to stamp out the use of seconds, but the practice was hard to curtail. In 1641, though, confronting a slowdown in the market, the assembly repealed the bulk of their tobacco laws, leaving in place only the role of local inspectors and limits on the use of poor-quality leaf to pay debts. Even these remaining rules were softer in the enforcing than they might have seemed when the burgesses first penned them. This regime of local inspectors and periodic new laws from the burgesses and governor was the tobacco growers' world that the Washington brothers knew.[61]

The 1683 Originall Brown Survey Map

Thanks to some property transfers and anxiety, we have one of the rarest types of documents from this period: a map. It was drawn by one Robert Chamberlaine—a man of some mystery. He held no public office and may even have spent some years as a tenant farmer, but he appeared in the court records as Mr. Chamberlaine, an honorific title that meant he was locally respected and economically self-sufficient. He was active in the county during the 1680s, at a time when William Horton was the county's official surveyor. But Chamberlaine clearly knew the craft as well and was more than capable of creating a fine draft of a patent and annotating it with the most elegant flowing penmanship—not a skill to be overlooked in the 17th century. His perfectly drawn, compassed, directional arrows could be things of true beauty.[62]

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[60] William Waller Hening, *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 1: 116.

[61] Russell R. Menard, "The Tobacco Industry in the Chesapeake Colonies, 1617–1730, and Interpretation," *Research in Economic History* 5 (1980): 130; Russell R. Menard, "A Note on Chesapeake Tobacco Prices, 1618–1660," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 84, no. 4 (1976): 401–10.

[62] Chamberlaine's 1683 map is in the GEWA collections. On maps and surveying, see Christian J. Koot, "The Merchant, the Map, and Empire: Augustine Herrman's Chesapeake and Interimperial Trade, 1644–73," *William and Mary Quarterly* 67, no. 4 (2010): 603–44.

Although Horton's surveys carried the authority of county government, Chamberlaine, "ye surveryor," was contracting with planters on his own here and there and appeared in court many times, either requiring payment for services rendered or being bound to pay his debts. On occasion, he would work alongside Horton, who must have been glad to have had a handy companion. Surveys were always important and often sources of controversy. Getting a line wrong or moving across a property even one or two degrees off could mean a considerable amount of land misallocated. That is why the court was so often involved, either to ensure "an orderly survey" with "no interruption" made "by anny one," as in the case of John Rosier's 1684 land dispute, or simply to see that the work be done by "some honest surveyor."[63]

In 1683, Originall Brown hired Chamberlaine to conduct a survey and draft a map of part of Mattox Neck along the Potomac. The bulk of Chamberlaine's Westmoreland County career was then still ahead of him, but he had at least come to Brown's attention. Brown himself, though, was another Mattox Neck stalwart, although not as prominent as the Washingtons. He was one of those local men whose standing came from their alliances and abilities rather than from offices and titles. He was useful to the community; he was a skilled and well-equipped carpenter, meaning there is no saying how many local homes he helped build and adorn. It was he who made the coffins for the widow Jane Lisson and her two boys. He had served on the jury that found against the rebels who occupied John Washington's home, and he considered Lawrence Washington an "esteemed" friend (although that word does not necessarily imply the kind of intimacy it does in today's usage). Like most of his neighbors, Brown was obliquely related to Henry Brookes. Brown's parents were Marylanders—Kent Islanders in fact—with their wonderfully named son Originall having been born in Maryland before the family made the move over to the Potomac's south shore. Around 1670, he married Henry Brookes's recently widowed daughter, Jane, thus making for another union of former Marylander families—this time both with Kent Island roots. The couple had children, daughters mostly: Jane, Judith, and Mary, all born between 1672 and 1685. A boy named William joined the family in 1685 and was destined to become a carpenter like his father. They all lived comfortably but not ostentatiously on a few hundred acres bordering the western edge of Digwood Swamp, a place name still in use today that they knew well in the 17th century. Their home had the

[63] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1684–1685* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 72; John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1685–1687* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1988), 32.

usual array of "brass pewter and iron potts," furnishings like a "chest of drawers," 14 chairs, "2 ovil tables," and feather beds as well as the horse equipment, farm tools, and firearms one would expect to find in a well-established freeholder's estate.[64]

Brown's books contained some evidence of the Browns having Puritan leanings. His books contained the evidence. There were three Bibles, one of which was ornate and had been in the family for some time. He also owned a Book of Common Prayer and a critique of Islam and the Ottoman Empire, a popular topic for 17th-century English readers.[65] But he also had a copy of Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety*, one of the most read and reprinted devotional guides for Puritans.[66] There had been Puritans at Kent Island in the 1640s, and it may well be that the Browns were among them. After Maryland's Plundering Time and the arrival of Virginia's strongly anti-Puritan Governor Berkeley, many of Virginia's few Puritans left their homes on the lower rivers for the comparative tolerance of Maryland.[67] But it was also in this period that many Marylanders moved to the Potomac's south shore. Presumably, any Puritan-inclined settlers who made that move did not place church reform at the top of their priority list.

If Originall possessed Puritan sympathies, he must not have been the most contentious or vocal of church reformers. After all, he married the daughter of a founding member of the Anglican Washington Parish vestry and almost certainly attended the same church graced with the Baldridge-donated silver plate and cup and the royal insignia and Ten Commandments John Washington had bequeathed. These adornments were exactly the kind of "Popish" extravagances Puritans most wanted to banish. But most Puritans—even in their heyday—were not separatists like the small number who settled in Plymouth in Massachusetts. Most wanted change within and not the abandonment of the national church. Even at their fanciest a century later, Virginia's churches never reached the level of ostentation that could be found in England, where centuries of windows, statues, tapestries, and other adornments had collected even in small parish churches. It might be that colonial conditions inadvertently allowed for a church building plain enough to not ruffle reformist feathers while still pleasing an Anglican sense of majesty.[68]

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[64] "Original Brown," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22829&tree=Tree1; Danny Brad Hatch, "An Historical Archaeology of Early Modern Manhood in the Potomac River Valley of Virginia, 1645–1730," PhD diss., University of Tennessee, Knoxville, TN, 2015, 117–19.

[65] "Original Brown," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22829&tree=Tree1.

[66] Jerald C. Brauer, "Types of Puritan Piety," *Church History* 56, no. 1 (1987): 39–58.

[67] Kevin Butterfield, "Puritans and Religious Strife in the Early Chesapeake," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 109, no. 1 (2001): 32–34. See also April Hatfield, *Atlantic Virginia: Intercolonial Relations in the Seventeenth Century* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2004): 118–23.

[68] Francis J. Bremer, *The Puritan Experiment: New England Society from Bradford to Edwards* (Hanover, NH: New England University Press, 1995).

Puritanism also had run out of steam by Originall's day. By the 1680s, the older battles between Anglicans and reformers were well in the past—so much so that few even spoke of Puritans anymore. Cromwell fatigue and the restoration of the Stuart monarchy had more or less settled the matter. The 1680s' fears of a Catholic resurgence also united those with Puritan sentiments and establishment Anglicans under the banner of defending a Protestant England. Virginia itself, with its own internal conflicts, Indian wars, and tobacco economy, further smoothed off the rougher edges of old religious tensions that might otherwise have divided colonists. Nevertheless, the presence of Bayly's Puritan handbook in the Brown home was an unmistakable statement of religious sentiments, beliefs that may have made Brown a bit hesitant to hold public office given how strict Westmoreland officials were about making sure officeholders swore oaths of loyalty to church and crown.[69]

If Brown, and perhaps his whole family, quietly stood apart on matters of religion, they were in the mainstream when it came to enslaving African people. By the 1690s, the Browns were enslaving at least three Africans: a "girl" named Jenny and an informally married couple named Diana and Coffey (marriages of enslaved people had no standing in English or Virginia law). The names of other servants and enslaved laborers who worked on the land are lost to time. Brown was not a particularly wealthy man, and he held no county offices, the mark of men of standing. By the 1750s, it would have been perfectly normal for a man of his stature to be enslaving a few people. But in the 1690s, that was a bit unusual. But Brown and his kin had long lived in the Washington family commercial and social orbit. The easiest way for a smaller planter to have access to the trade links needed to acquire enslaved people was through a well-connected, wealthier friend, kinsman, or neighbor. For Brown, the Washingtons played that role.

In January 1682, Brown and William Kimball went to court against the always-disputatious David Wyckliffe over the latter's use of tobacco land, a "conciderable good orchard" to which the two plaintiffs claimed Wyckliffe had no right.[70] As was always with these sorts of cases, it was complicated. This was a family dispute since all three were not only Mattox Neck neighbors but also kinsmen: both Brown and Kimball had married Henry Brookes's daughters, and Wyckiffe was the son of Brookes's adopted son. Much of

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[69] The text of Lewis Bayly's *The Practice of Piety* (London: Daniel Midwinter, 1723) can be found on Google Books, https://www.google.com/books/edition/_/uMlN5jcVsIYC?hl=en&sa=X&ved=2ahUKEwjeuJ6Xnuv7AhUBSzABHUWkD_UQ7_IDegQICBAD; see also Edward L. Bond, "Source of Knowledge, Source of Power: The Supernatural World of English Virginia, 1607–1624," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 108, no. 2 (2000): 109.

[70] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Virginia Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 15. The presence of an orchard is quite in keeping with English practice and Virginia colonization. Orchards were vital for cider making. Sarah Hand Meacham, "'They Will Be Adjudged by Their Drink, What Kinde of Housewives They Are': Gender, Technology, and Household Cidering in England and the Chesapeake, 1690 to 1760," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 2 (2003): 117–50.

this confusion stemmed from the fact that Brookes's 1,000 acres had been broken into many smaller holdings with many members of the extended Brookes clan living on them, each with their own claims. Conflict was inevitable.

The property at issue in 1682 was the old Brookes estate, which until very recently had been the home of the widow Jane Brookes, Brown, and Kimball's mother-in-law and Wyckliffe's step-grandmother. But with Jane now dead, the sons-in-law argued that her land was to be divided between their wives, while Wyckliffe saw it differently and was then enjoying the "profitts of the land, house, and especially" that fruitful orchard. The court sided with the sons-in-law and ordered a division of Jane Brookes's old estate between her living daughters. The matter might have ended there, but Wyckliffe did not accept his defeat graciously and vacate the old Brookes land and home. In May of 1683 (March was the month of the new year then and not January as we now hold), Brown took matters into his own hands, and as the court recorded, he "did by force expell" Wyckliffe from the land. What exactly that entailed is not clear, but the justices were not thrilled and allowed the squatter to continue the use of the land "untill he shal legally be ejected."[71]

In August, Brown tried another tactic to claim his land. He turned to Chamberlaine to create the kind of legal document that represented the gold standard of landownership proof: the survey. In fact, the more elaborate and detailed the survey was, the more incontrovertible a truth it conveyed. Chamberlaine pulled out all the stops and produced the beautiful document now stored in the GEWA archives. It shows a 215-acre tract of land shaped roughly like a baseball diamond's home plate, with the flat bottom being the Potomac riverfront. The corners are marked with little symbolic trees showing the key markers and three somewhat stylized house drawings. These look a bit like Monopoly houses, with large gable-end chimneys, and they provide the locations of local homes and their proximity to one another in this close and crowded landscape. For researchers, that guide has made the map invaluable, but Brown did not commission the map to satisfy the centuries-later interests of people with research tools he could not even have imagined. The key is in the writing.[72]

On the lower right, Chamberlaine provided a rather pro forma description of his walk through the land and all the relevant markers. But on the upper left was the real significance of the document. There it lists the three small homes on the map. These were not meant to be actual representations of homes; they are not to scale, and they are not reliable guides to a home's size and grandeur, or lack thereof. But they are also not silent symbols; they do reveal broad details about homes and their relationships, one to the next. One home on the upper right of the sketched land was "Mr John Washingtons," this being the Bridge's Creek homestead John Sr. had bought, which by 1683 was home to John

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[71] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1682–1684* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1982), 15.

[72] "Chamberlaine Survey, 1683," GEWA Collection.

Jr., Anne (David Wyckliffe's daughter), quite possibly "Black" Betty, and certainly other servants and enslaved people. Washington-site archaeology, John Washington's will, and John Jr.'s inventory about 15 years after the survey all show the home to have had a porch addition, giving it a somewhat L-shaped footprint. Chamberlaine's Monopoly home shows none of that, but there are three little markings on the gable end that are suggestive of windows, an expensive and still somewhat rare adornment on finer homes.[73]

On the left, opposite Washington's home, was what Chamberlaine listed as "Mr Originall Brown's Dwelling House." This was showing the home along Digwood Swamp. In the drawing, the home is ever so slightly smaller than Washington's and does not have any hint of windows, only a small doorway that looks the same as on the other two homes. In some subtle way, the map is telling us that the Brown home was less grand than Washington's. This could just as likely be a drawn way of showing social status rather than architecture. Chamberlaine may been using these little houses to show who was a bigger man and who was more humble.[74]

But the little house with three drawn windows that sat on the Potomac was the point of the map. This was the Brookes home, the one that had been at the center of the dispute with Wyckliffe six months before. Chamberlaine described it as "his house where old Mrs Bookes lived." That word "his" was what this was all about. This survey was Brown creating a document that would record his understanding of just who rightfully owned what. Manifesting it on paper was the surest way to make it a reality.[75]

Brown was not quite done, though. At his death in 1698, he made his "beloved wife Jane" executor of his estate—common language in contemporary wills. But he followed that by writing:

> But if my said Wife should in any case Imbezell make away or strive to defraud my said children of any part or Parcell of any of the mentioned legacies which I have given them, then it is my desire that my esteemed friends, Capt. Laurence Washington and Mr. Caleb Butler whome I empower & Interest as overseers over my Children and their estates, to take my said Children and their Estates into their custody and I desire my said two overseers carefully to look after my said Children and their estates, during their minority, until they come to the specified time which I have left them of age.[76]

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[73] "Chamberlaine Survey, 1683," GEWA Collection.

[74] "Chamberlaine Survey, 1683," GEWA Collection.

[75] "Chamberlaine Survey, 1683," GEWA Collection.

[76] "Original Brown," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

The fear of Jane cheating their children would seem at odds with her being beloved—but then again, this sort of language could sometimes be rather pro forma. There is little to fill in the gaps, though. What was happening in the Brown family that made Originall part of this life with this comment about Jane? This very strange clause at the end of the will is an odd glimpse into this most interesting Mattox Neck family.

As land will, the disputed 215 acres were passed down and sold along after the Browns were dead and buried somewhere beneath its sod. Decades later, in 1726, the inheritors of the property—a Higdon, two Popes, and a Brown—sold the land to Lawrence Washington's son Augustine, who was then living on property his father had left to him on the west side of Bridge's Creek. That sale made another chunk of Mattox Neck belong to the Washingtons, like the filling in of jigsaw pieces. Bit by bit, the crowded network of Henry Brookes's descendants and their patchwork of properties was becoming one single family's large holding. The sale documents made specific mention of the "homes" and "hereditaments" on the land: they all became the Washingtons'.[77] So, too, did the "orchards," still good enough to warrant special mention in a legal document.

[77] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, ed., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 100.

CHAPTER TEN

Augustine and Jane Butler Washington, 1690–1715

The End of the Second American Washington Generation: The Birth of the Third

None of John and Anne's children made it out of their 30s. John himself lived to be about 46, but Anne died in her 34th or 35th year. These ages are understandably horrifying to us today, living as we do in an era of long life. But they were not at all out of the norm in 17th-century Virginia. High rates of child mortality generally pulled down averages for ages at the time of death, but that reveals little about the longevity of those who lived to reach adulthood. The longer one lived, the longer one was likely to live, and there certainly were people who made it to a venerable age. But dying in one's 30s or 40s was not considered uniquely tragic. One traveler to the colony reported meeting "few old people," while another observer noted that "if the English live past 33 they generally live to a good age" but that many died before reaching that age—one with strong Christian overtones.[1] When William Fitzhugh reached the age of 36, he thought of himself as being in his "declining age."[2] All of this means that the lengths of the Washingtons' lives were well within the sad norm of their day.

Anne was the first to go. She had married well. Francis Wright was Northumberland County born and a man of affairs, much like her father. Like Anne and her brothers, Wright was the scion of a prominent family: the Mottroms of Chicacoan, one the Potomac south shore's most venerable English names. The couple lived well in Cople Parish, and in 1684, they had a son they named John after Anne's father. One possible stress in their marriage was that Francis made deals to sell off lands that were in reality Anne's. Some of these sales became legal problems that their son would eventually have to settle many years later.[3] At some point, Anne took ill, or perhaps she had a complication

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[1] Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, "'Now Wives' and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in a Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad W. Tate and David Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 157.

[2] Darrett Rutman and Anita Rutman, "'Now Wives' and Sons-in-Law': Parental Death in a Seventeenth-Century Virginia County," *The Chesapeake in the Seventeenth Century: Essays on Anglo-American Society*, Thad W. Tate and David Ammerman, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1979), 157.

[3] "Anne Washington, Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties," https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22499&tree=Tree1.

from childbirth as she was only 31; nothing tells us. Whatever the cause, she was dead in February 1683 and was buried on her brother's land at Bridge's Creek in the family cemetery that already held her father and mother. She left no will, and Francis Wright, who remarried and lived another 20 years, managed what was left of her property. In all of this, her diamond ring seems to have vanished.

John Jr. was the next of Anne and John's children to pass away. He drafted his will on January 22, 1697, and illness soon overcame him. Like his parents and siblings, he was laid to rest in the family cemetery near the Bridge's Creek home, where he had spent his entire life. Anne Wyckliffe and John Jr. had four children together in rapid succession: Nathaniel, Lawrence, John III, and Henry. Nathaniel, named for his paternal great-grandfather, was born about 1691. Lawrence, a popular name in the family, was born about 1692. John III was born about 1693, and Henry, named for his adopted great-grandfather Henry Brookes, was born in 1695. Anne was widowed with a group of children all under the age of eight. She quickly remarried to Charles Ashton, a man who had already had two wives, whose deaths left him with three adult children and two minors. Anne and her children joined the Ashton family, making it a household of six young children. It might not have been the happiest of arrangements. When Nathaniel and Henry were old enough, they both petitioned the court to replace Ashton with Nathaniel Pope as their guardian, and the court agreed.[4] It is hard to read too much into this change, though, because it might simply have been about securing inheritances as Ashton entered his dotage.

Eldest brother Lawrence was the last to go. He had been running from an unnamed ailment since at least the early 1690s, but in 1698 it overtook him, and he, too, was interred in the family plot at Bridge's Creek. As is often the case, the surviving record offers little insight into the cause of death. But 1698 saw waves of infectious diseases in the Americas, a common enough occurrence in the era. It is easy to imagine Lawrence being swept away by some sort of distemper.[5]

Mildred Warner and Lawrence had one daughter who died in infancy and three children who lived to adulthood. The eldest, John—like his cousin named after his grandfather—was born in 1692; Augustine, born in 1694, was named for his maternal grandfather; and Mildred was born in 1696. Lawrence's death left his wife with three minor

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[4] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1707–1709* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1991), 31.

[5] Philip R. Hough, a 1940s park superintendent, thought that this was the cause of Lawrence's and perhaps John Jr.'s deaths. The idea is worth mentioning, but there is no direct evidence for it. Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield': Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 171; Noah Webster, *A Brief History of Epidemics and Pestilential Diseases* (London: G. Woodfall, 1800), 248.

children, the oldest of whom was six, in her sole care. She married again almost immediately to an English merchant ship captain named George Gale, a match that created an interesting and complicated story for her children.[6]

Upon Mildred's marriage to George Gale, she, her children, and at least one enslaved person—a girl named Jane—left Virginia to live in Whitehaven, England, where the Gales and their small merchant empire were well established.[7] The port was immediately south of the Scottish border on Britain's eastern side. Although it never eclipsed Bristol, and certainly never came close to the volume of trade London saw, Whitehaven was a port town of growing importance on England's eastern Atlantic side. Whitehaven's rise, though, was short-lived, as Liverpool's trade in enslaved people and manufactured goods and Glasgow's tobacco markets became dominant and drew most of the non-London-bound ships and merchants crossing the Atlantic.[8]

Why Did the Washington Brothers Not Exceed Their Father's Achievements?

Lawrence and John Jr. clearly had different goals from one another in life. Lawrence, with his English education and the social capital it brought him on the Potomac, saw himself as a man of standing, and his neighbors agreed. John Jr., on the other hand, was a local man contented with life on Mattox Neck. Neither the highflier nor the stay-at-home, though, reached the level of prominence and significance their father had attained. There are many possible explanations for that, some of which we can ascertain and some that we cannot.

The great unknowable underlying this question is one of personal character. We simply cannot know the unrecorded intangibles of personal charm, drive, and skill that might have led one 1600s person to rise and another to not. John Washington certainly had that sort of drive, and Lawrence continued down the path of public activity that his father had opened. But we have no information to say that personality accounted for the difference in the two brothers' careers.

We can explore other reasons, though. The fact that both men died in their 30s might have played a role. There certainly were people whose short lives were felt across the colony. Nathaniel Bacon, for example, was only 29 when he died. But at the same time,

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[6] "Augustine Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-in md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[7] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Kindle Loc 1494.

[8] Jacob M. Price, "The Economic Growth of the Chesapeake and the European Market, 1697–1775." *The Journal of Economic History* 24, no. 4 (1964): 501; J. E. Williams, "Whitehaven in the Eighteenth Century," *The Economic History Review* 8, no. 3 (1956): 393–404.

longer lives meant more time for the fruits of one's labor to mature. John Washington arrived in Virginia when he was about 26, giving him a late start, but his most influential years were after his mid-30s. His sons did not have that opportunity.

More identifiable is the fact that the brothers lived during the era of tobacco market difficulties, which squelched opportunities for many Northern Neck planters.[9] They also lived at a time when the kind of large-scale land acquisition that occupied John Washington was no longer locally viable. New lands and the profits they promised were only available far upriver, and surveying western acres was not a calling for a man focused on the county court and the House of Burgesses—or for his even less adventurous brother. John left his sons large enough estates to ensure that their pursuit of a comfortable living would not require the kinds of efforts others put in. The brothers might have failed to rise in part because they did not have to; they were born into a level of comfort all but unattainable for most Virginians and were content to stay there.

Westmoreland County in general and the Mattox Neck in particular had become fully populated and crowded places. Even as late as the 1660s, there were still unclaimed parcels to be had, and there also was still land granted to original tribes that could be legally (if unethically) taken from them. By the time John Jr. and Lawrence were adult planters, though, no such opportunities existed adjoining their land or in the immediate area. Acquiring land through debts was still possible, and as Lawrence's buying of the Lisson tract showed, a planter with resources could still buy out a neighbor. But this was a game every planter of substance was playing, and most had become quite skilled at it. By the 1680s, there were quite a few well-established families in the area, and many of these were in their second and even third generation of Virginia residency. The changing landscape John Washington walked into at midcentury had long since become an anglified place controlled by deeds and wills loaded with entails and bequests for wives, sons, daughters, and other relations who all had legal claim to land and estates. In the early days, it was not rare for an unmarried planter to die and leave his land to a neighbor; it happened quite a bit. But by the Washington brothers' day, every local parcel had a home, and each home had a family, and each family had its own complicated line of inheritance.

The Homes of Bridge's Creek circa 1700

John Jr.'s death placed the GEWA portion of his estate in Anne Wickliffe Washington Ashton's hands, but after her death in 1704, it went to John III. At the time of John Jr.'s death, he was renting part of his property to two tenant farmers, Thomas Wilsford and

[9] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 194–96.

Richard Watts. This means that there were at least two more livable homesteads on the land that have yet to be located. Willsford and Watts both had their own furnishing and tools, and the inventory was the legal document that marked whose goods were whose.[10]

By the end of the century, though, the Washington home and outbuildings were more than 40 years old and showing their age. Very few 17th-century Virginia homes survived long into the 18th century, partly due to changes in home style and construction techniques that made the older homes no longer desirable, and partly due to the simple fact that so many were earthfast and were slowly rotting away from the day they were built. Excavations of the John Washington home showed some repairs to the structural posts, but not to all of them and with only one repair cycle, not enough to have kept the home on the best footing for all that long. Artifactual evidence also showed that English people stopped living on the site in the 1720s, when the land was owned by the Stafford County Washingtons.[11]

John Jr.'s inventory showed that the old home had not changed much since John Washington's death. It described a very typical 17th-century Virginia hall and parlor home, with a closet in the hall and loft rooms above those two as well as a stair tower addition and a "porch chamber" above that. That made for a total of six rooms, but only those with goods were mentioned in the inventory. "Chambers," by convention, were always on the second floor, or in this case the loft, so that a listing of a parlor chamber, for example, reveals there being both a parlor chamber above and a parlor below. This is more or less the same footprint found by archaeologists. The outbuildings included an "old store," which was a warehouse probably near the water, a "kitchen" filled with pots and cooking equipment, a barn that contained an old mill stone, and a building intriguingly called the "old House."[12]

The hall chamber contained a feather bed, a rug, a blanket, a bedstead, a trunk, a chair, and a featherbed bolster. The porch chamber contained "4 old chairs," an "oval table," a bedstead, a "pair of old curtains," and a rug. The parlor chamber contained assorted goods, usually called "lumber" in inventories. The hall contained a "trundle bedstead," an "old table and chest"(which was probably a desk with a large set of drawers), a "spinning wheel," and "3 old leather chairs."[13] A number of interesting items were scattered around the house as well that give a view of the family's life and activities. The hall closet contained a "saddle and bridle" as well as a "sword & belt & bayonet." There

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[10] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

[11] Brooke S. Blades, "Archaeological Excavations at the Henry Brooks and John Washington Sites, George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Virginia," National Park Service, Office of Planning and Resource Preservation Mid-Atlantic Region, Philadelphia, PA, 1979, 10.

[12] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

[13] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 5*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

was a "parcel of old books," a "pair of pistols," a "pair of mens gloves," and three pairs of children's gloves, three pairs of "mens yarn hooes" (knitted socks), and a pair for a child, a "felt hatt," and plenty of plates, fireplace tools, bolts of cloth, and similar domestic items.[14]

The inventory of Willsford's rented home offers a contrasting view of the material life of a man living much farther down the economic scale than the Washingtons. Willsford had an "old pott with two legs"(it should have had three), "1 old pewter dish," "half a skimmer, 1 old pr tongs, 5 spoons, 1 old frying pan," a "parcel old lumber," a "very old bed," two old rugs, two very old "bolsters and one very old blanket."[15] The inventory made no mention of rooms, mainly because Willsford was living in a one-room home wherein all he owned was stored and easily counted.

The inventory provided a count of the enslaved people living and working at John Jr.'s estate and of the servants working there as well. Although Betty was the only enslaved person mentioned by name, there were a total of 15 enslaved people of all ages, 10 of whom were at "the Indian Town" and the rest at the main home. There were seven free white servants, one of whom was at the Indian Town spread.[16]

Augustine Washington Returns to Virginia

Once settled in Whitehaven in 1700, the Gales sent John and Augustine off to school about 50 miles inland at the Appleby School in a town coincidently named Appleby-in-Westmoreland.[17] In 1701, Mildred gave birth to the couple's one and only child: a girl they also named Mildred. It must have been a difficult birth since both mother and daughter soon died. Mildred drafted a will while still abed and rather tragically dictated being "doubtfull of the recovery of my present sickness."[18] The enslaved Jane, whom the couple had brought with them from Virginia, also passed away around the same time. In addition to the emotional side of Mildred's death, her passing created a complicated transatlantic property issue. The three surviving children were minors, each with a significant inheritance back on Mattox Neck. In April 1702, John Washington (the son of Lawrence

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[14] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

[15] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

[16] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 2*, Montross, VA, 149–149a.

[17] T. Pape, "Appleby Grammar School and Its Washington Pupils," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1940): 498–501. Pape was himself an English schoolmaster and took a great interest in the Washington family. He was a regular collaborator with Charles Arthur Hoppin as the latter collected information for the Wakefield National Memorial Association. Much of their correspondence is in the GEWA collection files. See also Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Kindle Loc 1505.

[18] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 244; Saxton, *The Widow Washington*, Kindle Loc 1489–1505.

Washington, the immigrant), from the Chotank area of what was then Stafford County, and Samuel Thompson brought suit in Westmoreland County Court, asking that the children and their property be placed in their custody in accordance with the terms of Lawrence's will. The issue was another complication due to entail clauses in a will. Lawrence, not foreseeing his wife's remarrying and moving to England, had given Mildred a lifetime interest in his property while also appointing his kinsman and ally as partial executors. This pitted the interests of Mildred and her new husband against those of the Washingtons back in Virginia, and both parties saw themselves best able to care for the children and their inheritances. In court, John (Stafford) and Thompson argued that "the orphants, being within age and whose tuition and charge together with their estates," legally "belongeth to the plaintiffs [John (Staf) and Thompson] as their guardians and tutors until they arrive to age."[19]

Gale, of course, saw it differently, and through his attorney, George Eskridge (a man soon to play an even more prominent role in the Washington family story), argued that Mildred possessed "a separate trust reposed in her" for the care of the children and their share of the estate and that "Mildred as surviving parent of the children" in her will "did devise the tuition of the children" to Gale. As with the Frances Lisson case, this was a legal argument that rested on the assumption that women had the right to make such transfers and that that right superseded the terms of a will. John (Staf) and Thompson disagreed, arguing that Mildred, "being a feme covert," was not a full person in the eyes of the law, at least where property matters and the terms of a will were concerned. Therefore, her actions were "butt personall and terminated with her death."[20] This was fairly sophisticated and nuanced stuff for a court more accustomed to dealing with straightforward debts. One can imagine the justices referring to the law books and statutes that a previous court had made sure would be on hand in the new courthouse in which this 1702 drama took place.

After their own "mature deliberation on the premises" that the litigants had presented, the justices ruled that "the tuition and guardianship" of the Washington orphans and their estates "for the reasons in the defendant's plea laid down to George Gale of right doth lawfully appertaine."[21] In other, less elaborate words, the court agreed with Eskridge's presentation of Gale's case and allowed him to carry on as things had been.[22]

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[19] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1701–1703* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 28.

[20] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1701–1703* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 28.

[21] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1701–1703* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 28.

[22] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1701–1703* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1983), 28.

The decision mirrored the court's rulings in the cases dealing with Frances Lisson, holding again that a gift of a day was a permanent gift and that a woman had the right to transfer property, even if it was not accounted for in a man's will.

By 1704, though, the situation had changed. After Mildred Warner Washington Gale's death, George Gale remarried to an Accomack County, Virginia, woman named Elizabeth (Betty) Denwood from a well-established Quaker family that had been making a living on the Chesapeake's eastern shore since at least the 1670s. The couple took up residence just north in the Maryland eastern shore county of Somerset, and there Gale lived, took up county affairs, and raised his and Betty's four sons until his death in 1712.[23]

By 1705, the Gales were starting their new family in a new home on the Chesapeake's eastern shore, but the status of the Washington stepchildren, now aged 13, 12, and 11, was somewhat ambiguous. John was only a year or less away from an age that Virginia saw as the beginning of maturity, and the other two were close behind. The boys might have still been in school, but more likely, all the children were with the Gales in Maryland. After losing his 1702 case, John (Staf) announced his intention to appeal the court's ruling. There is no record of the appeal, meaning that he probably did not follow through with his threat. But in August of 1705, John (Staf) came to the Westmoreland County Court with a "receipt" to Gale "for the children of Capt, Lawrence Washington" and "all the estates and portions belonging to them," which was "produced and ordered recorded."[24] Whatever agreement led to transferring the care of the children and their property, it seems to have been arrived at by Gale and the Washingtons outside of the court. At that point, the legal control of the Washington orphans and their property was in the hands of their Stafford County relations and would so remain until 1713.

Augustine, then 11 years old, had the benefit of spending a few years at the Appleby School, but his return to the Chesapeake cut short a full English education. At the end of the 17th century, grammar school curricula across Britain were in a transitional state.[25] A basic mastery of Latin was still understood as a crucial part of a good education, but there was an increasing emphasis on the basic skills of reading, writing, and mathematics. Augustine's having been in school between the ages of 7 and 11 would have given him a good grounding in the basics but also would have left him far from accomplished in the kinds of literature and poetry that were points of pride for English-educated members of the gentry. Likewise, he would not have had much of a chance to master classical or European languages; English was probably the only tongue he knew. In most respects,

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[23] Charles Arthur Hoppin, *The Washington Ancestry, and Records of the McClain, Johnson, and Forty Other Colonial American Families* (Greenpoint, OH: Private printing, 1932), 1: 244.

[24] *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1698–1705*, Montross, VA, 271a; Clayton Torrence, *Old Somerset in the Eastern Shore of Maryland* (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1936), 100–05.

[25] Richard S. Thompson, "The English Grammar School Curriculum in the 18th Century: A Reappraisal," *British Journal of Educational Studies* 19, no. 1 (1971): 32–39.

those few years at the Appleby School would not have taught Augustine much more than he could have learned from a good tutor or by attending a small local school in Virginia. But the learning was only part of the goal. The social value of even a short English education, and the aura of connection to the metropole it provided made it a species of social commodity in and of itself, regardless of how well the recipient could read Homer or Virgil. One lasting effect of his time at school was Augustine's lifelong connection to Appleby and its staff. He corresponded with officials there as late as 1740, and he also sent his two eldest sons, Lawrence and Augustine Jr., to the school for their own English education.[26]

John, Augustine, and Mildred took up residence in their cousin's home, where they remained until 1713. They all lived in part of what was then Stafford County but, after 1720, became King George County. In fact, the Stafford Washingtons' holdings were quite close to the western boundary of Westmoreland County, meaning that the children were essentially back in the bosom of their Potomac birthplace. The entire eastern part of Stafford/King George County took on the local name Chotank for the creek near current Caledon State Park.

Lawrence's Estate Division, 1713

The elder brother's estate was far larger than John Jr.'s. The terms of Lawrence's will called for a four-part division of his property, but because Mildred had remarried, moved, and passed away, the division did not take place until April 2, 1713. After 1704, this all would have been John Washington of Stafford County's (hereafter called "John [Staf]" for differentiation) responsibility since he was a cousin acting as the children's guardian.[27] The items, of course, would have all been in use in relatives' households, but the ownership would have been known to have been Lawrence's, and it was the executor's responsibility to make sure items were protected, even if they were used. The 1713 division occurred because Lawrence's two sons were coming of age and were ready to come into their material inheritance. The list of possessions was extensive, but unfortunately, it is not clear which family member received which of the four even parts created by court representatives. Also, because the division was made for a distribution long after Lawrence's death, the lists offer no information about the rooms of the home. But the list is impressive and provides quite a contrast between the way the two brothers lived. The list included 33 chairs, 6 bedsteads, many chests and chests of drawers including an armoire, 33 books and

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[26] T. Pape, "Appleby Grammar School and Its Washington Pupils," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1940): 498–501.

[27] "John Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22577&tree=Tree1.

3 recipe books, 2 looking glasses (mirrors, which were an expensive imported consumer item), and a sealskin-covered trunk. In addition, there were singular items such as a set of doctor's scales, a syllabub pot, sheep shears, a marble mortar, and a "pair of handcuffs."[28]

The court also divided all the 26 people Lawrence enslaved into the same four alphabetized lists. The fact that this took place more than a decade after his death raises many questions. Where were these people living and working? Many, if not all, would have still been needed to work the acres no matter who was living in the main home. It is also possible that they had been moved around to work on various properties even though they were still technically part of Lawrence's estate and their well-being assured by John (Staff). One of these divisions was given to Augustine Washington, but there is little to clarify which of the four property lists and which group of people went to the GEWA acres as part of Augustine's home. The division of people was as follows:

A: Frank, Tom, Occory, Beck, Sarah, Kate, Rose.

B: Toby, Dick, Jack, Sarah, Rose, Nanny.

C: Joe, Sarah, Bess, Betsy, Sambo, Mary.

D: Congoe, Tom, Will, Betty, Molly, Peggy, Nanny

It is a confusing list and one that at least shows the recycling of simple English nicknames for the enslaved, including common names like Sambo and in this case the possibly Muskhoegean name Occory. The unnamed court officials who oversaw the division also noted that at least four of the enslaved women were pregnant at the time of their counting. They were spread across the four groups, and we have no way of knowing to what extent the division broke up families and friendships. The notation about the pregnancy was phrased in a singular fashion. Each list ended with the phrase "125 pounds tobacco for a negro child not yet born at the taking of the inventory."[29]

On May 27, 1713, the county court heard the claim by the orphans Augustine and Mildred that they wished to end the custody of their uncle John (Staff) and instead have their estates and well-being overseen by their older brother, John. The two were old enough by then for Virginia law to allow them to make such a request, and there was no contention involved in acting in it. The court also appointed Joseph Bayly and George Eskridge to join John in being "securitys for the trust," and thus they became "immediately possessed with their estates left them by their father."[30]

There were two details about that day in court that portended Augustine's future. First, that same court day, the bench also heard the claim of a recently orphaned young woman named Jane Butler, whose father, Caleb, had also been a justice and a significant

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[28] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 5*, Montross, VA, 135–37.

[29] *Westmoreland County Order Book 5*, Montross, VA, 137.

[30] *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1711–1713*, Montross, VA, 74.

player in county politics. Her father's death left Jane in the custody of Cople Parish's Reverend John Bagge, the man her widowed mother married, while the justices gave Joseph Bayly (Jane's uncle by marriage) the "administration on the estate of Butler dureing the minority of Jane Butler," whom Butler's will listed as executor. Bayly was the same man who was also dealing with the Washington estate. In a short time, this Jane Butler would become Augustine's first wife and mother to his two eldest sons.[31]

The second portent came in the form of the role of George Eskridge as one of the men offering security for the handling of the Washington estate. Eskridge was a justice and a man with extensive experience in the care of orphans' estates. Like Lawrence before him, he was one of those "go to" men when it came to handling the holdings of orphans, and he fulfilled that office frequently. A young woman named Mary Ball was soon to become his ward, and she would later become Augustine's second wife after Jane's passing.

GEWA during the First Washington Hiatus

After John Jr.'s death and Anne's remarrying, there were no members of the Washington family living on the park acres. The Bridge's Creek estate was old and in disrepair, but that was a common occurrence, and Virginia landowners had an answer for that situation: tenancy. Even when homes had lost their viability, there was still land that could be profitably worked. A home that was no longer fit for a gentry family could still be perfectly serviceable for poorer planters or the enslaved. Homes, just like the "very old" goods that made up Thomas Willsford's short inventory, could be hand-me-downs. That meant that landowners and executors of estates placed either enslaved laborers or the now-dwindling number of British farm laborers in old homes close to acres that they were to farm. Another option was to rent old homes out to poorer freemen like Richard Watts and Thomas Willsford. Both of these men, in fact, probably carried on their tenancies on Washington land, and it is possible that one of them might have even changed his residence from the type of small one-room home Willsford inhabited to the far larger, even if a bit run-down, old Washington residence. Such a practice was so common that almost all older homes ended their lives either being repurposed as homes for laborers or being dragooned into some other farm purpose; a building was still a building, and there was always one need or another.

Elsewhere on the landscape, the Lisson buildings—the former Bridges homestead—were showing their age at the end of the century when Lawrence bought them for 100 pounds. Things would only have gotten worse over the next two decades until they were finally abandoned or pulled down and burned in a heap to facilitate the reclamation

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[31] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1711–1713*, 74; see also "Jane Butler Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

and reuse of their iron nails. The heat, in fact, actually benefited the iron, and even today, when archaeologists recover burned nails from sites, they often have a distinctive reddish color and far less rust than unburned nails. While the home was viable, though, there would have been no shortage of possible occupants. The old Brookes house that Originall Brown had secured was also losing its viability as a proper home. The mid-17th-century built landscape was fading, and various remnants of Brookes's family, such as the Higdons and Abbingtons, would be building new homes to replace the old ones.

These newer homes that were going up all over the colony departed dramatically from the older style. Two connected rooms—the hall and parlor model, like the Bridge's Creek home—were common 17th-century house plans. But newer homes increasingly had a central passage that separated the hall and parlor from each other. What had been two living spaces at the ground level became two divided by a third. Most central passages had doors on either end, meaning that this type of home offered far better airflow than the older approach, but it was more than that; the central passage design also worked better for the kind of communities and family ideals Virginians were then creating.[32]

Central passage homes had a main hallway that served as a sort of public space, where people of all classes could pass through, work, or even sleep as needed. But the passage also allowed the once-connected hall and parlor to become private spaces that could be closed off from the comings and goings of the many people needed to keep a farmstead running. To enter a hall and parlor home like the one on Bridge's Creek, one had to enter the main room, although the Washington home's having a stair tower would have created a separate entry area. But in a central passage home, workers and strangers could conduct business with a homeowner in a space that was at once inside the building and removed from the newly private activities of the resident family. Once he was done giving orders, signing papers, or having any number of farm-related discussions in the central passage, a homeowner could then enter the hall or parlor and return to the more intimate world of his family. It is hard to overstate how dramatic a change in housing this was and how it set in motion (or stemmed from) changing ideas of home and family and public and private that are still with us today. In Virginia, there was the added dimension of enslaving Africans, a social system that added unique dimensions to a change that was happening all over the British world. These new home ideals also had something to do with

[32] Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (1981): 135–96; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 451–522. See also Cary Carson, Joanne Bowen, Willie Graham, Martha McCartney, and Lorena Walsh, "New World, Real World: Improvising English Culture in Seventeenth-Century Virginia," *Journal of Southern History* 74, no. 1 (2008): 31–88.

why the older 17th-century homes lost their favor among the elite and were handed down or left to rot: their shape and layout simply no longer facilitated the kind of domestic life English people had come to expect at home.[33]

Northern Neck Proprietary

There are many ways in which Augustine's Virginia was different from that of his father's and grandfather's. One of the most significant changes came in the form of colonial governance. John Washington arrived in Westmoreland County right after it had been carved out of Northumberland County and had become a stand-alone part of Virginia. That colony was governed by the burgesses, the governor, and his council of personally selected advisors. The governor was the king's man on the ground, and the burgesses were the representatives of the people—or at least they were the elite planters selected by their neighbors to represent their interests. Of course, the county courts (on which sat justices of the peace) and the various county-level officeholders (such as the sheriff, militia officers, and surveyor) were where the rubber of secular governance most often met the road of the common people in day-to-day life. But across the colony, this model of county officials, burgesses, and governor and his council was the governmental apparatus under which Virginians lived and labored.

The land between the Rappahannock and the Potomac, though, had a parallel secular governmental hierarchy unique to that part of Virginia. This created a governmental reality that made the Northern Neck a sort of colony within a colony. In 1649, as Charles II fled to exile in France, he wanted to reward those who had stood by the crown during the late Civil War. Of course, his authority to use governmental powers was very much in dispute, but the symbolic act of rewarding allies was powerful nevertheless. One of those allies was John Culpepper, First Baron Culpepper of Thoresway, who, along with six other Stewart stalwarts, was granted the proprietorship of the Northern Neck. In theory, at least, that made the group of allies colonial proprietors, like the Calverts in Maryland. But unlike Maryland, which began unquestionably as a proprietary project, Virginia was already in full swing as a royal colony. Creating a proprietary zone within an existing colony was no simple matter. Consequently, the claim lingered for decades, effectively unacted upon.

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[33] See Fraser D. Neiman, "Temporal Patterning in House Plans from the 17th-Century Chesapeake," in *The Archaeology of 17th-Century Virginia*, Theodore Reinhart and Dennis J, Pogue, eds. (Richmond: Dietz Press, 1993), 251–83; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 493–521; Matthew Johnson, *Housing Culture: Traditional Architecture in an English Landscape* (London: University College London Press, 1993), 1–16. See also Barbara J. Heath, "Dynamic Landscapes: The Emergence of Formal Spaces in Colonial Virginia," *Historical Archaeology* 50, no. 1 (2016): 27–44.

Technically, there was a group of proprietors, but they made no meaningful demands on colonists, and all the rules of life and governance in Northern Neck counties looked the same as they did in the rest of Virginia.[34]

That began to change in the 1670s. In the decades after the initial grant, the Culpeppers gradually acquired the majority of the claims from the other six original grantees, effectively making the entire body of land a Culpepper property. In 1673, Thomas Lord Culpepper secured the management of the Northern Neck and a share of all the annual "quit-rent" land taxes owed by all Virginia landholders.[35] In 1677, Culpepper succeeded Sir William Berkeley as governor of Virginia, further smoothing the transition to proprietary rule between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. In 1688, James II added perpetuity to the Culpepper grant "bounded by and within the first heads or springs of the rivers," and the same year, the council recognized the grant.[36] In 1689, on Culpepper's death, the rights and title of proprietor of the Northern Neck went to his daughter Catherine, whose husband, Thomas, Fifth Lord Fairfax, had his claim recognized in 1694. From then on, the Fairfax family name was intimately tied to the Northern Neck and, particularly, to the rules governing land ownership. Although initially the family remained in England, that did not lessen their power and influence on the land. Their role as the proprietary family would only end in the American Revolution and national independence, which brought to an end all such proprietary claims.[37]

Proprietary rule made for a few significant changes in how things worked in Westmoreland County and the other counties between the rivers. The first was the end of the headright system, whose governmental grants of free land had taken so many families from obscurity to great wealth. Another was a change in how quit-rents worked. In most of the colony, each landowner had to pay one shilling for every 50 acres of land annually to the crown through colonial officials. At times, the crown designated individuals to be the sole beneficiaries of those taxes, but that incurred considerable resentment. Counties also designated officials who acted as collectors. Complicating the matter was that most payments were, of course, in tobacco and therefore had to be shipped overseas as part of the annual movement of commodities, and the resulting monies or debt could be employed for

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[34] Stanley Phillips Smith, "The Northern Neck's Role in American Legal History," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 3 (1969): 277–90; Stuart E. Brown Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax* (Berryville, VA: Chesapeake Book Company, 1965), 26–35. See also Fairfax Harrison, "The Proprietors of the Northern Neck: Chapters of Culpeper Genealogy," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 33, no. 4 (1925): 333–58.

[35] Warren M. Billing, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), 104.

[36] Stanley Phillips Smith, "The Northern Neck's Role in American Legal History," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 3 (1969): 279.

[37] Stuart E. Brown Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax* (Berryville, VA: Chesapeake Book Company, 1965), 35–38.

the benefit of the colony. In 1699, the council gave William Byrd the authority to sell the office of quit-rent collector to planters in each county, who would pay a small fee for the privilege and then pay the expenses of the sheriff from the earnings.[38]

Being the quit-rent collector, therefore, was a considerable boost to that planter's personal business. Westmoreland and Stafford Counties, for example, yielded 12,880 pounds of quit-rent tobacco for 1663–65—an enormous quantity even given that many planters were in arrears year after year.[39] The opportunities for skimming were equally enormous, and enrichment of oneself by holding such offices was a primary motivator for those who collected the quit-rents. For instance, a county sheriff who oversaw the actual physical collection of quit-rents was entitled to claim some of the tobacco for his troubles, and the same for any involved officials along the way.

Northern Neck residents had to pay quit-rents, just like Virginians elsewhere, but after the 1690s, those quit-rents went to the Fairfax family instead of to the crown through its colonial officials. Likewise, if a planter died intestate—without a legal will assigning his possessions—then that land reverted back to the Fairfaxes. The proprietors also made a claim to all mineral wealth under the ground. Overseeing all of this necessitated a distinct office unique to the Northern Neck: the proprietary agent. Each Virginia county had that official or those officials tasked with collecting quit-rents and other debts due to the government. All Northern Neck counties, though, had an agent who acted as the local representative of the Fairfax family, who until Augustine's day had continued to live back in England and run their colonial affairs through agents in Virginia. There had been agents before the 1690s, but that role was largely symbolic. Fairfax had appointed William Fitzhugh and George Brent to act as agent and collect fees and oversee land sales. But the role is most associated with Robert "King" Carter of Lancaster County, who held the office from 1702 to 1711 and again from 1722 until his death in 1732. Carter profited immensely from the office, both by skimming fees and by grabbing up as much land as possible along the Rappahannock and farther west as Virginians moved above its rivers' fall lines. The realization of the amount of wealth that this office provided began the Fairfax family's move to Virginia to ensure that *they* would be the ones to gain and not others.[40]

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[38] Stanley Phillips Smith, "The Northern Neck's Role in American Legal History," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 3 (1969): 280–82.

[39] Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 2, no. 579.

[40] Stanley Phillips Smith, "The Northern Neck's Role in American Legal History," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 77, no. 3 (1969): 279–82; Stuart E. Brown Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax* (Berryville, VA: Chesapeake Book Company, 1965), 35–38. Although focused on the 18th century, Albert H. Tilson offers some Northern Neck background in "Friendship and Commerce: The Conflict and Coexistence of Values on Virginia's Northern Neck in the Revolutionary Era," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 3 (2003): 221–62. See also Fairfax Harrison, "The Northern Neck Maps of 1737–1747," *William and Mary Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1924): 2–15; "The Northern Neck of Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 6, no. 4 (1898): 222–26.

Augustine Washington's Virginia, 1700–1715

All of this meant that by the time Augustine was an adult in the 1710s, his part of the colony had a well-established and phenomenally wealthy upper crust. These people had not replicated the kind of unattainable status held by the titled gentry in England, but they did, in their way, constitute a colonial version of the same. In 1699, the center of government moved from Jamestown to Williamsburg, in the heart of the wealthy James City and York County planter country. A new college had been founded there in 1693—the College of William and Mary in Virginia—ostensibly to train ministers and address the ongoing shortage of Anglican clergy that had been a problem for Virginia parishioners since the founding of the colony. Soon, though, the college provided grammar school education and higher-level studies in science, rhetoric, the classics, and religion for nondivines as well and thus created for planters an alternative to sending their sons back to England for an education. The college was founded and overseen by Reverend James Blair, who acted both as the college president and as the Bishop of London's commissary, effectively his representative in Virginia. This made Blair and each of his successors the representative of the bishop of London's authority and a sort of senior clergyman among the rank and file of Virginia's vicars—not quite a bishop in title as such a man would have been in England, but the closest thing the colony would ever have to a bishop. With easy access to the governor and the House of Burgesses (in which the college had a seat), the commissary was a new power base in Virginia politics and represented another way in which the colony was gradually becoming more like England itself.[41]

Within this hierarchy, the Washingtons were far wealthier than most other Virginians. But at the same time, they had nowhere near the level of wealth and influence as those at the top of the colony's social pyramid. The family was elite at a local and county level—well known in the neighborhood but not of much reach beyond their locality. Augustine's father had been a burgess, but although Augustine served on the county court, was a member of the vestry, and briefly was the county sheriff, he never held that office.

Conflict with Native Americans

John Washington arrived in a still-volatile colony and settled into a community made up of people who had firsthand experience with violent chaos. It was a place where independent Native American power was still a considerable force and represented a genuine threat to

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[41] Parke Rouse, "James Blair Of Virginia," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 43, no. 2 (1974): 189–93; Samuel Clyde McCulloch, "James Blair's Plan of 1699 to Reform the Clergy of Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 4, no. 1 (1947): 70–86; G. MacLaren Brydon, "James Blair, Commissary," *Historical Magazine of the Protestant Episcopal Church* 14, no. 2 (1945): 85–118. See also Edward L. Bond, "Anglican Theology and Devotion in James Blair's Virginia, 1685–1743: Private Piety in the Public Church," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 104, no. 3 (1996): 313–40.

English tobacco planters on the lower Potomac River. War with Native populations was still raging as Augustine settled into his inheritance. Northern Iroquoians and their allies increased their raiding on southern peoples such as the Catawbas, Nottoways, Cherokees, and Tuscaroras after 1700. In 1711, South Carolina backcountry settlers incurred the wrath of the already wary Tuscaroras, who fought back to preserve their lands.[42] The resulting tumult sent shock waves up to Virginia and disrupted the colony's tribal diplomatic trade, led to an increase in defense expenditures, and even led to the establishment of some strategic settlements. But these conflicts were mostly in the piedmont areas and in the backcountry south of the James River.[43] The Potomac, which had decades before been a major front in the extended battle for territory and sovereignty between colonists and original inhabitants, went largely untouched. What is more, by the 1710s, there was no significant independent Native presence in Westmoreland and Northumberland Counties. Whereas John Washington saw Native American towns, heard Native languages, and actively displaced Native peoples, it is entirely possible that his grandson never saw a Native person at all, and if he did see Native people, they would have been either enslaved or thoroughly adapted into British Virginia. They would have been men like James Loggin, listed by the Westmoreland County Court as being "an Indian mulatto," who in 1701 apprenticed himself to Henry Wharton, or like "Billy, an Indian," who in 1713 petitioned the court to allow him to renegotiate the terms of his service to Robert Bennett.[44]

Slavery

By the time Augustine took the reins of his inheritance, his portion of his father's estate included six or seven enslaved people, one of whom was a pregnant woman, and Lawrence Washington's estate appeared to have had four times that number of enslaved people.[45] Augustine began his life as a planter having simply inherited nearly as many enslaved people as his grandfather had acquired through trade connections and marriage. This points to the fact that African labor was a far more common and widespread practice by the 1720s than it had been a half a century earlier. Fields worked by British laborers—

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[42] David La Vere, *The Tuscarora War: Indians, Settlers, and the Fight for the Carolina Colonies* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013); Rebecca M. Seaman, "John Lawson, the Outbreak of the Tuscarora Wars, and 'Middle Ground' Theory," *Journal of the North Carolina Association of Historians* 18 (April 2010): 9; Ron L. Harris, "The Tuscarora War: Culture Clash in North Carolina," *Central States Archaeological Journal* 63, no. 4 (2016): 201–3.

[43] James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 183–85.

[44] *Westmoreland County Order Book, 1700–1701*, Montross, VA, 46; John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1700–1701* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1978), 46; John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1711–1713* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1992), 64.

[45] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds*, Book 5, Montross, VA, 135–37.

sometimes side by side with enslaved Africans—was an ever-rarer sight, whereas enslaved farm labor was rapidly becoming the norm. The older system of royal monopolies that had governed and limited the trade ended with the sunsetting of the Royal African Company's hold in 1698. From then on, the trade was open to all who chose to venture it, a fact that increased the numbers of people brought into the colony while lowering the price slave traders asked for them. About 8,600 enslaved people were sold into Virginia in the 1700s, about 6,200 in the 1710s, and 13,000 during the 1720s.[46] This had rapid and visible effects across the colony. The mass movement, of which this was just one small part (between 1500 and 1800, around 10 million people were removed from Africa), had global consequences that ranged from a widespread destabilization of West African societies to an increase in the size, power, and influence the Royal Navy now needed to protect an increasingly large, valuable, and essential trade. An uptick in piracy in the early years of the century was met with a concerted effort to shut down maritime theft once it began to interfere with the slave trade.[47] In 1706, one of the largest-yet tobacco fleets lost 30 vessels and nearly a third of its total tobacco shipments to storms and French raiders.[48] Augustine, as another example, would have read with interest of the killing of Edward Blackbeard Teach and the trial of some of his crew in Williamsburg in 1718 because raiders like the famous Bristolian brigand represented a real threat to the business of planters like Augustine.[49]

John Washington's Virginia was still developing the body of law that defined the status of enslaved people. That lack of a full code made for gaps and opportunities for people of African descent to live in the colony as free people. As a burgess, the elder Washington voted on some of the most significant laws that solidified the status of Africans and closed otherwise open doors. Augustine, however, only knew a colony in which the law drew clear and bright lines between people of African and European descent. Likewise, following the racial laws of 1690, the color of a person's skin had become an unchangeable universal marker of a person's status. In 1705—right around the time that Augustine returned from England—the burgesses crafted Virginia's first full slave code. It was called "An Act Concerning Servants and Slaves" and represented a distillation, updating, and expansion of the gradually growing body of law that had constructed the institution's parameters heretofore.[50] It specified details such as that voyag-

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[46] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 334.

[47] Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 140–42.

[48] Warren M. Billing, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), 173.

[49] Marcus Rediker, *Villains of All Nations: Atlantic Pirates in the Golden Age* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 127–47.

[50] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 447–60.

ing to England was not a cause to end a person's enslavement and that a "Christian servant" was barred from "intermarrying" with any "negro, mulatto, or Indian, Jew, Moor, Mahametan [Muslim] or other infidel," and it made clear that "baptism of slaves doth not exempt them from bondage."[51] This represented the last major innovation in Virginia's laws governing enslavement during the colonial era.

Jane Butler

Augustine's first wife was born on Mattox Neck in 1699, the same year of the founding of the new capital in Williamsburg. Her family owned a large chunk of land just south of the Brookes acres. Her grandfather was an English immigrant named John Foxall, who owned a few hundred acres adjacent to John Washington's Mattox Creek holding, the land that he left to Lawrence. Her mother's family, though, had deep Mattox Neck roots and was also rather intermarried with other local families. Her great-grandfather Thomas Butler had been a Kent Islander who moved to the Potomac south shore in the migration and had married into the Baldridge family, the family that had owned the land at the mouth of Mattox Creek and built the original Washington Parish Church. Assuming all of its plate and adornments had survived, parishioners like the Washingtons would have taken communion from the silver cup donated by her great-grandmother. Her mother, Mary, tended to outlive her husbands, and thanks to a sequence of marriages, Jane had half brothers and half sisters all over the area, including members of the Vaulx family, which was rapidly becoming one of the most locally prominent clans. Jane's father, Mary's fourth and penultimate husband, was her own maternal uncle Caleb Butler, who, despite being the younger brother of her mother, was only one year older than his niece/wife.

Marriage between cousins was a fairly common occurrence in Virginia. There was no law against it, leaving a common understanding of biblical prohibitions to be the only thing stopping such problematic marriages.[52] An uncle marrying a niece was somewhat less common, but there is nothing to suggest that the union caused any concern. Most commonly, these sorts of intrafamily marriages fit into a larger pattern of strategic nuptials designed primarily to keep property within the family. Gentry marriages often combined properties but also secured holdings from drifting away from the network. The Washingtons

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[51] Hening, *Statutes at Large*, 3, no. 447–60.

[52] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996): 210, 333. See also Frank L. Dewey, "Thomas Jefferson and a Williamsburg Scandal: The Case of Blair V. Blair," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 89, no. 1 (1981): 44–63; Brian Connolly, "'Every Family Become a School of Abominable Impurity': Incest and Theology in the Early Republic," *Journal of the Early Republic* 30, no. 3 (2010): 413–42.

and their neighbors played at this throughout their lives by securing marriages for their children that solidified business bonds or kept holdings in closed circles. Incestuous marriages like that of the Butlers were only the most extreme version of this concern.[53]

Butler was a longtime justice of the county court and was deeply involved in local affairs, representing neighbors, assessing estates, and acting as guardian for orphans. Like his neighbors, he had an extensive tobacco growing and shipping business and was particularly well connected—almost in Mattox Neck tradition—with merchant firms in Bristol.

In 1702, John Hankins, "late of the citty of Bristoll, merchant" and trading representative for the Bristol firm of Thomas Mountjoy and Company, died while he was staying at the Butler home.[54] There was nothing suspicious about the death—no coroner was called for—but a considerable amount of tobacco awaited shipment from Mattox Creek. It was claimed by another Bristol firm, Richard Franklin and Company, and at that time, Richard Franklin's brother Phillip, master of the *Richard and Mary*, was on hand to ship out the cargo of packed leaf. The county court allowed this, but a problem soon emerged when Mountjoy complained that he had "kept a store and disposed of part of the cargo" of inbound English goods "at Butler's house."[55] Those goods, or at least their value, was due to his firm since they seemed to still be stored there, and somehow the money from the Franklin brothers' shipment of Mattox Neck tobacco did make it to Mountjoy. The court ordered that "Caleb Butler doe deliver" the goods to Mountjoy.[56] Arrangements and small debt battles like this happened all the time along the tobacco coasts, but it was not every day that an English merchant died in a planter's home. Jane was just a toddler when Hankins of Bristol lay dead in her father's house, so she would have had no memory of the incident. But this was the world in which she was raised—one where everyone was obliquely related to everyone else either by kinship or marriage, the management of the tobacco trade and the movement of imported goods were daily concerns, and sometimes Bristol merchants and their trade representatives came and went, occasionally quite literally.

All of this meant that Jane and Augustine had similar roots and backgrounds. Apart from the latter's time in England and the fact that he lived with his uncle, they'd led very similar lives. After Caleb Butler's death, his wife married her fifth husband, the Ireland-born Reverend John Bagge, but in 1713, Mary died, leaving Jane with her stepfather as guardian, thus making orphanhood something else Jane and Augustine, along with many

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[53] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996): 253–60.

[54] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1701–1703*, 36.

[55] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1701–1703*, 72.

[56] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1701–1703*, 36.

other Virginians, shared. Mary's death occasioned the securing of Caleb's estate until Jane could inherit—again, very much the same situation Augustine was in when their two cases were heard in court on May 27, 1713.

That estate was quite significant, as was Mary's portion of it. In addition to "six silver spoons" that were "expected from Bristoll" later that spring, Mary owned several rings and enough "apparel linnen and woolen" for all of her daughters from her line of husbands to each receive some.[57] Jane was bequeathed an "emerald ring with tenn sparks of diamond round the emerald," a remarkable object to be sure but perhaps not quite as valuable as Anne Washington's diamond ring.[58] Jane also inherited "one Negroe man named Tony," who was one of five enslaved people she named in her will, themselves only part of a larger group of an unspecified number of unnamed people. Just as Mary distributed her clothing and jewelry with an eye toward equal distribution among her children, so too did she divide the people she enslaved. No one recorded the nature of the relationships between the men named Tony and Prince and the women named Pendar and Frank (a woman despite the name). There also was "one Negroe child called Christmass," who was less than three years old in 1713.[59] Was Chrismass a child of either Pendar or Frank—or perhaps one of the other unnamed people or even an orphan by either death or sale? The will was silent on this issue. But Christmass was to be given to Elizabeth Jarvis, either out of affection for the elderly woman or to cover some recalled debt. Whatever the intention behind this division of people and goods, the people would have their social worlds broken apart and remade without their consent. Love, marriage, and family had no meaning in Virginia law within enslaved communities, so it was no matter to simply move people around as one would a set of silver spoons shipped from Bristol. This sort of redistribution became a daily occurrence in Virginia as enslavement became the primary means of gaining and retaining labor. The white British population blended—as had the Foxalls, Vaulxes, Butlers, and Bagges—by intermarrying and creating complicated tangles of kinship and alliances based on children, land, and inherited property. As the enslaved community grew right alongside that of their masters, the constant reshuffling of people due to death and inheritance created its own parallel and equally complex fabric of kinship and alliance across plantations. And despite laws to try to stop it, there were also those people whose lives represented the meeting of the two communities, although the law placed them in the quarter and not in the hall or parlor.

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[57] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 5*, Montross, VA, 222; John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1712–1716* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 49.

[58] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1712–1716* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 50.

[59] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1712–1716* (Washington, DC: Privately Published, 1989), 50.

Jane's inheritance from Caleb Butler was even larger than Mary's. Butler's lands went to Mary and, through her, to Jane, but the details were not clearly outlined in his 1707 will. Jane received six enslaved people named "Philip and Sarah"—listed in a way that suggested they were a couple—and Jack, Joe, Bess, and Dick.[60] Apart from some specific bequests of clothes, mourning rings, and a "black horse," Butler requested that the rest of his estate be "equally divided betwixt" Mary and Jane.[61] He further asked that all the tobacco owed him (and as a significant merchant he was owed quite a bit) be sold for money and that "the said money to be laid out in negroes" for Jane with some left to Mary as well. Most local wills devoted considerable ink and concern to the distribution of land, but Butler's will handled that matter in short order. Instead, what was on his mind most as he lay "very sick in body" was the dispersal and division of his more liquid assets and, particularly, that money be invested in the human property that had become an extremely useful and solid investment. Butler read the trends of the local economy with a remarkable if grim clarity. All of this meant that by the time Mary passed away in 1713, then-14-year-old Jane came into landed estates and no fewer than seven enslaved Africans to work that land—and probably quite a few more.[62]

George Eskridge, b. 1655, d. 1735

George Eskridge was one of the most important figures in Augustine's life. For elite male Virginians, the lack of a living father was a significant disadvantage. It meant not having an adult to act as one's principal patron to open social, political, economic, and matrimonial doors. If an orphan had property, then that property would be overseen by a guardian and not necessarily members of one's own family. It also meant not having a father's affection and dedication to one's advancement. Once Augustine was in Virginia, Eskridge filled some of those roles, particularly those associated with local politics and the marriage market. Eskridge was not a surrogate father to Augustine, but he was a well-established and powerful man who brought Augustine into his orbit of influence, and the two men mingled their business and public affairs for the rest of the older man's life.[63]

Eskridge was born in Lancashire, England, in 1655. In a probably apocryphal story, he was said to have been abducted young and brought to Virginia to serve on a plantation. Having completed his term, he made his way back to England and studied law before returning to the colony to become a prosperous planter. The truth is probably more

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[60] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 4*, Montross, VA, 192.

[61] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 4*, Montross, VA, 193.

[62] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 4*, Montross, VA, 192–93.

[63] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 868.

Mundane. He seems to have arrived in the colony in the late 1670s but was clearly already a man possessed of an aptitude for public affairs and the workings of being a merchant planter. By the time of his death, he had amassed more than 12,000 acres in various counties.[64] In 1679, he married Rebecca Bonum, the Northumberland County–born daughter of an Irish immigrant father and Kent Islander mother, and the two settled in Cople Parish. Before her death in 1715, she bore eight children (five boys and three girls), all of whom survived into adulthood.[65] Eskridge quickly remarried to Elizabeth Vaulx, which linked him to that influential family and all its extended relations, including the Butlers. From his seat at Sandy Point, he amassed hundreds of acres and built up a large tobacco merchant business. But it was his constant and tireless engagement in public affairs that made him a household name in the Westmoreland County of the first quarter of the 18th century. He had some considerable trade with Whitehaven in England, the town that George Gale had called home and to where he took young Augustine and his family. These trade connections might be how and why he knew Gale enough for the Englishman to enlist Eskridge to act as his attorney when the custody of the Washington children became an issue.[66]

Eskridge served as justice on the county court and was called upon repeatedly to represent his neighbors in their various cases. His understanding of the law and familiarity with the court was the root of the later notion that he'd had formal training, and many genealogical essays label him as an attorney. Like Lawrence Washington, he was one of those men whom the court repeatedly entrusted with gentry orphans and the management of their estates. A significant number of the county's steady flow of orphaned children had Eskridge to thank for retaining and managing their parental bequests. He also stood for county office on a few occasions and went to Williamsburg to serve as a member of the

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[64] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 868.

[65] "George Eskridge," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I7408&tree=Tree1.

[66] Eskridge noted these connections in his will of 1735; see Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 50-51. Early-20th-century genealogists published a considerable amount of information on the people they saw as being of historical consequence or were of personal or family interest. Eskridge, due to his association with Mary Ball Washington, attracted an unusual amount of attention. See "Eskridge, of Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 7, no. 4 (1900): 434–36: "Eskridge Family (Continued)," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 9, no. 2 (1901): 201–3, 434–36; Mrs. Henry L. West, "The Eskridge Family (Continued)," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 8, no. 3 (1901): 318–20; Mrs. Henry Litchfield West, "Eskridge Family Association," *William and Mary Quarterly* 18, no. 3 (1938): 319.

House of Burgesses. He would play a role in the passage of the 1692 law that allowed county courts to convict and execute enslaved Africans, a move that spared what justices saw as the expense and trouble of sending accused enslaved people to the capital for trial.[67]

Eskridge would be a powerful force at most every turn in Augustine's career, and most notably, he was instrumental in facilitating both of Augustine's marriages.

Augustine and Jane Butler Washington, 1715

Augustine came of age in 1715 and finally took possession of the land on Bridge's Creek that his father had bequeathed him. He also took possession of one of the four portions of Lawrence's estate. Almost as soon as he became legally independent, he married 16-year-old Jane Butler on April 20. That union brought together the extended clans of Washingtons/Popes/Wrights with the Foxalls/Butlers/Vaulxes. That represented a significant linking of two important Mattox Neck lineages. Both of the orphans also had had some part of their lives moved along by George Eskridge; for Jane it was oversight of property, and for Augustine it was his staying for a time in England. There was more too. Eskridge had recently married Elizabeth Vaulx, one of Jane's half sisters thanks to her mother's many marriages. That meant that the new young couple could call Eskridge a brother-in-law.[68]

The newlyweds began making a home near the mouth of Bridge's Creek's west side on the old Lisson property that Lawrence had struggled with for so long. Exactly what actual home they lived in remains unclear. As Lawrence had noted, there were buildings on the Lisson property, but they were old and showing their age. Nevertheless, it might have been one of these older homes that first housed the couple. In 1716, Augustine sold 30 acres of land on the eastern side of Bridge's Creek to a local mariner named Mark Callum for 4,000 pounds of "good tobacco in hand."[69] This land abutted a parcel then owned by Nathaniel Washington, John Jr.'s eldest son and Augustine's cousin. The fact that Augustine lived on one side of the creek and Nathaniel on the other helps explain why some local people had fallen into the habit of renaming Bridge's Creek as Washington's Creek.[70] While the couple lived on the old Lisson land, Jane bore their first child, a boy they named Butler, who did not survive his infancy.

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[67] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1659/60–1693* (Richmond: The Colonial Press, E. Waddey Co., 1914) 5, no. 205; Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 868.

[68] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 1520; "Elizabeth Vaulx," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23817&tree=Tree1.

[69] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 6*, Montross, VA, 34.

[70] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 6*, Montross, VA, 35.

Jane and Augustine's home was not all they might have hoped for because the couple shifted residences quite a bit, especially compared to John Jr., who had lived his entire life in the same home his father had owned. An opportunity presented itself in 1717 when the aged bachelor Joseph Abbington was planning to leave the colony and move up the bay to Gunpowder Parish in Maryland's Baltimore County to pass his last days, presumably in the company of friends or family. Abbington was one of the last Henry Brookes descendants still living on the old family lands. In 1717, Abbington set about ending his family's long stream of ownership of the parcel along Popes Creek. As his sun set, he arranged to sell his holding to the young couple on the neighboring property, who were in the dawn of their life together. Over the course of two sales in sequential years and for a total price of 280 pounds sterling, Abbington sold Augustine just under 200 acres of land situated between "the Dancing Marsh" and Popes Creek.[71]

This meant that after 1718, and for the next 100 years, a large part of Mattox Neck and virtually all of the GEWA park acres were owned by the Washingtons. For 65 years, this area had been a patchwork of small holdings, but that was changing rapidly. The sale also meant that the parcel of land jutting into Popes Creek where George Washington would soon be born was now Washington-owned land.

[71] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 6*, Montross, VA, 34, 238–48.

CHAPTER ELEVEN

Life, Death, Theft, Business, and Slavery on Mattox Neck, 1715–1728

The Theft of Mattox Church's Pulpit Cloth, 1715

There had long been problems with the Washington Parish church's ceremonial cloth. Parishioners had the silver cup and plate, courtesy of the Baldridge estate, and the walls were adorned with the royal crest and Ten Commandments that John Washington had donated. But getting and keeping a good cloth for the pulpit had proved rather more elusive. The parish's first minister, Reverend William Butler, had donated 200 pounds of tobacco to secure the items, but the vestry never followed through, and after his death, his widow won a court order to return the tobacco to her. On his death, though, Lawrence left a cloth and cushions to the parish, and at long last, those small but significant bits of church finery were gracing the devotions along Mattox Creek.[1]

Sometime in the previous summer, word had gone out that someone had burgled the church on the creek. The Ten Commandments on the wall *specifically* singled out stealing as a thing to not do, but on that day, the text was unpersuasive. Robbing the church would have been simple. The building was easily entered, and there would be long parts of the day when Reverend St. John Shropshire or anyone else was not around. It would have been child's play to walk off with the silver—but far harder to make the crime pay. An engraved silver goblet would have been a difficult item to fence in a community where virtually everyone knew exactly what the cup was and where it was supposed to be. Even if the thief were to row over to Maryland, the nature of the cup would have been obvious. The best bet would have been to melt it down or sell or trade it to a sailor who would soon enough leave the colony, but that depended on there being a willing accomplice. Besides, to be caught with a church's silver ornament was to invite hanging. All in all, such a theft was just not worth the effort.[2]

Cloth, though, was a horse of a different color. Cloth could be bundled up and easily stashed away. It could be traded to an accomplice on the river, in another county, or in Maryland even, and there would be little way to tell a stolen bolt of velvet from one legitimately purchased. The thief would have to get rid of any identifying elements. The green silk fringe and the gold and silver "cyphers" that adorned the Mattox church's pulpit

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[1] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1714–1716* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1998): 51–54.

[2] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1714–1716*, 52.

Cloth, for example, would be identifiers that would have to go.[3] But once that was done, the thief would have cloth that could be refashioned into something less obvious, such as a pair of "breeches" and a jacket.[4]

Sometime after the theft, William Murfey showed up at Ruth and Robert Alworthy's house with a mysterious parcel. Murfey was a "jobber" who worked on both sides of the Potomac as the need arose, and he and the Alworthys were part of a small network of Irish freeholders and laborers who socialized together and intermarried. Murfey would sometimes stay at his friends' home when he was on the Virginia side, and on occasion, Alworthy would ferry him across the water.[5] When Murfey showed up at the Alworthys' home this time, their married daughter, Ruth Cannady, was there. Either Murfey himself or his "pack" aroused her suspicion that something was not quite right. At the time, her parents were "in the tobacco house hanging tobacco," but when they came back, everyone saw what was in Murfey's pack. It contained two large pieces of velvet and also "some green silk fringe," a set of "brass buttons," and "a silk handkerchief," all "rapt up in a coat"—all of which were items that were out of place in the hands of a river-hopping jobber.[6] Anyone who had been at the Mattox church would have immediately recognized the velvet and fringe for what it was—or, more precisely, what it had been. Murfey's plan was to sell the cloth to Alworthy since the latter was handy with a needle and thread and could fashion the two squares of velvet into garments while also finding a buyer for the

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[3] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 52.

[4] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 52. There was an important relationship between clothing and status, particularly for poor folks and servants. One example of this is Jonathan Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750–1800," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 1 (1991): 124–59.

[5] Although the following study focuses on the West Indies, it is still illustrative of how Irish colonists were viewed by English authorities. Hilary McD. Beckles, "A 'Riotous and Unruly Lot': Irish Indentured Servants and Freemen in the English West Indies, 1644–1713," *William and Mary Quarterly* 47, no. 4 (1990): 503–22. See also Nicholas Canny, "Migration and Opportunity: Britain, Ireland and the New World," *Irish Economic and Social History* 12 (1985): 7–32. For an archaeologically informed study of the connections between English colonial rule in Ireland and Virginia, see Audrey Horning, *Ireland in the Virginian Sea: Colonialism in the British Atlantic* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 271–352. See also Nicholas Canny, "Identity Formation in Ireland: The Emergence of the Anglo-Irish," in *Colonial Identity in the Atlantic World, 1500–1800*, Nicholas Canny and Anthony Pagden, eds. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1987), 159–212. Although this group of Irish colonists appear to be Catholic based on their names, there is a large literature on the far larger presence of Scots Irish immigrants in the 18th century. For a short introduction, see Maldwyn Jones, "The Scotch Irish in British America," in *Strangers within the Realm: Cultural Margins of the First British Empire*, Bernard Bailyn and Philip D. Morgan, eds. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1991).

[6] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 53.

Extra coat. Murfey claimed he had gotten the goods "amongst the shipping," and his friend, "the tailor," was content with that explanation and gave Murfey a "serge vest" in exchange for the goods.[7]

Ruth Alworthy, though, was far from convinced. She laid into Murfey, telling him that "if it should be known" that he was trying to sell these goods, "he would be hanged," and then she turned to her children, telling them "not to speak of it" lest blame for the theft spread. Alworthy pressed the matter further and "charged" Murfey "of being there for noe goodness," and "after severall words past between them," Murfey finally offered a different version of how he'd come by the bundle, claiming now that he "had stolen" the cloth, the coat, and the sundries "out of a capt. Of a shipp's boat."[8]

Alworthy somehow conveyed the stolen coat to Thomas Arringon, who later claimed to have no idea that it was stolen goods. The velvet squares, though, stayed at the Alworthys' house, where Sophia Codhew saw "the tailor" making a pair of breeches out of the same cloth. Patrick Doyle saw the breeches as well, and he was certain that they had been made from the stolen "pulpitt cloath." By the time the county court got a hold of the incriminating breeches and began to make a case, Murfey had fled back to Maryland, and no one knew where he was. That left the finger of suspicion pointed firmly at Alworthy, who, if not the actual thief, then at minimum was an accomplice after the fact. When he was hauled before the court in June of 1715 and shown the breeches and the remnants of the cloth, he had no good answer for most of the questions from the bench. No, he had no idea where Murfey had gone. Yes, he had seen the pulpit cloth in the church. Yes, he had heard about the theft. When asked if the color of the cloth before him was the same as that of the stolen pulpit cloth, the tailor replied that "it might be soe." If there was a convincing defense, Alworthy failed to make it.[9]

In the end, the Westmoreland justices sent the case and the accused to Williamsburg to be tried before the high criminal court in the capital. Until transported, Alworthy was held in the small jail near the county courthouse. In Williamsburg, though, he must have made a better case for himself because the justices acquitted him, and he was soon back in the county growing tobacco like his neighbors and perhaps sewing clothing for them as well—although probably nothing as unique and problematic as those velvet breeches. He died in 1718 but not in the hangman's noose. In all the testimony about the

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[7] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 52–53.

[8] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 53.

[9] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 52–53.

pulpit cloth, though—almost certainly the one paid for by Lawrence Washington—no one thought to mention what color its velvet was. That, like the identity of its thief, remains a mystery.

The Popes Creek Road Project of 1716

When the Marylanders first came over the river in the 1650s, most of the homes they built had direct access to the water. With goods coming by boat and tobacco being shipped out in the same boats, all of life looked outward onto the water. But as more settlers crammed themselves into every available acre, an increasing number of planters had no direct access to the vital river. This was the beginning of an interior road network that is still in Westmoreland County in one form or another.

Centuries of Native American travelers had long ago found all the best and easiest routes and most reliable fords, and as English people settled the area—and displaced the original roadmakers' descendants—they incorporated those well-worn paths into their own travel world. Many of the early English land patents reference Indian paths that wended along the Northern Neck. One of the main ones ran more or less along the line of modern Route 3. But there also was an important Native American path that ran similarly to current Route 205 and forded Mattox Creek somewhere near Mattox Bridge. That path ran very close to where Nathaniel Pope built his seat.

English farming and property law created its own road needs as each planter would need a path from their home that linked them to a larger road and that, in turn, led to the vital places of English colonial life such as church, courthouse, and wharf. Individual farm lanes and paths were the responsibility of the landowner, but details were also mandated by law—for example, the requirement that "every person having a plantation" put on their path "a gate in his ffence for the convenience of passage of man and horse to his house."[10] Such improvements were done at the landowner's expense. Larger public roads were just that—public—and as such were an important part of the colonial infrastructure. At times, the burgesses would mandate the creation of a new road to address some public need, as in the 1691 act that called for a new road to run from near the fall line of the James River to that of the Rappahannock.[11] A 1705 act required that there be roads between "the court house of every county, the parish churches, and such public mills

[10] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 2, no. 261.

[11] Hennig, *Statutes at Large*, 3, no. 85.

And ferries as now are" in use, and that these byways "be kept well cleared from woods and bushes, and the roots well grubbed up, at least thirty foot broad."[12] Bridges over creeks were also mandated, and each was to "be at least ten foot broad, and level and passable."[13]

On Mattox Neck, keeping roads dry was a priority due to the area's naturally sodden soils. Sometime in this period, locals modified an English habit of siding roads and paths with ditches and berms that would keep a flooded field's overflow from running onto the road. The ditches would require regular maintenance. These features were large enough that a few have survived today. The expense for all these efforts at building and maintaining roads fell largely on the county courts, who had broad power to procure road repair crews as needed by simply dragooning any enslaved or servile workers needed for the project. The county also appointed a surveyor of highways to ensure that all roads were kept in tip-top condition. Roads and paths on private land were the concern of the landowner, and scraping ditches was, alongside repairing fences (many made with the same ditch and berm system as on roads), on the list of tobacco off-season work left to enslaved and servile labor.

At times, the existing road network was found wanting for one reason or another. Robert Vaulx petitioned the court in 1715 to have a public road rerouted so that it did not pass through his land at the head of Popes Creek.[14] In early June, the court was also looking to have a better road run from the mouth of Popes Creek. They sent out the "two of the surveyors of the highways" and empowered them to call together the servile labor they needed to run a new road along the creek. They were to seek out the "directions of some person that well knowes the fording places over the creek" and, with that information in hand, lay out a thick and wide oystershell path that "shall appeare to be safest and best for travellers." The road crew was to take extra care and use "some instrument" to make sure that the "oshter shells" were "lieing in such way to be broke and beat so that horses passing the same may not be endangered thereby." It's not clear on which side of Popes Creek all this roadwork took place, but in all likelihood, people working on Augustine's plantation were tapped to do this work, whichever side it was on.[15]

A decade later, though, local folks were having second thoughts. The run of the new road was nowhere near as good as the old one, and the people who relied on it complained that the new road was "much dirtier and wetter, and a considerable way further about than

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[12] Hennig, *Statutes at Large*, 3, no. 392–93; Philip Alexander Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia in the Seventeenth Century* (Gloucester, MA: Peter Smith, 1964), 1, no. 114.

[13] Hennig, *Statutes at Large*, 3, no. 393.

[14] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1712–1716* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 14.

[15] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1712–1716* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 14.

The old road." It was also not "well cleared and repaired," perhaps due to its always being muddy. The court reversed the 1715 ruling and ordered that the new "road now in use be stopped, and the old way to be opened again and cleared."[16]

The new road also might have held some bad memories for some people. In February 1718, as Augustine was concluding the deals for the new tract on Popes Creek, a man named John Seamore dropped dead "upon the road nigh Mr. Augt. Washington's Plantation." That might well be the same road that the county had been busy laying out the summer before. A jury convened by the court "evinced the corps" and concluded that Seamore, "traveling upon the road and being for some time before sick," had "dyed of the said sickness."[17] Seamore's death on Vaulx's new road was not a factor in its closing, but it was at least a bad omen.

Augustine's Dispute with Robert Vaulx over Tony, Frank, and James, 1717

In 1717, Augustine fell into a complicated dispute with Robert Vaulx, Jane's half brother and therefore a form of in-law to Augustine. At issue was the distribution of some of the people whom Caleb Butler had enslaved and the way they had been moved around among different members of the extended Butler family. Butler had given five enslaved people to his wife, Mary, at his death: Tony, Jenny, Heccubah, Frank (a woman), and Jane. When Mary died soon thereafter, she gave Tony, by name, to her daughter Jane along with an unspecified number of other unnamed enslaved people. Mary distributed her other enslaved people between her many children from her string of marriages. One of those children was Robert Vaulx.[18]

By 1717, Tony was working on Jane and Augustine's Bridge's Creek estate, along with the other people Jane had inherited and the enslaved Africans Augustine had received from his father, Lawrence. This meant that there were as many as 14 inherited enslaved people working on the land. Those who had been enslaved by Washingtons before Jane and Augustine's marriage were probably working on land and living in homes they had inhabited for some time, most likely having been simply transferred along with the land and not moved around. But Tony and the others, including the woman named Frank and her young child named James, whom Jane Butler Washington had brought into her marriage estate would have had to have come from the Butler acres to work at their owner's new

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[16] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders, 1726–1729* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 171.

[17] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1716–1720* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 74.

[18] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1698–1705*, Montross, VA, 172a.

homeplace. The move promised to be not overly traumatic since the old place was not too far away from the Washingtons, and social relations, though disrupted, would not have been entirely erased as they would have been had the move been much farther away.[19]

A problem emerged, though, because Robert Vaulx read Caleb Butler's will as meaning Tony, Frank, and James were in fact his to enslave and not his half-sister's. The Vaulx family owned a large estate near what is now Potomac Mills at the head of Popes Creek. Like the Washingtons, they were a clan of considerable commercial power, although the Vaulxes were rather less drawn to public office than their Washington neighbors were. The Vaulx family had been in court before over their enslaved people—sometimes in quite dramatic ways. In 1702, for example, a mixed-race man named Edward Buss went to the court, claiming that James Vaulx, Robert's father, was unjustly "depriving him [Buss] of his freedom and detaining him as slave." Buss claimed that he was "born of an English or white woman" and therefore should by law be free.[20] The court, on which Caleb Butler was sitting, disagreed, stating that Buss should "continue and remain as in his first and former station."[21] Now, a decade later, a Vaulx was back in court, arguing for his right to some of the people Caleb Butler had enslaved.

Vaulx's claim was complicated and had to do, once again, with the ambiguity of wills and bequests. He argued that Butler's 1708 will had left Tony and Frank to his wife, Mary, who died soon after remarrying her fifth husband, Reverend John Bagge, who, as the manager of her property, had given Tony and Frank to Vaulx. Because the baby boy James "was born of the body of the negro Frank since the death of Caleb" Butler, Vaulx saw him as an extension of his property and therefore his.[22] All the while, though, Tony and Frank had followed Jane Butler when she married and moved to Bridge's Creek, so while Bagge and Vaulx might have had their own agreement about who owned these people, the daily reality was that they ended up living and working on the Washington estate.

The court agreed with Vaulx and, in essence, affirmed the idea that the language of a husband's will was more binding than the later choices of a widow, a very different view from the one it had held in other cases. Augustine had to give the three people over to Vaulx and pay the court fees as well, a standard practice for the loser of a court case. In just under 10 years, Tony and Frank had been passed among five different owners, all of whom were related to one another either by blood or marriage—and in one case by both. Whatever the relationship was between Tony and Frank and her child James, the three were passed from Caleb Butler to Mary Butler and John Bagge and, from there, to Augustine

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[19] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1715–1717* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1992), 76.

[20] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1698–170*5, 172a.

[21] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1698–1705*, 172a.

[22] Dorman, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1715–1717*, 76.

Washington and then to Robert Vaulx, and they had moved from the head of Mattox Creek to Bridge's Creek and then on to the head of Popes Creek. While this sort of movement was highly disruptive, it also was a central part of how enslaved communities extended their own kinship networks. The web of their families was just as complicated and layered as that of the people who enslaved them. One difference, though, is that the colony's documents had little interest in recording its shapes and contours.[23]

Jane and Augustine's Family, 1715–1722

The couple had their first child soon after their marriage, while they were living on the west side of Bridge's Creek. He was a baby boy they named Butler, who died in infancy. The year 1718, however, was a big year for the couple, with the birth of their son Lawrence, named for his paternal grandfather. That same year, a planter named Thomas Spellman passed away and left a request that his children be cared for by Augustine, meaning that the Washington home very quickly went from having no children to being filled with them.[24] In 1720, Jane gave birth to a second son, whom they named Augustine Jr. after the baby's father, a common English practice. Thirty years later, George Washington revealed in a personal memorandum that members of the family at the time called the younger Augustine by the nickname Austin.[25] Throughout his life, though, Augustine Jr. used the formal version of his name, and it seems that no 18th-century document other than George's memo referred to him as Austin. Later Washington biographers have latched onto the name Austin to help distinguish the father from the son in prose (the Washingtons tended to reuse their given names quite a bit). Its overuse, though, creates the false impression that the name was more commonly used than the evidence actually suggests.

In 1722, Jane had a daughter, also named Jane, but this girl did not live past the age of 13. By 1722, Jane and Augustine were raising three children of their own and had an unspecified number of minor orphans in their care as well. It was a crowded house.

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[23] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1717–1718* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1992), 76.

[24] John Frederick Dorman, eds., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1717–1718* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1992), 54, 85.

[25] W. W. Abbot, ed., "Memorandum, 1749–1750," *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), vol. 1, no. 7; Jane Butler, Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23752&tree=Tree1.

Around that time, Augustine contracted local carpenter David Jones to make for him a new cradle, a piece of furniture that made eminent sense. The next step was to build a new home for the family. For that, Augustine turned to Jones as well.[26]

Jane and Augustine's Early Homes, 1715–1725

After acquiring Joseph Abbington's land, Augustine was well on the way to amassing an extensive contiguous estate on Mattox Neck. His cousin still owned the site of the old family home on Bridge's Creek, but by then, the old post-in-ground house and its outbuildings were gone, and the entire area had been turned over to farming. Where Mannering and Bacon's rebels had once contested, there now stood leafy Oronoco tobacco plants. All that remained was the family cemetery nearby, which by then contained the remains of people from three generations of Washingtons. There also would have been a quarter for the enslaved Africans who worked the land, as well as their own gardens where they grew vegetables and some tobacco for their own use or sale. Jane had inherited her own land from her father. She had a plot stretching westward from Popes Creek that amounted to some 500 acres. Her marriage to Augustine added that to the extended family holdings.[27] Old homes like John Washington's were falling back into the landscape all over Mattox Neck as what was once a patchwork of small holdings became the large possessions of a few planters.

When it came to homes, Jane and Augustine would have been spoiled for choice. There were the old Lisson buildings, which had been Brookes's before that. Originall Brown's place was in their ownership too, after the Abbington purchase of 1718—and then there was whatever home the old bachelor inhabited as well, assuming, of course, that he was not living in one of the others. In the old days, the land deeds outlined the land's main markers and often mentioned the neighbors so as to eliminate confusion. But by Augustine's day, every deed made careful mention of the many houses, outbuildings, barns, sheds, quarters, gardens, and orchards that sat on virtually every property in the county.

In 1724, Augustine added another 200 acres to his holdings. The year after that, he added another 215 acres on Popes Creek, adjacent to the old Abbington place, and then in 1728, he bought another 130 acres in the area. Along the way, he also purchased from his sister Mildred the land at Little Hunting Creek (later to be called Mount Vernon), which Lawrence had inherited from his father and then left to his daughter. It remains unclear if a home sat on the Little Hunting Creek land, but each of the local Westmoreland County

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[26] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a; Jane Butler, Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23752&tree=Tree1.

[27] George Washington Birthplace Landscape, George Washington National Monument, National Park Service Inventory, 2000, 64.

Properties was already a functioning farm with a full set of residences, barns, and dependencies.[28] Planters generally rented these homes out to tenants who worked the land or housed enslaved people there, also to work the land. By then, though, the couple had relocated to one of the homes on Popes Creek. Augustine also bought the islands at the mouth of Popes Creek from his brother John—the same islands that John Washington had patented 75 years before.[29] Like filling in puzzle pieces, Augustine was gathering up his family's lands and those of their neighbors, when they wanted to sell them, into one large holding that covered most of Mattox Neck's Potomac area.

Augustine Washington, Taxes, and Tithables, 1722

Virginians were subjected to a variety of taxes and levies put on them by a variety of entities. The colonial government taxed Virginians to cover its expenses for everything from defense to gifts to allied Native American tribes. Parliament in England could levy duties as well, and as British subjects, Virginians would have to pay them if applicable. Each landowner had to pay an annual quit-rent of two shillings per 100 acres of land to the crown—or in the Northern Neck to the proprietor—for the privilege of owning land. Long-term neglect of one's quit-rent obligations could result in the miscreant's land being forfeited and sold to someone else. The county court had expenses that it had to cover year in and year out, such as road and bridge maintenance and the upkeep of the courthouse.[30] The court taxed the county residents as needed to pay these and other expenses. Because the Anglican Church was the established church of the land, all subjects had to pay a tax going to the upkeep of the church, clergy salaries, and other parish expenses such as poor assistance. Members of dissenter churches often resented paying for an Anglican establishment while also having to shoulder the costs of their own churches. For an annual fee, though, non-Anglicans could buy their way out of parish levies. The movement of goods to and from the colony also incurred an ever-changing array of duties, and officials at every level, from tobacco inspectors to surveyors, were at liberty to impose fees for their services. There was hardly a corner of colonial life that was not assessed and taxed accordingly.

How to assess all of these taxes, their rates, and on whom they should land was always a matter of contention and changed somewhat during the colonial period. By Augustine's day, the rule was that all white men and all enslaved people above the age of 16 were subject to annual taxes and were also always eligible to serve on public works projects

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[28] *Westmoreland County Wills and Deeds, Book 8*, Montross, VA, 78, 175, 309.

[29] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 105.

[30] Stuart E. Brown Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax* (Berryville, VA: Chesapeake Book Company, 1965), 35–38.

when needed.[31] Using the centuries-old language of English law and custom, people in this status were called "tithable," a reference to the one-tenth of livestock medieval English parishioners were liable to give to the church. Freeholders were responsible for their own duties, but the taxes for enslaved people and servants were paid by their masters. Thus began a long-enduring game of cat and mouse whereby masters and enslavers did what they could to avoid, or at least delay, an accurate counting of the people working their lands and in their homes. All servant or enslaved children were presented to the county court so their age could be recorded. Since accurate birth records were few and far between, the court's assessment that a child was of a certain age made that age a legal fact and thus set the date upon which they would become tithable. Early tax law required that "everie master of a ffamily shall present a true list of his ffamily by the names of all tithables therein" annually to the court for taxation.[32] Hiding a tithable incurred a fine of two or three times the money originally owed for that individual. But that system proved to be rather leaky. It eventually fell to the counties to have the sheriff or other selected men or specific justices oversee a counting of all tithables in the county, with results presented in the summer. Even this system was full of holes, and finally, the burgesses required that counties be divided up into tax precincts and that specific men of standing be assigned the counting for their locality. The idea here was that it would be harder to hide tithables from more eyes, each with some familiarity with the people in their neighborhood. The system's main weakness stemmed from its main strength. Knowing one's neighbors, as a counter was likely to do, also made the official susceptible to their pleas and plights. Who better to help hide tithables than a friendly neighbor? It was not uncommon for districts and even individual plantations to turn in laughably undercounted tithable rolls.[33]

By 1718, Westmoreland County had four tax precincts, resulting from both Washington and Cople Parishes being divided into upper and lower halves. In May of that year, in preparation for a June deadline, Augustine was "appointed to take the list of the thythables" for the lower section of Washington Parish.[34] This was his family's stomping grounds and a place he knew well. He was a logical choice. He repeated the task again in subsequent years, but something went wrong in 1722. On January 31, Augustine "acquainted" the court that "thro some oversight he had omitted to enter several persons" from his submitted list of Washington Parish tithables. The error was easily fixed by his submitting the 21 missing names then and requesting that the "shrff do collect from each of

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[31] John C. Coombs, "'Others Not Christians in the Service of the English': Interpreting the Status of Africans and African Americans in Early Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 127, no. 3 (2019): 224; Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia*, 2, no. 548–49.

[32] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 454–55.

[33] Bruce, *Institutional History of Virginia*, 2, no. 554.

[34] John Frederick Dorman, eds., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1717–1718* (Falmouth, VA: Privately published, 1992), 63.

The sd persons the county levy and the church wardens the parish levy."[35] No one implied that Augustine had done something wrong—no accusation that he was somehow in cahoots with the people whose names he had forgotten to turn in. Likewise, the tax avoiders themselves also had not done anything wrong. It was not their fault that their names had not been submitted, so no punishment was due to them either. Rather, it seems to have been a simple "oversight" by a busy man. The mistake certainly did nothing to tarnish Augustine's reputation as a capable gentry man, as he would soon become churchwarden in 1724 and, three years later, would serve a stint as sheriff.

Augustine Washington, David Jones, and the Washington Home, 1722–1726

The Washington home on Popes Creek has long been one of the centerpieces of the GEWA landscape and has garnered more attention over two centuries than any other part of the site. The obvious reason for this persistent focus is that it is the site where Augustine's third surviving son, George, was born. But another reason for the attention is the considerable ambiguity that surrounds every aspect of the home. The date of its construction, its material, its footprint, and even its exact location are all poorly documented and remain only partially understood.

The only documentary record of the home's building is an account recorded in the Westmoreland County book of Records and Inventories, 1723–46. The account is written in a modified form of double-entry bookkeeping, a 16th-century financial innovation that was widely used across the British world. It entailed a two-sided ledger that carried the information for each account. In the case of the domestic farm economy, that would mean a space for each person or entity with whom the farmer did business. The general practice was that value coming in appeared on the left side of the ledger, and value going out appeared on the right side. The reason for each debt or credit was listed near its date, and when all was done properly, the books were "balanced," and one could tell exactly the state of each recorded financial relationship. Books like this were an essential part of running a successful enterprise, but these books also were kept at home in a given estate's nerve center. Sadly, this meant that most colonial-era record books have not survived. Augustine's book was lost long ago, but in 1726, he requested that the record of his account with the carpenter David Jones be recorded in the official county records. As a result, a small portion of his account book has survived.

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[35] F. Edward Wright, ed., *Westmoreland County Virginia, Orders*, *1721–1724* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 88.

At issue was the fact that Jones had died sometime in 1725, leaving a few large projects incomplete. This left a complicated account that dealt not only with Augustine's own needs but also those of the parish church—a new building that Jones was contracted to build. On March 30, 1726, Augustine had this portion of his account book added to the county records. It would seem that Augustine was concerned to make sure that his account with Jones became a matter of public record so that there would be no question about its resolution.[36]

Like many common folks, Jones left almost no documentary record about his life or origins. He was renting one of the many homes Augustine owned on his various parcels. The account references three pounds as "rent twice charged" that Augustine paid (possibly related to quit-rents), and in 1723, Jones paid L33 "in money and goods," presumably wooden items built by the carpenter. He also made a few pieces of furniture for Augustine that year in addition to the aforementioned cradle, including a "small poplar table," "2 bedsteads," and "2 mantell pieces."[37] But more tellingly, that same year Jones paid Augustine 9,004 pounds of tobacco, in 1724 he paid 3,586 pounds of tobacco, and the following year he paid 188½ pounds.[38] This was certainly rent, but it is interesting to note the declining tobacco totals, perhaps a sign of Jones's "sickness" and failing strength. When Jones finally passed away in 1725, Augustine covered the expenses for the carpenter's illness and burial but was reimbursed the costs from what remained of Jones's estate—another sign that he was a client of Augustine's.

The biggest single expense in the account was the 6,000 pounds of tobacco and L40 sterling for the "building of the round hill prsh Church"—all told about L75 in real money.[39] This was a second Washington Parish church (the other being on Mattox Creek), which was sometimes referred to as the upper church. Normally, the cost of church repair and building would have been a vestry expense, and the vestry would have had its own financial records. Those are now lost. Augustine was a member of the church vestry from the time he reached majority, and in 1724, he became churchwarden. All of this meant that the new building expenses were part of his own account, probably because Augustine was acting as the "undertaker," which was the title for the person whom we now would call the general contractor. Undertakers usually were tradespeople able to execute parts, or even all, of the work called for. There are examples, though, of vestry members serving as the undertaker for a church project.[40] Several builders then operating in the colony were known as

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[36] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[37] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[38] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[39] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[40] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 22.

Excellent church builders; much of their handiwork is still visible today. One of the most sought after and notorious was Larkin Chew of King and Queen County. Chew built several public buildings on the Middle Peninsula, including Essex and King and Queen County Courthouses and Petsworth Parish Church, as well as Mattapony Church in Spotsylvania's St. George Parish. Such high-profile work garnered high-level attention, and Chew eventually fell into conflict with Governor Alexander Spotswood.[41] Henry Gaines and his son by the same name also had long, successful careers. Gaines built churches in Middlesex County and on the James River. The celebrated builders erected high-style brick churches that were the pride of the parish. Costs could be quite high. The first Pohick church, in which Augustine was briefly a vestry member, cost 35,000 pounds of tobacco—about 35,000 dollars in current money.[42] William Waite, for example, was paid 14,000 pounds of tobacco for "doors with glass over them and plain neet cutt windows" and then an additional 3,000 pounds for a plaster cornice.[43] Jones, though, did not number among the celebrated and high-priced builders.

Sometime in 1723, Augustine put forward 5,000 pounds of tobacco, which his account listed as being for "my house when finished."[44] This is a slightly contradictory entry since it sounded like a promise for payment on completion. The debt would not be listed were it not paid, but an advance payment was common for building projects to help cover the costs of gathering and preparing materials. In 1725, Augustine received 500 pounds of tobacco listed as being for "the not finishing my house." Five thousand pounds of tobacco is a considerable sum but not especially noteworthy in regard to house-building.[45] Factored at an average rate for the time of 12 shillings for 100 pounds of tobacco, 5,000 pounds equals about L30 in real money, roughly the cost of four horses. In current money, that would be L3,500, or about $4,700. This is more than the sum some pamphleteers thought would build "starter" homes for 17th-century settlers.[46] But it is nowhere near the sums gentlemen in England were then paying for grand estates. One

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[41] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 24.

[42] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1948), 1, no. 36.

[43] Dell Upton, *Holy Things and Profane: Anglican Parish Churches in Colonial Virginia* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1986), 32.

[44] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[45] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[46] Cary Carson, Norman F. Barka, William M. Kelso, Garry Wheeler Stone, and Dell Upton, "Impermanent Architecture in the Southern American Colonies," *Winterthur Portfolio* 16, no. 2/3 (1981): 168, Ftnt 108; Willie Graham, Carter L. Hudgins, Carl R. Lounsbury, Fraser D. Neiman, and James P. Whittenburg, "Adaptation and Innovation: Archaeological and Architectural Perspectives on the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," *William and Mary Quarterly* 64, no. 3 (2007): 493–521.

contemporary brick seven-bay home in Norfolk, for example, cost an estimated L2,470—enough to buy 400 horses in Augustine's day and valued at about L323,000 in today's money (about $375,000).[47]

It is unlikely that Jones was to build an addition to an existing structure because documentation of the period is pretty clear and consistent when it comes to "new rooms" and other such changes. The phrase "my house" is unmistakably clear. But the fact of a moderate sum remains. One explanation is that the 5,000 pounds of tobacco were only covering the cost of Jones's labor; other expenses like materials would have been listed elsewhere in Augustine's now-lost account book. This would also explain the 6,000 pounds for "building the round hill church."[48] Here again, other expenses would have been recorded in the vestry records, but the sum credited to Jones accords with contemporary wages.

Another key to understanding the arrangement Augustine had with Jones is the word "finishing." In this case, that may well refer not to the completion of a project but rather to the finished carpentry, such as trim, edging, wainscoting, and other internal wooden elements of a home. This was a common use of the word at the time, specifically when discussing construction. In either case, the account makes clear that this construction project sat incomplete for some period of time in the early 1720s. It was not at all uncommon for a home to take a year or more to build, but any structure sitting incomplete for any length of time meant risks for the materials. There is very little to reveal whether the building was wood frame or brick (although frame was far more common than brick), but either would have endured better if there had been at least a roof over it, even if the house was unfinished. However it was built, the new home had to have been occupied by March 1726 because Augustine referenced his and Jane's living on land "which he purchased of Joseph Abbington" in a notable land sale (to be discussed shortly).[49] By that time, Jane and Augustine owned a large part of the old Brookes patent and the land between the creeks. Might they have been living in the old Abbington home? We do not have enough evidence from either the documentary or the archaeological record to give a clear picture of in which home the Washingtons were living.

One other important detail in the account was the reference to Jones's burial. It listed 500 pounds of tobacco "to his [Jones's] sickness and burial if allowed to Maj Eskridge."[50] All deaths and burials were recorded either by the court or the vestry as a matter of law, private burials being illegal lest a master beat a servant to death and try to

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[47] R. G. Wilson and A. L. Mackley, "How Much Did the English Country House Cost to Build, 1660–1880?" *The Economic History Review* 52, no. 3 (1999): 440. For currency calculations, see https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result.

[48] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, Montross, VA, 74a.

[49] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 78.

[50] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, Montross, VA, 74a.

hide the evidence in a secret burial.[51] That multiple parties were part of the arrangements to bury Jones is to be expected. But the reason for George Eskridge's involvement is unclear. The 1720s were a decade in which Eskridge was one of the county's most active public figures, representing people in court, caring for orphans, serving as a justice, and more. He had already played a role in Augustine's life, acting on behalf of George Gale in his claim to retain the Washington children, and he had a small role in the management of Jane Butler's estate as well. Eskridge's involvement in Jones's estate is unclear, but it is more evidence of how much Augustine entwined his affairs with those of this older and far-better-connected public figure.

The record, though, leaves at least four possibilities:

1. Jones died before completing the building of a new home for the Washingtons.
2. Jones died before completing the interior carpentry for a new home for the Washingtons.
3. Jones died before completing an addition to the Washingtons' home.
4. Jones died before completing the interior carpentry for an addition to the Washingtons' home.

Iron Mines and the Principio Company of Maryland, 1718–1728

In the 1720s, free Virginians had a few roads to wealth. Tobacco, of course, was the most prevalent, and in Westmoreland County, changing tastes and expanding markets created more buyers for their Oronoco crop. The scope and stability of the market also helped offset small price fluctuations. Augustine and his tenants planted all the tobacco they could, as did their neighbors.[52] Another road to wealth was land speculation. This was very much the economy embraced by John Washington in the late 17th century. But Lawrence did very little in the way of speculative land purchasing. His son Augustine threw himself into land acquisition upon reaching adulthood, but unlike many other of his gentry peers, he largely stayed out of the western land boom that was reaching to the headwaters of the Potomac. He bought no land above the fall line and, as far as the records reveal, might never have even traveled any farther west.

But there was another route to wealth that many gentry planters pursued—and Augustine was in their number. Iron was an essential part of the empire's commercial and military endeavors, so any new source of the mineral was guaranteed instant markets.

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[51] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Kindle Loc 527.

[52] Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 210–15.

Ambitious Virginians had made a few attempts at creating profitable mines and furnaces since the colony's early days, but no endeavor really caught fire. In 1714, though, Virginia governor Alexander Spotswood established an iron furnace above the falls of the Rappahannock. When William Byrd II visited that enterprise, he was impressed by the "rough stone" furnaces, the hundreds of feet of wooden pipe for funneling in water, the mountains of charcoal, and the "two mighty pairs of bellows" that drove the fires.[53] This work also required a large, enslaved workforce living on-site. With the governor in the lead, a small iron boom began in places like the Rappahannock fall line, where the ground held iron ore and there were adequate supplies of the limestone, timber for firewood, and water to run the operation.

In 1718, a group of partners operating as the Principio Company in Cecil County, Maryland, were able to ship back to England their first large batch of iron: three and a half tons produced by their overseeing agent on the ground, a man named Joseph Farmer. It was a promising start, and the English backers quickly replaced Farmer with a more skilled ironmaster, John England. In Britain, he would have rated as a man of average skill, but in America, England was one of the few men who knew the ins and outs of producing iron, so he was a man in demand.[54] After his arrival, England was eagerly scouring the region for new sources of raw ore that could be melted down and formed into shippable iron bars, or "pigs." Others were on the lookout for iron sources as well, and by the mid-1720s, the Principio partners were not the only people running forges and furnaces; Maryland alone had nine of the former and eight of the latter. [55]

There were problems from the start, though, mostly tied to the restrictive rules governing iron production. English producers had no interest in their prices being forced down by colonial imports, nor did they wish to lose American markets to local production. As a result, there were some restrictions on what locally forged iron goods could be sold within the colonies, while tight controls governed Virginia exports. Nevertheless, the need for iron was steady and stable, especially when it came to outfitting an expanding navy and army, so the larger needs of the empire overrode the protectionist concerns of one of its many commercial enterprises. Maryland- and Virginia-made iron was soon in the shops of colonial blacksmiths, being fashioned into every manner of iron tool or architectural need.

It happened that a parcel of land that Augustine had recently acquired on Accokeek Creek, off the Potomac in Stafford County, held iron ore deposits. It is not clear just who found the iron, but in 1725, John England and Augustine had agreed informally to let the ironmaster establish a forge and foundry on the land under the auspices of the Principio

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[53] William Byrd, quoted in *Journal of Metals*, 1959, 659.

[54] Michael Warren Robbins, "The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720–1781," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1972, 29.

[55] Michael Warren Robbins, "The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720–1781," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1972, 29.

Company. In July of the following year, they drafted a more formal agreement that had some unusual terms. Augustine faced a small problem. He owned land that contained the valuable ore, even though by law, one-third of all mineral wealth belonged to the Fairfaxes as the Northern Neck proprietors. But he had neither the skill nor the capital required to set up something as novel and complicated as an iron forge and foundry, a specialized set of structures that ended up costing in the range of L700 once completed. He was a man in need of outside help and money if he were to see a profit from his property. As a result, he leased to the partnership 1,600 acres for a full 1,000 years—an almost laughably long deal for the Principio men. Augustine would pay one-sixth of the cost of building the various needed buildings at the Accokeek site—sheds, barns, slave quarters, and the like (a tiny expense)—but in exchange for their generous lease, the firm would carry the cost of building and maintaining the forge and furnace. Once the operation was running, one-sixth of all the resulting iron pigs would be Augustine's, with the rest going to the firm to share among the backers and to cover the incidentals like England's salary and the one-twelfth share he was due.[56] After the furnace was running, Augustine would then become responsible for one-sixth of the maintenance costs. He also slipped a clause into the agreement that said that no more than 100 tons of ore were to be dug without Augustine's permission, a control clause that counterbalanced the length of lease. One hundred tons was a considerable amount. But the clause meant that while the Principio partners might have the lease for 1,000 years, if 100 tons of ore were to come out of the ground in the first year, for example, then the next 999 years were meaningless unless Augustine agreed to more digging. Over the next two and a half decades, the Accokeek furnace operation became large enough that in one year (after Augustine's death, when his son Lawrence oversaw the works), it shipped out 410 tons of iron pigs, a quantity that was a full fifth of all the iron sent out by Maryland and Virginia combined.[57]

By any measure, the Principio agreement shows Augustine to have been a shrewd negotiator. He was able to have the partnership shoulder most of the expense and risk of erecting and maintaining the specialized buildings. They paid the shipping costs, and they also paid a one-twelfth share going to England or any other experienced ironmaster needed to make the whole operation run. For the cost of one-sixth of the expense of some shacks and of gathering an enslaved labor force, Augustine could claim one-sixth of a commodity that he had no viable way to retrieve on his own and that was guaranteed a stable English market. For someone raised in the lower-status Oronoco side of the ever-fluctuating tobacco market, this new iron venture must have seemed like a godsend. From that point on, the mine operation became a centerpiece of Augustine's

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[56] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life, Volume One* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1948), 38–40.

[57] William G. and Henry Whitley, "The Principio Company: A Historical Sketch of the First Iron Works in Maryland (Continued)," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 11, no. 2 (July 1887): 194.

Business—perhaps, in his view, even the most important part. Virginia's iron works generally received an official boost in 1730 when the House of Burgesses passed an act that exempted "all persons employ'd in Iron Works" from militia musters, although the same act also made maintaining roads to the mines the business of the landowner.[58]

William Byrd II visited the operation in 1732 and wrote:

> Not far from this last spring [near Fredericksburg] are England's iron mines, called so from the chief manager of them, though the land belongs to Mr. Washington. These mines are two miles from the furnace, and Mr. Washington raises the ore, and carts it thither for twenty shillings the ton of iron that it yields. The furnace is built on a run, which discharges its waters into Potomac. And when the iron is cast, they cart it about six miles to a landing on that river. Besides Mr. Washington and Mr. England, there are several other persons, in England, concerned in these works. Matters are very well managed there, and no expense is spared to make them profitable, which is not the case in the works I have already mentioned. Mr. England can neither write nor read; but without those helps, is so well skilled in iron works, that he does not only carry on his furnace, but has likewise the chief management of the works at Principia, at the head of the bay, where they have also erected a forge and make very good bar iron.[59]

Byrd praised England's skill and scope, but well before this visit, the ironmaster himself was already feeling overworked and underpaid and foresaw problems with his trying to manage works in Maryland and up the Potomac. He wrote to the partners that he "shall have great fateague by ye works lying so far remote from each other" and that his one-twelfth share was "too small for myselfe in this concerne."[60] England saw Augustine as at least partly responsible for his small share and wrote to the partners, suggesting they "make Capt Washington a small present of wine" to butter him up and support the case that England deserved more for all he had done on behalf of the company.[61] England soldiered on, though, and saw significant increases to his salary as his labors began to yield rewards for the grateful partners.[62]

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[58] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 67.

[59] William Byrd II, *Progress to the Mines in the Year 1732* (Petersburg, VA: Ruffin, 1841), digital edition, Early Americas Digital Archives.

[60] William G. and Henry Whitley, "The Principio Company: A Historical Sketch of the First Iron Works in Maryland (Continued)," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 11, no. 2 (July 1887): 194.

[61] William G. and Henry Whitley, "The Principio Company: A Historical Sketch of the First Iron Works in Maryland (Continued)," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 11, no. 2 (July 1887): 194.

[62] Michael Warren Robbins, "The Principio Company: Iron-Making in Colonial Maryland, 1720–1781," PhD diss., Johns Hopkins University, Baltimore, MD, 1972, 52.

Augustine Sells the Popes Creek Estate He Had Only Just Purchased, 1726

The year 1726 was busy for Augustine. He finalized his complex deal with the Principio Company, and he saw his new home either finished or well on the way to completion. It was also the year in which he set up notable land deals. By February, the Washingtons were living on the land they had bought from Joseph Abbington and had rented out their acres on the western shore of Bridge's Creek. Despite the fact that all seemed to have settled down, Jane and Augustine devised a plan to now turn around and sell their newly acquired Popes Creek estate to George Eskridge and Lawrence Butler. For the "sum of five shillings of lawful money of Great Britain"—a merely symbolic price—the Washingtons sold to the two men "the plantation and tract of land whereon Augustine Washington now lives which he purchased of Joseph Abbington" as well as several other adjacent Mattox Neck properties. The land sale stipulated that what is now the GEWA acres were "to be for the proper use of Augustine and Jane Washington dureing their naturall lives and the longest liver of them and after their decease to the use of Augustine Washington, junr., son of aforesaid Augustine and Jane," while the rest of the land was also Jane and Augustine's under a lifetime tenancy, and upon "their decease" would go to "Lawrence, eldest son of Augustine and Jane Washington."[63] The land sale did not end the family's life on the land, but it did shift the formal title of the property to Eskridge and Butler and created a chain of inheritance clearly and irrevocably stated in a legally binding document. The immediate effect of this sale was that while Augustine owned many parcels of land, he did *not* own the one he called his home.

Augustine continued to buy land, including the Little Hunting Creek property that would become Mount Vernon. But he sold off his main seat while continuing to live there. This sort of sale was not unheard of. It was a way to insulate property while keeping it effectively in the same hands; financial operators today have a host of similar arrangements. In this case, the sale indirectly transferred the ownership of the Popes Creek estate and the GEWA acres to Augustine Jr. and placed Eskridge and Butler as the trustees until he reached maturity. The mechanics (as we will see) are interesting but simple enough to understand. The real question is why did Augustine make this move? Understanding that sale takes some work— and, even then, the existing record raises more questions than it answers.

The sale itself was one moment in a long and complicated history of British property law. In the early 16th century, Henry VIII and Parliament enacted the Statute of Uses, which governed land sales and remained in force across the British world until its repeal in 1845. The new rules were designed to control, formalize, and tax the then-common shifting of feudally owned land into the more modern form of private ownership—something of a

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[63] John Frederick Dorman, *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Deeds and Wills Number 6, 1716–1720* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989): 41; Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 21–22.

Revolutionary innovation in its day. Once these cumbersome rules were in place, though, British lawyers and landowners worked to circumvent them and create simpler paths to legal land transfer. By Augustine's day, these original concerns were just memories, but both the statute and its many workarounds had created a few different ways to own or sell land.[64]

Traditionally, signing a legal agreement was only the first part of a sale. There also was a physical component. No sale was complete until the buyer had actually walked onto the land in a performative legal act called *livery of siesen*.[65] For that reason, there were elaborate rules and even ceremonies that traditionally attached to this significant act. By the 17th century, the need to actually walk the land had fallen from the law, and Englishmen had developed new ways to avoid the livery of siesen and make land sales less complicated. Instead, the legal phrase "have granted," which appeared in so many documents, was the sign that for the purposes of law, the requirements of a livery of siesen had been met.

The most popular way to simply convey land was through a "lease and release" contract. This is the form of deal that Augustine had struck with Joseph Abbington when he first purchased the Popes Creek acres. In this scheme, the buyer officially leased the land for a six-month period for a trivial sum; "five shillings money of Great Britain" was the most commonly invoked amount in contracts all over the British Empire. This *bargaining and selling* put the buyer in actual possession of the property.[66] Then the original seller would immediately reverse the lease and effectively make the sale in a way that evaded the claims of feudal land dues.

Augustine and Jane's sale of Popes Creek was in the form of a *bargain and sale*. This was a way for a seller to sell land to a second party, who held the property for the use of a third party. The legal phrasing was in the sale document itself, which stated that the Washingtons "doth bargain and sell unto" Butler and Eskridge.[67] The form of the sale was a common English land option, but that does not address the question of *why* Augustine and Jane chose to bargain and sell their newly acquired homeplace.

The terms of the sale and the role of George Eskridge all show this to have been part of some larger but unrecorded plan. Involving Eskridge made sense given his stature and role in Jane's and Augustine's lives. The choice of Lawrence Butler as the other partner was rather more of a mystery. At issue might simply have been age. Eskridge was approaching his 71st year at the time, a staggering age in a place and time in which 40 was still considered venerable. In contrast, Butler was about Augustine's age, meaning that if the elder partner were to pass away, then the younger one would still be on hand to protect

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[64] E. W. Ives, "The Genesis of the Statute of Uses," *The English Historical Review*, 82, no. 325 (1967): 673–97.

[65] A. D. Carr, "Deeds of Title," in "Short Guides to Records," Lionel M. Munby, ed., *History* 50–170 (1995): 323.

[66] A. D. Carr, "Deeds of Title," in "Short Guides to Records," Lionel M. Munby, ed., *History* 50–170 (1995): 325.

[67] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 21–22.

The terms of the contract. Eskridge's marriage to Elizabeth Vaulx made him and the Butlers kin, so that added a family connection on the buyer's side of the sale. One wonders, though, why Augustine did not involve any of his Washington family members. There were several who could have played a role—his brother John in Gloucester County, for example, from whom he later purchased the islands in Popes Creek.[68]

The timing of the sale is probably the key to understanding its underlying logic. The parties signed the documents in February 1726, which was about six months after Augustine formalized his deal with the Principio Company. Augustine saw that project as the centerpiece of his personal business empire. The mines promised considerable wealth, and the involvement of many prominent Virginia gentry folk gave mining a special added social prestige. This also took place at a time when the Oronoco tobacco market was stable and growing in scope but also not hugely profitable. But at the same time, Augustine had two sons he knew he would need to set up when the time came. Selling Popes Creek and the Bridge's Creek lands through a bargain and sale secured their passing to the boys while removing Augustine from the process. This might have been a hedge against a possible bankruptcy resulting from the failure of the Accokeek mines. Properties could only be seized and have a lien put on them if their owner was in debt. If Augustine was not the owner of Popes Creek and Bridge's Creek, then those properties were protected for the boys and could not be taken if everything went south. The end result, though, was a curious and usually overlooked reality: from 1726 to his death in 1743, Augustine was not the legal owner of the home on Popes Creek. He and his family were only the tenants.

The Sale of Moll, Bess, and Their Children, 1727

Five months after the Popes Creek deal, Augustine and Jane were again in court to validate the same kind of contract, but this time, the sale involved people they were enslaving. At the center of the story were nine enslaved people. These were a woman named Moll and her two minor children—"one negro boy named Lawrence and one negro girl named Frank"—who made up one group, and Bess and her five children—Bett, Nan, Guss, Pricilla, and Little Sarah—making up the second group.[69] As in the land sale, the two groups were sold to George Eskridge and Lawrence Butler, who were to hold them "for the future benefit and advancement" of Lawrence and Augustine Jr.[70] The first group, Moll and her children, were to go to Lawrence, and the second group, Bess and her children, were to go

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[68] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 105.

[69] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 38–39.

[70] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 38–39.

To Augustine Jr. Also mirroring the land sale was the symbolic price of "five shillings of lawfull money of Great Brittain."[71] The motivation for the sale might also have been the same as the bargain and sale of Augustine's Popes Creek holdings: the insulation of the control of these people against the possibility of financial collapse. But that is where the mechanical similarities end since the sale of human beings immediately touched more lives than the sale of acres.

When the court divided Lawrence Washington's estate into four parts in 1713, enslaved people were added to the resulting lists, along with the books and furnishings. Nothing survived to reveal which inheritor received which of the four groups of six or seven people. But there was a woman named Bess in what the court labeled Group C and a woman named Molly in Group D. No specific demographic information was attached to those lists, so there is no way to say for sure the ages of each of the people in each of the 1713 groupings.[72] The only exception was that they noted that one unspecified woman in each group was then pregnant.

The records have too many silences to allow any authoritative identity claims, but understanding who enslaved people were based on these sorts of records demands some careful weighing of evidence. Both Bess and Moll were very common names for enslaved women. Moll is often a shortened version of Molly, so the woman in Group D could have been the woman named in 1727. The fact that none of the listed people in 1713 were singled out as children (commonly listed as "negro boy" or "negro girl") means that these people were probably adults. If Molly or Bess were between 16 and 20 years of age in 1713, then they would have been between 29 and 33 in 1726, certainly old enough to have numbers of children. But all this does is suggest a connection between the differently dated lists—nothing more. Jane Butler had been given a woman named Frank by her mother, but that person was moved to the Vaulx estate after the 1717 court ruling against Jane and Augustine. So the age differences between the Frank of 1717 and the "negro girl named Frank" of 1727 were already enough to show that these were not the same people. The only other thing to consider is that many decades later, Augustine Jr.'s will of 1762 made mention of a woman named Old Moll.[73] If 1727's Moll was 20 years of age at that time—an age that would easily have allowed for two children—then she would have been 55 at the time of Augustine Jr.'s death. It is certainly possible that the two Molls are the same woman, but her being enslaved at Popes Creek would have meant there had been an unrecorded exchange between Lawrence and his brother, something that certainly happened from

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[71] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 38–39.

[72] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 5*, 135–37.

[73] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 14*, 126–29.

Time to time but is also hard to verify. All of this means that the people in the 1727 sale do not easily match the names and stories of other people the Washingtons and their associates enslaved at the time.

But the fact remains that these two women were important enough to be separated, with their children, from the far larger number of people and protected by a sort of bargain and sale exchange. Enslaved men often became valuable to their enslavers through developing special skills. Carpenters, masons, chefs, and more were all labor-based routes to social prestige and extra value and all the rewards and protections attached to that. Enslaved women, though, had fewer routes to higher status and almost none that involved leaving the homesite. Women who were good cooks and could manage the complexities of a wood-fired kitchen became prized members of their community and valuable to their enslavers. Housemaids and nursemaids also were in unique positions to create special bonds with the families that claimed their labor. Sexually desirable women were in a similar position, although that space was fraught with its own set of problems. At the end of the 17th century, "Black" Betty was an important enough member of John Washington Jr.'s extended free and enslaved household that she was singled out in his inventory, and neighbor and John Jr.'s father-in-law David Wycliffe left much of his estate for the care of her and her children. The fact that Moll, Bess, and their respective children were carefully and legally separated from a community of enslaved people that included at least two dozen people shows that these two women residents of the GEWA acres stood out in some unspecified way.

CHAPTER TWELVE

Augustine Washington of Popes Creek, 1726–1731

Augustine Washington as Sheriff, 1726–1728

The office of sheriff in a colonial Virginia county was, like that of surveyor, something of a plum that the court handed out to one of its own. The court would put together a slate of nominees, from which the governor would pick one. The office came with a salary and generous reimbursement for any expenses incurred in the course of county business, and it brought some social prestige as well. Like all colonial-era offices, some skimming of funds was part of normal operations. On the other hand, it was a demanding job and a busy one: county court records are full of orders issued to their respective sheriffs. Augustine had been nominated for the office as early as 1720, but it was not until 1726 that he received the commission. As sheriff, Augustine had a host of duties. It was his responsibility to round up juries to hear cases in which he was not personally involved. He had a role in the collection of duties and had to arrange for the arrest of criminals and people called to court, sometimes done through deputies or done personally. He occasionally had to take on a role very much like that of an estate executor. For example, when Henry Tanner abandoned his wife, Martha, and their children, the court ordered that Augustine ensure that property due to the Tanner children was not taken to pay their absent father's debts.[1]

As sheriff, Augustine also had to oversee criminal punishments and publicly mandated discipline for enslaved people. These at times were quite dramatic. For example, in 1728, Edward Wharton was convicted of an attempted sexual assault on Jane Iles. The court found that Wharton "had offered such rudeness to her, that the sd. Jane Iles was obliged her to leave her bed in the night time and runaway in her shift only, to the next neighbor for refuge."[2] Augustine oversaw Wharton's punishment, in which he was bound to the "whipping post" near the courthouse, where he received "39 lashes, well laid on for

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[1] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders, 1726–1729* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 164.

[2] Gonzales, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1726–1729*, 155.

His offence."[3] In another sitting, John McDaniel, a "common cheat and a runaway," swore a "profane oath bef[ore] one of the Co[unty] magistrates." The court ordered that Augustine tie McDaniel to the whipping post and lay "30 lashes" on his "bare back."[4]

Augustine Washington and the Thomas Barnes Affair, 1727

One of the most public tasks on a sheriff's docket was the running of local elections. This high-profile part of Virginia life was governed by long-established English rules and conventions. On the other hand, this was also an arena filled with opportunities for preferment and conflicts of interests, as the sheriff himself and the men running for office were almost always people with very close ties. That was exactly the issue that emerged from the election of 1727.[5]

Thomas Barnes was a native of Northumberland County, and his father had been a Kent Islander. By the mid-1720s, though, he had made a home and a few hundred tobacco acres in Washington Parish on the Potomac in the vicinity of "the Cliffs" on the current grounds of Stratford Hall. At the time of his death, he was enslaving an unspecified number of people, including Prince, Achee, Clarke, Goodded, and Jack.[6] His land housed a court-mandated public tobacco landing where planters who lacked their own river access could store and load their crops for shipping.[7] That would have made Barnes well known to many of the local smaller planters. Like Augustine, he was also interested in mine operations, although his project sought copper and not iron ore. Over the years, he had been brought into county court on the usual matters: tobacco debts, having lost a horse, and so on. He had been brought in for an unstated misdemeanor, too, but nothing came of that charge. He had also been accused of "not keeping a bridge over his mill dam," but he was able to show that he did not own the dam in question.[8] In 1724, Barnes gained permission to reroute the road that led to Mattox Ferry and skirted Augustine's land because he claimed the original run was "very inconvenient to him."[9] He was never a justice, but he

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[3] Gonzales, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1726–1729*, 155.

[4] Gonzales, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1726–1729*, 169.

[5] Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790*, repr. ed. (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2012): 110–14.

[6] https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I118063&tree=Tree1. See also F. Edward Wright, ed., *Westmoreland County Virginia, Orders*, *1721–1724* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 57.

[7] F. Edward Wright, ed., *Westmoreland County Virginia, Orders, 1721–1724* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 57.

[8] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1716–1720* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1989), 71.

[9] Holly G. Wright, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1724–1726* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 15.

Served as a juror for many cases. On one occasion, though, he refused to serve on a jury and ended up with a fine of 400 pounds of tobacco for "contemptuously departing from the barr."[10] He had the usual types of credit and debt disputes, but after he married Augustine Higgins's widow, Anne Barnes, he played a role in settling the Higgins estate, a process that dragged on for years. That matter led to a small debt dispute with George Eskridge, which resulted in some court-ordered payments to Eskridge. The two men also found themselves on the opposite sides of a few property and debt cases during the 1720s.

In 1727, Barnes opted to stand for a seat in the House of Burgesses. As a freeholder, it was his right to put his name forward to represent the community. What motivated him is a mystery. Like any polity, Westmoreland County was filled with factions and conflicts, most of which are lost to time, and Barnes could have had any number of scores to settle with the county's ruling elite. Standing for office was a tough way to enter the game, though. Barnes was not a particularly prominent man. He held no county office, nor was he a member of the court. His road request shows a certain community spirit, even if it was rather self-interested. His having a public landing on his land also was something of a platform for him and would have made him a known quantity to some planters.[11]

Whatever his reasons, Barnes sought the honor of going to Williamsburg to serve the people. This would not be an easy campaign. The county's freeholders were set to send two men to the House of Burgesses, and both of the incumbents wished to retain their seats. Those two men were Thomas Lee and George Eskridge, both members of the court with long governmental experience. Both also sat at the top of large client networks that stretched across the county, and both were among the most prominent men in the county, along with Daniel McCarty, perhaps even *the* most prominent. Certainly in the 1720s, they had few rivals for that honor. Barnes was unquestionably the underdog.

In the spring of 1727, newly appointed governor Sir William Gooch sent the appropriate "writ" to Augustine, notifying him that he was thereby empowered to call for a general election. As sheriff, Augustine had to set the date of the vote and post notices of the date and the candidates at all the county churches and at the courthouse where the poll was to be held. The notices had to be posted no less than two Sundays before the election so that word could get out. Every male freeholder was eligible to vote as long as he was able to get to the polling place on the day. Once the notices were up, the campaigning could begin. Candidates brushed up their social networks and made sure their allies and agents were visiting homes and beating the bushes to ensure that their voters were primed to turn out. They also used the campaign to hear complaints and make promises. This was not a cynical act. Candidates like Lee and Eskridge were prominent gentry men. But seeking office required the assent of people far lower down the social ladder. Small planters invariably

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[10] Wright, *Westmoreland County Orders, 1721–1724*, 13.

[11] His son Abraham, though, seems to have been a man of some status on the Maryland side of the Potomac. "Barnes-Morton," *William and Mary Quarterly* 17, no. 2 (1908): 145.

Had to doff their caps (literally and figuratively) to their social "betters" and always respect the rules of deference or they would face fines, beatings, or jail time. Elections inverted that hierarchy for a moment and provided a chance for the lower sort to speak frankly to a member of the gentry, who now came to them in need of their support. Such periodic, almost ritualized inversions were vital for maintaining the smooth functioning of a system that was in all respects rigid and imbalanced.[12]

Virginia elections were often quite festive public affairs. Any large gathering of the community was a treat for farmers, who spent most of the time in the company of their families and servants. All manner of conversations, agreements, and personal conflicts flowered on the grounds around the courthouse as the freeholders gathered to cast their votes. Candidates habitually provided food and drink for their supporters as they gathered in the hours before the poll. Roasting pigs on spits and cracking open barrels of whiskey or rum were just some of the incentives candidates and their allies provided their supporters on election day, and more than a few votes were cast simply out of gratitude for the chance to get drunk on someone else's liquor. Cheers and hurrahs for the king, the governor, and the candidates got louder and more frequent as the crowd grew and the barrels gradually emptied.[13]

The day Augustine picked for the election arrived, and it turned out to be an inclement one. He had set the time at noon, but by then, the weather had begun to turn "very bad."[14] At the posted time, Augustine read once more the writ from Governor Gooch and called for the vote. These were always issued publicly. In some cases, a freeholder would come before the candidates and declare his preference, which the clerk then recorded. But there were other methods of voting. On this day, Augustine followed Eskridge's wish that the vote be cast by caucus—a means of physically voting called "division," which was a tradition deeply rooted in British practice (it is still part of how Parliament votes). The crowd then divided, with the supporters of the incumbents moving to one side of the courthouse yard and Barnes's people gathering on the other. Once the groups were formed, it was clear that a "majority for the sitting members appeared."[15]

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[12] For the tenor of Virginia politics and elections in this era, see Charles Sydnor, *Gentlemen Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia* (New York: The Free Press, 1963), 28–29; Richard R. Beeman, "Deference, Republicanism, and the Emergence of Popular Politics in Eighteenth-Century America," *William and Mary Quarterly* 49, no. 3 (1992): 401–30.

[13] Charles Sydnor, *Gentlemen Freeholders: Political Practices in Washington's Virginia* (New York: The Free Press, 1963), 44–59; Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 111–13, 253–54.

[14] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

[15] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

Augustine reckoned it to have been "at least four to one" supporting the incumbents. The result seemed clear, and "no body at that time demanded any poll"; in other words, the result was so obvious to all that there was no need to provide a supplementary head count.[16]

Augustine left matters as they were until about one o'clock, when he asked Barnes "what he intended to do." Barnes replied that "tho[ugh] he had no hopes of succeeding in the election," he nevertheless requested Augustine to hold everyone for another hour in case any of his late supporters showed up. Augustine agreed, but just before two o'clock, the weather was "growing worse" and the freeholders "grew uneasie and desired to be dispatched" back to their homes. Although it was not yet two o'clock, Augustine called for a second division, which produced the same result as the first. It seemed obvious to all that Lee and Eskridge had won their seats, so the cold and wet freeholders began to leave. This was when things went wrong. Since the bulk of freeholders had seen their preferred candidates win, they considered the day's business done and headed on their way. But as each Lee and Eskridge voter rode or walked away, their numbers dwindled and so did the visible division. Barnes's backers, on the other hand, "who had been drinking," stayed put and watched their proportion of the assembled people grow. After about a half hour, they "declared themselves not satisfied" with the earlier results and demanded a new count. Seeing the changed numbers, they declared Barnes the winner, and a portion of his drunken supporters picked Barnes up "and carried him into the court-house" in celebration. Sensing an opportunity, Barnes *now* demanded a head count, but Augustine was having none of it and announced the incumbents as the winners.[17]

The matter might have died there, but Barnes petitioned the House of Burgesses Committee of Elections and Privileges, accusing Augustine of "acting partially and unfairly, in determining the election without a poll and returned Mr Lee and Mr Eskridge, the sitting members, in injury to the petitioner's right."[18] He backed up that claim with a list of freeholder signatories who agreed that Augustine had effectively rigged the election in favor of the well-connected incumbents. On its face, the claim that Augustine was acting as a client of more powerful men was a reasonable one. Eskridge in particular had been a force in Augustine's life ever since he had returned to Virginia. He had acted as Jane Butler's protector and helped in getting the new couple together, and thanks to Eskridge's marriage to Jane's half sister, Elizabeth Vaulx, he and Augustine were brothers-in-law. This was a hierarchical society, where the wealthy and well-connected men cultivated

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[16] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

[17] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

[18] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

Clients and allies, and those people understood that helping one's patrons was the best way to help oneself. Augustine was a creature of this world and knew its rules well. He benefited from them, and as a fatherless man, he was certainly a client of the older Eskridge. It would have been almost unthinkable for Augustine to cross his patrons or publicly challenge their interests. There also was the fact that Eskridge had friends in the House of Burgesses and even had served on the Committee of Elections and Privileges and, therefore, was well placed to influence its conclusions as they reviewed Barnes's claim. One can forgive Barnes for seeing a conspiracy.

On the other hand, Barnes was always an outsider candidate running against the hard core of the county gentry. His loss was so overwhelming and obvious that it did not require a full head count, and his supporters' postelection chicanery did not help his claim. It seems to be true that Augustine neglected the poll, but in this election, that was just a formality, and Barnes was trying to capitalize on a technicality.

Once the committee looked into Barnes's claims, his accusations and schemes began to unravel. The bulk of freeholders made clear that they "were satisfied that the election was fair."[19] On top of that, it soon emerged that Barnes's agents had collected freeholder signatures while misrepresenting the complaint the voters were signing. Once they had collected the names of people who said they would support there being a second election to clear up matters, Barnes and his friends then "wrote upon a separate paper" a more damning charge against Augustine and submitted that document accompanied with the signatures intended for the first petition. Westmoreland freeholders came to Williamsburg and told the burgesses that Barnes and his allies had duped them. In the end, the House seated Lee and Eskridge, and the committee absolved Augustine of any wrongdoing. Barnes was brought before the bar at the capitol, and "the doors being opened" so that a crowd gathered outside could hear and see the next spectacle, he "made an humble confession of his offence, expressed his sorrow for the same, and asked pardon of the gentlemen he had injured" as well as that of the burgesses, whose time he had wasted.[20] With that ritual humiliation completed, Barnes received a reprimand from the Speaker of the House and then was allowed to leave, having paid his fees and costs. Faith in Virginia's elections was not a thing to trifle with, and false accusations of fraud carried real consequences. On the other hand, if nothing else, Barnes learned that it was hard to defeat a ruling elite on its home turf.

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[19] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 31.

[20] H. R. McIlwaine, ed., *Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, Volume 13* (Richmond: Colonial Press, 1910), 34.

More Thefts

On August 30, 1722, Augustine went to court, demanding payment from Daniel Higdon for his "maliciously shooting and wounding" one of the former's horses. The jury awarded Augustine L20 for the harm done from what had to have been some sort of hunting accident.[21] But Augustine was the target of more illegality that was not simply an accident. In the spring of 1723, Patrick McCay came before the court for "committing perjury and feloniously stealing silver lace" from Augustine Washington and Reverend Lawrence de Butts.[22] The lace was not even the highest-quality goods; the court described it being "of little value."[23] But theft was theft, even if it was a small quantity of cheap lace taken from a storehouse—or maybe the church (again!) or some other accessible place. A break-in would have called for different phrasing in the court record. For example, when Frances Abbington found a "dram bottle" broken in her home on a winter day in 1717, she immediately accused her kinsman James Abbington of "feloniously breaking her house" even though there was little evidence, and the court eventually threw the case away. McCay was not so lucky. When first confronted, he "made oath before a magistrate that he had not stolen the said lace." But once in court before a panel of justices that, as it happened, included Augustine, McCay reversed his denial and "voluntarily acknowledged that he had stolen the same silver lace from the sd persons." The victim of the theft and his fellow justices ordered that the sheriff immediately take McCay to the "common whipping post and give him on his bare back well laid on thirty lashes" in punishment for the theft. Then, with his back in tatters, he was to be made to "stand in the pillory" in the summer heat until the court finished its business and was able to file by as punishment for his committing perjury in the initial denial. The justices continued to hear cases and other matters on the day's docket for the rest of the sitting, accompanied by the sounds of McCay being whipped just outside the courthouse. Lastly, McCay was taken to the jail until he could "give sufficient caution for payment of officer's fees."[24]

The "notorious thief" John Wilson found himself in a similar situation in 1728 when he stole "large quantities of Indian corn, wheat, oates, & Indian pease out of the house of Augt Washington, Gent of Westmoreland Co."[25] Wilson, unlike McCay, fled the county but eventually found himself before the court in King George County, whose members seem to have known him fairly well. Stealing sacks of grain was an ambitious plan. Ribbons, lace, and even some velvet could be crimes of opportunity; a person could come across the

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[21] Wright, *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders 1721–1724*, 67.

[22] Wright, *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders 1721–1724*, 116–17.

[23] Wright, *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders 1721–1724*, 116–17.

[24] Wright, *Westmoreland County, Virginia, Orders 1721–1724*, 116–17.

[25] Mary Marshall Brewster, *King George County, Virginia Orders 1728–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 22.

Tempting items and grab them before the better angels of their nature could issue a veto. But stealing grain was a considerable endeavor. The grain was probably stored in the kitchen, although it was also common for such things to be stored in homes' cellars. Moving the stolen goods away, though, would have been time consuming and almost impossible to do unnoticed by either the white residents or the enslaved—people who would have had every interest in stopping the theft lest they get the blame. How did this all take place? "Large quantities" would require a wagon or at least a horse to move, unless it were done over time, but the case does not suggest that was the case. It is hard to imagine a thief backing a wagon up to a home and simply helping himself unnoticed. Likewise, a burglar stealing away with a sack of grain, caching it somewhere for later transportation, and then repeating the act also seems like something someone would have noticed.

In 1728, the Washington home on Popes Creek was still fairly new, but any Washington home at that time would have been a busy place filled with children, servants, and enslaved people. It could be that Wilson capitalized on a moment when the family was away. It is also quite possible that he robbed the older family home on Bridge's Creek, though the distinction between the two homes would not have interested the court. But Wilson was a skilled and experienced thief, so we can assume he knew how to ply his illegal trade.

Whatever defense Wilson mounted, it did not persuade the King George County justices. The whole plan had fallen apart, leaving Wilson at the dock and sentenced to "39 lashes on the bare back well laid on."[26] He also had to pay the sum of 40 pounds to cover the cost of his prosecution and punishment.[27] He managed to scare up the first 40, but three months later, he had still not provided the additional 20. The court ordered that the sheriff take Wilson "into his custody" until he could offer up the mandated fine as "security" for "his good behavior for a twelve month and a day."[28]

As soon as that 12 months and a day had passed, Wilson was at it again and had landed back in court, this time in Westmoreland County. In the September 30, 1730, court sitting, Wilson was at the bar to answer for charges of having stolen "a man's saddle, a bag, a hankerchief, a pr. Of gloves," and "a wallot" from the home of Rachell Reeves while she was away.[29] Given that Reeves was "aquainted" with Wilson's "manner of life," one wonders why she even turned her back on him in the first place. But she did, and as with Augustine's home, Wilson capitalized on the opportunity. In court, Wilson claimed Reeves

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[26] Mary Marshall Brewer, ed., *King George County, Virginia Orders 1728–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 22.

[27] Mary Marshall Brewer, ed., *King George County, Virginia Orders 1728–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 22.

[28] Mary Marshall Brewer, ed., *King George County, Virginia Orders 1728–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2007), 105.

[29] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 108–9.

Had "lent" the items to him, but she swore under oath that that was a lie. The court was not in a forgiving mood. The justices recalled that Wilson had previously "been guilty of stealing a rug" and knew him to be a "common thief and vagabond," and they were ready to throw the book at him.[30] To seal the deal, Augustine offered evidence of his own experience with the thief, and other local grandees, including James Vaulx, John Elliot, and John Lee Wright, all "delivered their evidence which contained proof of several thefts and rogueries" of which Wilson "had been guilty."[31] With all the evidence heard, the justices decided that Wilson was just too much trouble for them and ordered him sent to Williamsburg to face trial in the capital. They also ordered him again tied to the "whipping post" and there to receive "39 lashes well laid on" so that he could see how a Westmoreland whipping compared to a King George one. Wilson also had to pay a 50-pound cash security before he was taken to Williamsburg and an uncertain fate.[32]

As badly as McCay and the "notorious" Wilson might have suffered under the lash, cases of theft carried quite different punishments depending on the skin color and status of the defendant. When "Negro Anthony" was accused of stealing some cloth and a length of ribbon, the justices found him "guilty of the felony layed to his charge and that same he ought to die." Anthony was "remanded to the county goal [jail]" and a week after his conviction was "hanged by the neck until he be dead." An estimation of his value—"thirty pounds current money"—was to be paid to his master for the loss of his investment at the hands of the state.[33] Despite McCay's reputation and the mountain of evidence against him, the court still wrestled with just what to do with a thief who was also a white Briton with some property. On less evidence and with no hesitation whatsoever, the court ordered "Negro Anthony" to the gallows. This is a fine illustration of the idea that racism in the law is best understood as a double standard based on ancestry.[34]

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[30] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 108–9.

[31] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 108–9.

[32] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 108–9.

[33] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1731–1739, Part 2*, Montross, VA, 215–16.

[34] Karen E. Fields and Barbara J. Fields, *Racecraft: The Soul of Inequality in America* (London: Verso, 2012).

Katherine Shipton and Her Illegitimate Child, August 1728

The August 1728 court sitting was a busy one for Augustine. He produced the documents showing that he had acquired the mill at the head of Popes Creek, and he brought suit against the minister of Washington Parish—a case we will look at shortly.[35] He also saw one of his own servants brought before the bar to stand trial.

Even though enslaved Africans were the backbone of the labor force on Virginia plantations, the colony still had a considerable number of white British workers. The model of servitude was very much as it had been for over a century except that the need was reduced due to widespread enslavement. Servants, therefore, often appeared in skilled trades or domestic service. Many of the unmarried white British women who came to the colony arrived with exactly this sort of obligation. Katherine Shipton was just such a woman, living and working in the Washington home on Popes Creek.[36]

In 1728, Shipton became pregnant and, as a result, found herself in county court to answer to a charge of "having her a bastard, or base born child."[37] The law required that her master report the birth or face a fine, so the court had become aware of her child a few months before it was born. Despite being called to the bar, though, Shipton did not appear for a few of the court's sittings. Finally, in August, she was taken into custody and forcibly brought to trial. The justices confronted her and pressed her (as was usually the practice) to name the father. She did not and instead was recorded as "having nothing to say against the s[ai]d presentment."[38] The law required that her term of service to Augustine be extended as compensation for her lost labor and that fines be levied as a security in anticipation of the child potentially becoming a financial burden on the parish. The care of the child also fell to the parish and the churchwarden since servitude did not allow time for childrearing. The fates of these children were very much like those of poor orphans, who usually ended up being housed as servants in another planter's home. The court ordered 500 pounds of tobacco to settle these and the cost of the arrest, and fined Shipton for

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[35] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 134.

[36] Terri L. Snyder, "'To Seeke for Justice': Gender, Servitude, and Household Governance in the Early Modern Chesapeake," *Early Modern Virginia: Reconsidering the Old Dominion*, John Coombs and Douglas Bradburn, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 128–57; Betty Wood, "Serving Women in the Seventeenth-Century Chesapeake," in *Women in Early America*, Thomas Foster, ed. (New York: NYU Press, 2015), 95–117. Wood discusses several early 18th-century cases much like Shipton's. See also Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 47–58; for similar cases in North Carolina, see Kristen Fischer, *Suspect Relations: Sex, Race, and Resistance in Colonial North Carolina* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2002), 101–02, 108, 172–75. Inequalities in power made woman servants singularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. See Sharon Block, *Rape and Sexual Power in Early America* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2008), 64–74, 114–16.

[37] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 134.

[38] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 134.

Being uncooperative in not naming the father. Augustine paid those fines, but that was not unusual in a case like this; the extension of Shipton's term of service would have been more valuable to him than tobacco.

Shipton was only one of many Virginia women who appeared before the court on charges of having illegitimate children. The court's interest in these cases rested on several concerns. One, of course, was to ensure the smooth functioning of a system of servile labor. Servitude was understood as being a state of celibacy since time devoted to caring for a child was time that a master had effectively purchased. In that way, having a child was a species of theft. The colony—and the crown more broadly—was also interested in protecting the prerogatives of families, both as divinely sanctioned arrangements and as systems of control. Out-of-wedlock children were a disruption and were therefore problematic. The moral side of this concern, though, gradually faded from import as courts came to see bastardy as more of a criminal offense and less of a religious one. After the 1670s, it was rare to see, for example, an accused woman having to perform public ritual penances. Simple fines and extensions of service were the norm by the time Shipton stonewalled her inquisitors.[39] The relevant law of 1705 stated, "And if any woman servant shall be delivered of a bastard child within the time of her service aforesaid, Be it enacted, by the authority aforesaid, and it is hereby enacted, That in recompence of the loss and trouble occasioned her master or mistress thereby, she shall for every such offence, serve her said master or owner one whole year after her time by indenture, custom, and former order of court, shall be expired; or pay her said master or owner, one thousand pounds of tobacco."[40]

A third concern was that illegitimate children born to women servants became charges of the parish, with their care overseen by the churchwarden. This entailed a financial burden that county courts and colonial government alike were interested in avoiding.

Race and class played a role in how courts treated illegitimacy. For that reason, we can learn a bit about this unnamed child who was born on the GEWA acres. Fears of interracial sex and marriage were written into Virginia law, and courts were always concerned to stop what they called "that abominable mixture."[41] Had Shipton's baby been mixed race, the court would have noted that important fact and doled out the unique fines and punishments. For example, when Mary Fullam came before the court a few years earlier, the court charged her with "bearing a mulatto bastard child," making clear the racial designation of both the father and the child. No such language emerged in Shipton's case.

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[39] Kathleen M. Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Race, Gender, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 188; Terri Snyder, *Brabbling Women: Disorderly Speech and the Law in Early Virginia* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014), 61.

[40] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 452.

[41] William Waller Hening, ed., *The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia* (New York: R., W., and G. Bartow, 1823), 3: 454.

In cases like Shipton's, free or servant white fathers were bound to pay the costs the parish incurred in the child's care. A free man would have to provide that security to the court, whereas a servant would have to pay that debt at the end of their term. In cases where a woman's master was the father—something the law disapproved of—the fate of the child differed from children whose fathers were servants or free white men. In the former case, the woman's master was entitled to the labor of the child if the churchwarden saw fit to arrange it. But if the master was also the father, the law barred him from the benefit of his child's labor.[42]

As is often the case in stories involving the most intimate details of colonial people's lives, Shipton and her child's short court record raises far more questions than it answers. Why did she refuse to name the child's father? Who might she have been protecting, and why? And why was she willing to suffer the punishments for her pregnancy alone? One interesting twist in this case was that her master, Augustine, was possibly still serving as the parish churchwarden. This meant that he had the authority to place the Shipton child where he saw fit—and since there is no documented reason to suspect him as the father, he might well have chosen to keep the child in his own household. On the one hand, that would have given him the profit of another person's labor for the small cost of court fees. But such a move also would have kept mother and child together within the same household, an act of kindness if that was what happened.

Whatever the story was, the Shipton child was the first documented birth we can identify that took place in the extended Washington homestead on the GEWA acres.

Augustine and Reverend Lawrence DeButts, 1728

In 1720, Reverend Lawrence DeButts (sometimes spelled DeButte) became Washington Parish's fifth Anglican priest. He was trained in Williamsburg at the College of William and Mary and had married Elizabeth Kenner. The reverend was her third and last husband. Her second, though, had been Robert Vaulx, Jane's older half brother. That made him and Augustine loosely linked by marriage. Virginia was always a bit short on ministers, and parsons were always complaining that they simply had too much on their plates—a fair claim. DeButts was no different. In 1723, he took over for Reverend James Beechin of Cople Parish, meaning that for the next seven years, DeButts was alone in ministering to all of the Anglican souls of Westmoreland County.[43] It was a difficult job, and like most

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[42] John Watkins, "Insolent and Contemptuous Carriages: Re-Conceptualizing Illegitimacy in Colonial British America," MA thesis, University of South Florida, Tampa, FL, 2003.

[43] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 172.

Virginia parsons, DeButts felt that he was not being paid enough to live in the style to which he felt entitled. This motivated his taking Augustine and the church vestry to court before he finally left the parish in the 1730s.[44]

In 1724, DeButts wrote to his superiors, saying, "I have two churches in my parish, in one or the other of which divine service is performed alternately every Lord's day, unless I be hindered from going to church by sickness or very bad weather."[45] Ministers were often in short supply in Virginia, and many found themselves stretched near to breaking. Conflicts over the rewards and the conditions ministers faced were frequent in this period.[46] Debutts's story was typical. For seven years, DeButts bounced back and forth between Mattox Creek and Nomini Creek (where Cople was) on alternating weeks, using the public roads, until 1730 when Roderick McCulloch took over Washington Parish, leaving DeButts with only Cople to cope with.[47] Each of the two parish churches was "in length 20 yards, in breadth 8," making them only slightly larger than the common 20-feet-by-40-feet floor plan of many Virginia homes. Each of the two churches also had a "gallery" so that the enslaved and poorer parishioners could look down on the main floor and still hear the sermon.[48] Despite the reasonable size of the churches, DeButts claimed that "there was not convenient room" for all of his parishioners "within the church."[49] He might have been right; Westmoreland County was becoming a quite crowded place during his tenure. On the other hand, this could have been a bit of bragging on the minister's part about his effectiveness.[50] This concern was very much on the minister's mind since the year before, Augustine had laid out 6,000 pounds of tobacco for David Jones's "building at the round

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[44] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Kindle pos. 2304; Joan Louise Rezner, "The Anglican Church in Virginia, 1723–1743," MA thesis, College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1968, 90.

[45] Mark R. Wenger, "Thomas Jefferson, the College of William and Mary, and the University of Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 103, no. 3 (1995): 347.

[46] Jacob M. Blosser, "Unholy Communion: Colonial Virginia's Deserted Altars and Inattentive Anglicans," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 127, no. 4 (2019): 266–99. See also Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982); Edward L. Bond, "Anglican Theology and Devotion in James Blair's Virginia, 1685–1743: Private Piety in the Public Church," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 104 (1996): 313–40.

[47] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 172.

[48] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 160–61.

[49] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 160–61.

[50] George Carrington Mason, "The Colonial Churches of Westmoreland and King George Counties, Virginia: Part I," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 56, no. 2 (1948): 160–61.

Hill church," which would soon be a second church in Washington Parish.[51] Augustine's copy of his David Jones account listed a payment to DeButts for 200 pounds of tobacco and L2 sterling, money probably for something related to the Round Hill Church.

Wealthy landowners often had tense relationships with their church ministers, even more so when the landowners sat on the vestry and they were effectively the minister's employers. Clergy concerns over pay, access to good farmland, and general working conditions were a recurring flash point between Anglican parsons and vestrymen.[52] Augustine and the minister found themselves in conflict over the details of Robert Vaulx's estate. Augustine was named as an executor, but so was Elizabeth Debutts, who still retained parts of her late husband's estate. In 1729, Augustine took the Debuttses to court for the L10 he felt he was owed. An empaneled jury heard the arguments, read the receipt that Augustine had held since 1717, and heard from witnesses that both parties brought in to support their respective cases.[53] But something went wrong when it came time for the jury to issue a verdict. Juries were charged with coming up with their verdict upon hearing the closing arguments and were requested to stay put until their work was done. In this case, it seems the jury was either deadlocked or confused, but they chose to leave the court and head home before issuing a decision. In the next court sitting, in October, it was clear that the whole case had gone off the rails because the jury members had "unlawfully separated themselves without agreeing on their verdict."[54] The result was a tainted jury, and each of the men was fined 200 pounds of tobacco for his carelessness. The justices ordered a "venire de novo" to empanel a new jury to hear the case all over again. But they also had to deputize Benjamin Berryman to assemble that jury since the sheriff was now Augustine, and he was the case's plaintiff and therefore could not perform the jury-calling part of that job.[55] By March of 1729, the two parties had somewhat tired of the process. Augustine and DeButts had already reimbursed their witnesses the costs of their travel to court to the tune of at least 1,590 and 530 pounds of tobacco each, respectively, and were not relishing doing it all over again for the benefit of a possibly failed jury. Instead of seeing a new trial, they agreed to an extrajudicial procedure in which Nicholas Smith and William Aylett served as "gent[leman] arbitrates [sic] to make changes of an umpire," and the minister and the

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[51] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[52] Rhys Isaac, *The Transformation of Virginia, 1740–1790* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1982), 143–57; Rhys Isaac, "Religion and Authority: Problems of the Anglican Establishment in Virginia in the Era of the Great Awakening and the Parsons' Cause," *William and Mary Quarterly* 30, no. 1 (1973): 4–36. See also Jon Kukla, "New Light on the Parsons' Cause in Colonial Virginia," *Anglican and Episcopal History* 86, no. 4 (2017): 367–95.

[53] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 138–39.

[54] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 138–48.

[55] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 138–48, 155.

sheriff agreed to abide by the "final determination of the sd. Controversy."[56] At that point, the matter left the court, and the outcome was unrecorded. The men were not done with each other yet, though.

Augustine's Trip to England, 1729–1730

On May 28, 1729, Augustine performed his last duty as sheriff. He appeared in court to hand in the symbols and tools of his office—the keys to the jail.[57] From that moment on and for the next few years, William Lord was the sheriff of Westmoreland County. Augustine offered no reason at the time for his leaving office after only a few years, but certainly all his peers knew why he had stepped down. It was never made clear in some statement or document, but Augustine left for England soon after handing in the jail keys. Evidence for this trip, though, only comes from three different indirect sources. The first is his absence from court. He did not make a single court appearance from May 28, 1729, until June 24, 1730. He had been an active member of the court during his adulthood and had played multiple roles in many of the court's functions. His total absence for such a long time is at least notable if not absolute proof that he had left the colony.

The second piece of evidence comes in the form of a contract dealing with a land and estate sale in England. On June 28, 1728, Augustine was sworn in for second term as sheriff in the Westmoreland County Court. In that same session, he also received the power of attorney from Francis Ash, a Marylander from St. Mary's City.[58] Ash was involved in some local exchanges, but he also had come into an estate in Derby County in England thanks to the passing of his grandfather. The whole matter lay dormant (or at least was not mentioned in court records) for over a year until January 31, 1729—the new year being counted from March, not from January as they are now. In January, Augustine fulfilled his role as Ash's representative and sold the estate for L400 real money, a considerable sum that amounted to about 90,000 dollars in today's currency.[59] The actual sale itself is of little significance to Augustine's or the Washington family's story. What does matter, though, is the document of sale. It is a large and formal English one, written on parchment and bearing wax stamps, far more elaborately inscribed than most Virginia documents. The original is in the collection at Mount Vernon and appears to have been in the Washington family since the 1730s. It is clearly English in origin, and the other parties in the sale were

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[56] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 167.

[57] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 27.

[58] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders, 1729–1731* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 92.

[59] "1729, Jan 31 Augustine Washington, RM-683 Indenture with Wm. Soresby," Fred W. Smith National Library, Special Collections, Mount Vernon, VA.

all Englishmen living in London and Derby. At the contract's bottom edge is Augustine's signature and a wax seal—and that is precisely why the document is of interest. It shows that on the signing date of January 31, 1729, Augustine was in England.[60]

Upon his return to Virginia about six months later, his first appearance in court was on June 24, 1730. He was again with Francis Ash, this time to certify depositions signed by a Maryland couple and the "late Elizabeth Brown, of Brampton, Co. of Derby. Great Brittain, spinster," who were added to the county records.[61] Just what Augustine got from these deals is unclear, but he played an important role in their facilitation. Virginia land sales invariably rested on exchange of other lands, tobacco, or money—but in all cases, people were face-to-face for payment. It would seem, though, that in this case, Augustine either conveyed Ash's L400 in cash directly from Britain back to the colony or helped arrange some tangle of debt and credit to complete the deal. In any event, the Ash sales document is the most concrete piece of evidence pointing to Augustine's trip to England.

The third piece of evidence comes from a letter written to mine operator John England by John Wightwick, one of the Principio partners in England. On October 2, 1730, Wightwick wrote that he had a letter from Augustine dated July 10 and sent from Virginia that referenced his return to the colony. He was supposed to have met with John England there and was conveying some documents related to the enterprise, which he was supposed to give to the ironmaster. Wightwick was a London resident, and it seems likely that he and Augustine met while the Virginian partner was there. The agreement between Augustine and the Principio partners had been drafted in 1726, but the enterprise was complex, and changes and adaptations were quite possible. Augustine was to have met with England and then, in Wightwick's words, "entered immediately on that work according to our agreement."[62] It is not clear if these were new terms or the ones agreed to four years earlier. In either case, Wightwick's letter offers a glimpse into Augustine's plans and travels.

Why did Augustine go to England in 1729? Travel was dangerous and disruptive, so something significant had to outweigh those considerations. Wightwick's cryptic references to Augustine having "agreed to have exchanged articles" with England, his ironmaster, point to the Principio business in one form or another having being part of the trip. Also, given how important the project was to Augustine, it is reasonable to believe that contracts over the mines or meeting with the partners were behind the trip. Lawrence and Augustine Jr. were of school age at the time of the trip—14 and 12, respectively—and both spent time at the Appleby Grammar School, as their father had. It is also possible that

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[60] "1729, Jan 31 Augustine Washington, RM-683 Indenture with Wm. Soresby," Fred W. Smith National Library, Special Collections, Mount Vernon, VA.

[61] Amanda Gonzalez, ed., *Westmoreland County Orders*, 1729–1731 (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2013), 83.

[62] "John Wightwick to John England, October 2, 1730," The Principio Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD. See also Earl Chapin May, *Principio to Wheeling, 1715–1945* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), 41. This is an odd book that mixes transcribed documents with invented dialogue. Parts are useful; other parts are deceptive.

bringing the boys to school was part of the trip. There are few records of the school's history from that period, but what has survived references Lawrence in 1732, meaning that he could easily have started school there in 1729, and Augustine Jr. could have as well.[63] Likewise, the land deal with Francis Ash seems to have involved the conveying of a large amount of money, something one would not want to leave to chance. Also, the fact that Ash gave Augustine power of attorney fully a year before the latter left for England shows that the two men had worked out a plan well in advance of the trip.

Augustine was not the only Virginia planter to make a business-related trip to England; his grandfather Nathaniel Pope had been planning just such a trip before he passed away. But reverse travel was far from a common occurrence. In this way, the trip is a useful illustration of how Augustine differed from most of his peers. His having spent much of his childhood in England made the land less of an abstraction than it might have been for many other planters. His commitment to a mine operation also separated him from the general stock of comparable planters, who put their energies into land acquisition and tobacco growth. Both were certainly part of Augustine's economy, but few planters sold their home estates and retained a lifetime tenancy as he and Jane had done. That was an unusual act. Traveling to England, presumably to meet with his Principio partners, would also show the mines to have been of unique importance to Augustine. Finally, his moving his family away from Popes Creek entirely and settling them closer to the mine and forge reveal the mind of a man not at all content with the world of the tobacco plutocracy. Augustine was unique.

Jane Butler Washington's Death, 1729

There was another significant detail in Wightwick's letter to John England. In relating the contents of Augustine's July letter, Wightwick noted that upon Augustine's return to Virginia, "to his great grief he found his wife was dead."[64] Jane passed away on November 24, 1729, from some unstated cause.[65] It is unlikely that she died in childbirth since convention would have noted such an event. Likewise, if something of a more dramatic nature had taken her, there more than likely would have been a record of it. In all likelihood, Jane passed away from one of the all-too-familiar fevers and distempers that regularly cut

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[63] T. Pape, "Appleby Grammar School and Its Washington Pupils," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (1940): 498–501.

[64] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1948), 1, no. 42, Ftnt 153.

[65] George Washington later recounted the event but got the year wrong.

Virginians' lives short. She was 30 years old, and shocking as that is in our day, it was by no means unusual for an 18th-century Virginian to die at that age. Her passing would not have seemed that unusual to her friends, family, and neighbors.[66]

If the boys had gone to England with Augustine, that would have left Jane with the sole responsibility of managing the home and overseeing the care of her seven-year-old daughter, Jane, and perhaps other charges living in the Washington home. She may have gone to live with their relations like her Vaulx cousins living fairly close by at the head of Popes Creek. She also may have stayed at the Washington family seat. Whether she passed away at home on Popes Creek or at a relative's home, it would have fallen to those people to care for her newly orphaned daughter and make sure that Jane received a good and proper burial. From wherever she passed away, her mortal remains were interred in the Washington family plot near the site of John Washington's old home. By then, the buildings of that farmstead were long gone and the fields filled with crops.

Augustine returned to Popes Creek to find himself a widower. Wightwick's letter mentioned Augustine's "great grief" and expressed some irritation that Augustine was not acting quickly enough on his agreements with the Principio partners. A frustrated Wightwick told England that Augustine's letter offered "not one word whether he would take to his bargain with us or not."[67] Was it grief and the situation in which he found himself due to Jane's death that distracted Augustine from the mines?

There is good reason to take that sad phrase at face value. Jane and Augustine were close in years, with her being only five years his junior. Both were children of the same elite planter class in the same part of the colony. Both had been orphaned young and had spent time as wards in other people's estates. Both had had their life paths shaped by George Eskridge, and both were deeply enmeshed in networks of kinship and complicated chains of marriage. In marriage, they endured losing an infant, were raising three children, and together had built up a new estate. There is every reason to imagine that this vast well of common experience would have forged a close bond between the two and that Jane's death would have had a dramatic effect on the new widower.

Mary Ball's Early Life, 1708–1730

Regardless of the emotional impact of Jane's death, Augustine now had the responsibility of raising his daughter (and perhaps the boys if they were not yet at the Appleby School) and managing his household—both tasks that Virginians like him understood as being the responsibility of women. On top of that, the Accokeek furnace was promising to continue

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[66] Jane Butler, Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23752&tree=Tree1.

[67] Earl Chapin May, *Principio to Wheeling, 1715–1945* (New York: Harper and Brothers, 1945), 41.

to be a time-consuming project that required long stretches of time spent up the Potomac and far from Popes Creek. For the time being, Nathaniel Chapman was at the helm, while enslaved workers dug out ore. But Augustine was not able to be on hand to make sure things ran smoothly.[68] Thus, quickly locating a replacement for Jane became a priority both for the management of the family and the success of the mine operations.

Less than a year after his return to the colony, Augustine, then in his 37th year, married a 23-year-old orphan who had been living under George Eskridge's oversight. Augustine probably knew Mary well before whatever form their courtship took—and indeed, if Jane and his children had been cared for at the Eskridge home, then Mary would already have known them as well.

Mary was born in 1708 or 1709 in Lancaster County at the very southern end of the Northern Neck, probably on Corotoman Creek off the Rappahannock River.[69] Her parents were Joseph and Mary Bennett Ball. Little is known of Mary Bennett's family, but scholars have pieced together her own life's story. She seems to have been born in England and came to the Chesapeake in the 1680s as the servant of a London merchant named Abraham Wild. The terms of her service are unclear, but she spent some time in Maryland before ending up in Virginia and marrying a ship's captain named William Johnson in Middlesex County. The couple lived on land that Johnson owned, and they had two children together. But times were hard, and Johnson was sued and imprisoned for nonpayment of debts. His earthly travails came to an end around 1707, leaving his wife and children to do the best they could on 50 acres of Middlesex tobacco land.[70]

The Ball side of the family had a story that looked much more like that of the Washingtons. Joseph Ball was also probably born in England and came to Virginia when his father William made the trip amidst the Civil War, an event that brought many loyalists and loyalist-leaning English people to the colony. Father and son Ball both moved up in society much as had the Washingtons: by building their tobacco business, acquiring lands, seeking and holding public and church offices, and building merchant–client networks among their neighbors. The Ball family, though, were a quarrelsome lot and took one another to court quite a bit over land, inheritances, and control over enslaved people.

Joseph first married a woman named Elizabeth Romney, with whom he had five daughters and a son, all of whom lived to the age of 19 or older. Elizabeth died around 1703, but by that time, all of her children were either adults or very close to reaching that goal. Joseph soon remarried with Mary Bennett Johnson around 1708. For Mary, this

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[68] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life, Volume One* (New York: Charles Scribner Sons, 1948), 42.

[69] "Mary Ball," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I22506&tree=Tree1.

[70] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Kindle Loc 5441 of 8086. See also Paula Felder, "The World of Mary Washington," *Fredericksburg (Va.) Free Lance-Star*, Fredericksburg.com.

marriage was a significant move upward in social standing and into a far better-off household, which was of benefit to her and to her minor children. Marriages like this were a way that women of lower social standing could improve their lot, particularly when the woman was a bit younger than the husband and thus offered the promise of children. While marrying below a man's station might have raised eyebrows in England's elite families, these sorts of social lines were more fluid in the colonies and even more so on the Northern Neck at the dawn of the 18th century when the area was still something of a backwater.[71]

Joseph's motivation for choosing to marry Mary is somewhat more obscure. It may simply have been that Mary was at least 16 years his junior and able to run a household, even though she did not bring property into the union. Ball, although in his late 50s, also clearly was considering having more children, and a younger bride would fit that bill. When their daughter, Mary, was born, around 1708, it was into a typically blended gentry family with extended networks of relations in three counties. But if there were plans or hopes for a larger family, they were cut short. Before daughter Mary was four years old, Joseph Ball died, leaving her as the only child of his and Mary Bennett's marriage. Ball left much of his estate to his son Joseph Jr., who had been living in England but returned to the colony for a time to manage his inheritance. Management of Mary's part of the inheritance fell to Eskridge, though.[72]

In addition to land and furnishings, Ball's estate also included enslaved Africans. He had already shifted the legal ownership of some of the people he enslaved, but two adults, Dinah and Tony, were given specifically to his widow, Mary, to whom he also gave custody of a girl named Jenny until she could be handed over to Ball's underaged grandson Joseph Carnegie. Little Mary became a slave owner at this point too, thanks to Ball's giving her "negro boy Tom" and two men named Jack and Joe.[73] Because little Mary was a plantation child with slightly older half siblings but no child her own proximate age, the children of these enslaved people would have been the principal other children she knew during her early years. Likewise, the care of women like Dinah would have been Mary's earliest experience of how domestic slavery functioned. Those lessons would help shape her lifelong engagement with enslaving Africans.

Early on, her much older brother Joseph Jr. would have served as something of a surrogate father while he managed the estate. But he never had a real desire for the life of a tobacco grower and vacillated between living in the colony and working as a London

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[71] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 697; "Joseph Ball," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23988&tree=Tree1.

[72] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 697; "Joseph Ball," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I23988&tree=Tree1.

[73] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 697.

barrister (the name in English legal practice for a courtroom attorney), although he would serve as a mentor for his half sister well into her adulthood. However, life at the Ball home under the aegis of Joseph Jr. was not to last long. About a year after her second widowing, Mary had remarried, the common practice for Virginia women in her position. Her new husband was Richard Hughes, a man very much like Ball: active in local affairs, holding rank in the militia, serving on the vestry, and even having rubbed elbows with Mary's former husband in court cases and estate appraisals. Mother and daughter Mary now moved from the Ball home on Corotoman Creek to the Hughes land at Cherry Point in Northumberland County, about 20 miles to the north and close to the Potomac River. Mary's new home also was close to Eskridge's estate. This new marriage and move kept Mary and her child in the same gentry circles that had been her place ever since her second marriage. If he did not know the Ball temperament before his marriage, Hughes learned it in 1712 when Joseph Jr. took him and his new wife to court over debts. Ball eventually won L4 from the newlyweds (a trivial sum that hardly seems worth the distress of an intrafamily lawsuit), but they tried to return the litigious favor in a countersuit against him for trespass. The case was eventually dropped when Hughes died in 1713. In his will, he left his estate to his wife Mary's two older children and granted her a lifetime tenancy in the Cherry Point home and use of its 160 acres. The three-time widow also was given "a negro woman called Abba and negro girl called Winney," as well as a mixed-race man named Darby and money to buy an additional "breeding negro."[74] Little Mary, though, received nothing—an omission that raises questions. Was this simply because custom dictated that the six-year-old girl would be in the care of her mother and therefore benefit from her bequest? Perhaps it was because the girl had already had property left to her from her father and secured by Eskridge. Or perhaps it was some backhanded jab at the Ball family, with whom he was still battling at the time of his death.

Whatever the reason, the deed was done, and the daughter Mary entered a prolonged period in the near-exclusive care of her mother. For the next few years, the widow Mary worked to run Cherry Point on her own and manage the daily affairs, oversee the growth and processing of tobacco, and keep an eye on the labor force. Between the ages of 6 and 13, Mary had a front-row seat for watching a widowed woman manage a plantation. There is no way to know for sure what lessons she might have learned in those years or what kind of inner self-confidence she might have developed. What is certain is that once she herself was widowed just over two decades later, she chose to not remarry and, like her mother, ran her operations on her own.

During the period after Hughes died, the widow and her children grew ever closer and more connected to Eskridge. The elder Mary more and more came to rely on Eskridge for the types of court- and property-related matters in which the law envisioned a man at

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[74] The foregoing details of Mary's early life come from Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 697–943.

The helm. Additionally, the mother and daughter's Cherry Point farm entered Eskridge's client network, meaning that he was probably involved in shipping out their tobacco and handling their consumer goods purchases. Connections became even tighter when older sister Elizabeth married Eskridge's nephew by marriage Samuel Bonam. Also during this time, and the few years after, the younger Mary would have been learning the domestic arts in order to prepare her for a life as a wife in a gentry household. The dynamics of enslavement would never have to have been explained since these norms were being performed before her every day of her life. Reading and writing would have taken some work. Her mother was unable to write her own name, although she might have been able to read. Mary, though, was a reader, particularly of the popular devotional book *Contemplations Moral and Divine* by Matthew Hale.[75] She also would have learned the basic teachings of the Anglican church, applied her reading skills to the Book of Common Prayer, and learned the most popular melodies used in church. This Anglican bedrock would be the lifelong foundation of Mary's, and many other Virginians', spirituality. Her brother Joseph was concerned enough about the affairs of the colonial church that he involved himself in helping solve the perennial problem of the Anglican minister shortage. Women, of course, were barred from the management of the church, but Mary's reading habits show her to have taken an active interest in some theological questions. She eventually owned and wrote her name inside a copy of John Scott's *Christian Life, from Its Beginning, to Its Consummation in Glory* and James Hervey's *Meditation among the Tombs.* Notably, neither of these two books was pitched at a female audience, the hallmark of such religious writing being something of a condescending tone and repeated focus on what the church saw as women's roles. Instead, these books assumed some sophistication on the part of the reader. How and if Mary understood them is unknown, but her interest in them is telling. Both books also were quite possibly purchased for her by Joseph.[76]

Mary also would have learned the fashionable arts for gentry women, such as needlework, card and other table games, and the workings of formal high-style tea drinking, as well as the more utilitarian skills of general sewing and domestic management. Dancing and even playing music were also pastimes and gentry arts that women of Mary's station mastered. Her musical ability, such as it might have been, is lost to time, but she was well known to be fond of dancing until her old age.[77] Women of Mary's station were not expected to do the hardest kitchen work, but in the role of what her peers would have seen

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[75] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 109.

[76] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1368.

[77] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1329.

as the management of the kitchen and its enslaved staff, knowing how to read and use recipes was essential. Gentry women also mastered horse riding and were often said to be far more skilled at this than comparable women in England.

Perhaps the most important skill colonial Virginia society wanted women to master was that of childcare. Births were almost entirely in the control of women, fully medicalized male-doctor-overseen births in the modern model being something for the future. Midwifery was the common practice, and skilled practitioners garnered considerable respect in their neighborhoods. But many other women knew the basics of childbirth and were prepared for births if for no other reason than that plantations could be far apart and there was always a good chance that the midwife could not make it to the bedside in time. Managing labor and birth was far more involved and complicated than the Hollywood clichés of hot water and clean towels suggest. Bleeding, breech births, tearing, and other complications all confronted both midwife and mother, and women dying in childbirth was, if not common, certainly far from rare. Preparing for this complicated reality was an important life skill young women learned from their mothers. All these skills set young women of Mary's station on the path to a good gentry marriage in which they would be called up for a range of tasks from fashionable entertaining to helping save the life of a hemorrhaging new mother.

In the fall of 1720, the elder Mary fell ill, as did her son, little Mary's older half brother, John. The nature of the illness is unclear, but it must have been a lingering one since it left more than enough time for both mother and son to draft their wills and distribute their possessions. In December, Mary, being "sick and weake in body," added her mark of three vertical lines to her will, and by February, she had passed away, leaving her 13-year-old daughter entirely an orphan.[78] Mary's will secured some furnishings for her daughter, but most importantly, she requested that Eskridge step in as Mary's guardian to protect her inheritances and to ensure her upbringing and an eventual advantageous marriage. Cherry Point devolved to Elizabeth and her husband, Samuel, and Mary stayed on with her older sister while Eskridge played the role of protector-in-law. In 1726, when Mary was 18, Samuel Bonam, the master of Cherry Point, passed away, leaving his wife, Elizabeth, and Mary to tend to the couple's son, Samuel Jr. In keeping with the pattern, Bonam made Eskridge the boy's legal guardian. At that point, Mary might have moved into the Eskridge home at Sandy Point. Had she done that, she might well have met Augustine and some of his children there. If she had stayed at Cherry Point, managing the estate with

[78] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1059.

her sister, though, she would have had another experience with the dynamics of a female-run Virginia household. In either event, both Cherry Point and Sandy Point would have been places well known to her.[79]

In her short life, Mary had seen every significant adult in her life die, often to be replaced with another parent figure, who then died as well. She was hardly alone in these experiences. Whatever sorrow or trauma she might have felt over these losses would have been softened, at least somewhat, by the awareness that this was normal. Biographers have looked at Mary's later years through the lens of this unsettled and disrupted childhood. Some have seen her economic worries late in life as a shadow of childhood trauma. One entirely undocumented family story recounts an incident in which a friend of the family was struck by lightning right in front of Mary. The story holds that the power of the bolt melted the knife and fork the victim was holding at the fateful moment. All of this was said to have left Mary with a lifelong fear of thunderstorms.[80] Although the story, like many about Mary, is probably fictional, it does serve as a metaphorical memory of the fact that her childhood was tinged with loss, uncertainty, and upheaval.

Mary and Augustine Marry, March 6, 1731

With Augustine a 37-year-old widower with children and Mary being of marrying age and living either at or near the home of Eskridge, her property's guardian, putting the couple together would have seemed obvious—even inevitable. At that point Mary was 23, and even though many women married much earlier in life, there would have been no sense that she had become a spinster. Her union with Augustine was not an arranged marriage in the conventional sense, but it was certainly facilitated, if not stage-managed, by Eskridge. Convention dictated that gentry weddings take place at the bride's home, and the two were joined in matrimony at either Cherry Point or Eskridge's Sandy Point, with Cople Parish's Reverend Walter Jones officiating. One of Augustine's first gifts to his new wife was a copy of Hale's *Contemplations Moral and Divine*. The copy had been Jane's, but now it was Mary's, and she added her name below that of its previous owner.[81]

Once the celebrations were over, the couple would have returned to the home on Popes Creek, and Mary, now a married woman, would begin to employ all the skills she had learned in her long tutelage in her own household. The two boys might have still been home, but more likely, they were in England at the Appleby School. But nine-year-old Jane

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[79] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1778.

[80] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1136.

[81] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1659.

Would have been in the home, meaning that Mary's role as mother would have begun well before she even began to give birth to her own children. Her time in her sister's home and helping care for her eight-year-old nephew would have made such a task a very familiar responsibility.

Mary's Enslaved People

Mary's marriage coincided with her coming of age and being able to legally manage her own properties. Over the course of British colonization of Virginia, there was a gradual reduction of women's rights in court. But even though they were losing standing, gentry women like Mary were still able to maintain control of their holdings.

Mary also brought enslaved people into her new household. The numbers of these people are unclear because some people she enslaved would be working on land that she owned and would not have been part of the community at Cherry Point. It is possible that Jack and Tony came with her, and Dinah as well, since all three of these names appear in later lists of people enslaved at Popes Creek. Certainty, though, is complicated by the repetition of names and the overall lack of specificity in these matters. The records rarely record more than a name and an assumed monetary value. Once in a while, they might indicate age, skills, or trades or if a woman was the mother of one child or another. On top of that, counts of people usually only occurred at master-class deaths, when the estate was being appraised, or at formal redistributions or sales. A wedding did not offer a reason to record the names of and identifying information about enslaved people. That leaves considerable uncertainty about which enslaved people Mary added to the 20-some-odd people already enslaved at her new home.[82]

[82] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), loc 1748.

CHAPTER THIRTEEN

Mary Washington and Her First Birth, 1730–1732

The Tobacco Trade, 1730–1760

Augustine saw his Principio agreement as one of the mainstays of his personal economic empire. But he did not stop producing or selling tobacco; his acres were busy with the crop throughout his life. The dynamics of the trade had changed quite a bit from how they had been only a few decades earlier. For one thing, almost all the labor was done by enslaved Africans—a change that had profound effects in every aspect of Virginia life. Augustine still grew the same Oronoco tobacco that his neighbors had grown for decades and still followed the same seasonal patterns of seeding, planting, tending, harvesting, curing, packing, and shipping that had been worked out over a century earlier. But the marketplace in which planters sold their tobacco was very different from what it had been. Fees and inspection regimes were the norm, and these regimes only became more established as the century progressed. A planter could expect to pay a freighting fee and duties, and when it came time to ship consumer goods back to Virginia, there would be dock fees and port duties in London as well as another freighting fee. All of these were subject to hikes during times of conflict. The early 18th century also saw the development of insurance, a new idea that placed value on goods precisely when they were no longer valuable.[1] This new marketplace rested on the gamble that the fees that shippers paid for goods that *did* make it to their destinations safely would far outweigh the costs for those times when the Insurers had to pay out for lost goods. Usually they were right, and insurers such as the famous Lloyd's of London became quite prosperous firms on the gamble. In times of conflict, though, insurance rates would go up, adding to the costs planters like Augustine could expect to pay just to get their crops to market. The world had changed quite a bit from when Prescott and Washington had waded into the cold Potomac to salvage a cargo. Eighteenth-century planters could stay warm and dry and write that cargo off, turning to insurers to make up the losses.

Planters also had developed their own habits and tricks to make the system work better for them. For example, 18th-century weights and measures were often, and frustratingly, somewhat imprecise. Weighing a loaded hogshead of tobacco was not an easy

47 Ian Baucom, *Specters of the Atlantic: Finance Capital, Slavery, and the Philosophy of History* (Raleigh: Duke University Press, 2005), 80–112.

thing to do. So instead, barrels of standardized sizes were assumed to essentially all carry the same load. Shippers saw four hogsheads as making up a ton of cargo, and fees were set accordingly.[2] While fees were assessed by the barrel and not the actual weight of the tobacco, the actual sales in British markets would be based entirely on real weight. This meant that the more tobacco a planter could safely pack into a barrel, the lower their shipping fee would be for the actual weight of leaf they were shipping. Understanding these sorts of tricks was an essential part of thriving in that economy.[3]

On the British end, gone were the days of lots of small and even one-time tobacco shippers and merchants. As the tobacco habit settled in and became a staple of British life, the market settled down too. Several large trading firms came to dominate the trade, and the more well funded these companies were, the more able they were to push out competitors and shape the terms of the market to their liking. Firms like these were on the rise in the second half of the 17th century, when men like John Jefferyes and Thomas Colclough were powerful merchant forces on the Potomac.[4] But in many ways, these men were, much like Nathaniel Pope, working through local and family connections; Colclough even sent kinsmen to reside in Virginia. The great firms of the 18th century, on the other hand—epitomized by Robert Cary and Company, or Capel and Osgood Hanbury—had markedly greater reach and controlled larger portions of the trade than their predecessors did. These firms sat at the top of a commercial network that gave them wealth and influence across the empire. These fewer but more secure and powerful firms were able to massage the rules of trade to their benefit, actions that gradually irritated planters, who increasingly found themselves in ever-more debt to merchants whose security made them ever more distant. A language of friendship hung over these relationships, merchants and planters both preferring to describe business associates as "friends" and rely on all that the word meant when conducting commerce.[5] Some of this was simply 18th-century convention, but at the same time, the ideals of friendship were part of how the idealized version of the system operated. In John Washington's day, the relationships were in many cases actual friendships. But as new Virginia-born planters, with little real experience of England, engaged in trade with distant and often haughty overseas partners, the language of friendship rang ever hollower.

The system these firms controlled has come to be called the "consignment system." This was a formalized version of the way planters had been selling their tobacco since the end of the Virginia Company period. The model was the same, but the firms were

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[2] Bruce A. Ragsdale, "George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 2 (April 1989): 141.

[3] Bruce A. Ragsdale, "George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 2 (April 1989): 139.

[4] John C. Coombs, "The Phases of Conversion: A New Chronology for the Rise of Slavery in Early Virginia," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 3 (July 2011): 345.

[5] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 84–123.

larger, and more planters traded though a smaller number of them than had been the case a century before. The system was also supercharged by the expansion of English manufactured goods that had been reshaping British commerce. More demand had produced more goods, and more goods had produced more demand—and as better-off Virginians wanted more English goods, the big merchant firms grew in importance.[6]

Virtually all elite planters adhered to the same pattern.[7] A planter would ship his tobacco to a merchant in Britain—London remaining the center of the trade—and the merchant would then sell that tobacco in British or European markets. The planter would in return receive credit (or often debt before the tobacco was shipped), which could be used to buy the various consumer goods that the planter, his family, and his local clients wanted. These then would be shipped off to Virginia. The advantages of the consignment system for planters was that it gave them an agent in England who could seek out exactly the sorts of goods the planter might want. For the wealthy, who often made specific requests for fashionable cloth, ceramics, table settings, decorations, furniture, carriages, and so on, having a responsive, fashion-conscious, and well-connected agent—commonly called a "friend"—was essential.[8] Thus firms that could be relied upon to ship desirable goods went up in the esteem of elite planters. The downside of the system was that once the tobacco was shipped, the planter lost any ability to advocate for his own crop and make sure that it was in the best position to fetch the highest prices. Instead, all one could do was trust, wait, and hope for a letter from England sharing the most welcome news that the crop had sold well at market. We have no records about Augustine's use of these markets, but his son George left a large correspondence with English firms. He was continually frustrated by his own crops being valued at lower rates than those of his neighbors and was driven almost to distraction by the honeyed, even condescending, tones of his high-powered agents when they feigned sorrow over the low price his tobacco had received and hoped most fervently for a more favorable outcome from the next shipment.[9] The younger Washington eventually pulled his land out of the tobacco market and switched to wheat in a choice that vastly increased the value of his acres. But for his father and most other elite planters, the consignment system, with all its frustrations, was the best way to sell their tobacco and get the high-style goods they most desired.

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[6] Cary Carson, "The Consumer Revolution in Colonial British America: Why Demand?" in *Of Consuming Interests: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 483–697.

[7] Warren Billings, John Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO 1986), 200.

[8] T. H. Breen, *Tobacco Culture: The Mentality of the Great Tidewater Planters on the Eve of Revolution* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985), 11; Albert H. Tilson, "Friendship and Commerce: The Conflict and Coexistence of Values on Virginia's Northern Neck in the Revolutionary Era" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 111, no. 3 (2003): 221–62.

[9] Bruce A. Ragsdale, "George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 2 (April 1989): 141.

In the early 18th century, a second means of marketing tobacco became increasingly an option. This has come to be called "direct sale," and it inverted the model of consignment selling. Scots, particularly those coming from merchant firms in Glasgow, became key players in the direct sale market. Scots had long been active in the trade, but the 1707 Act of Union made Scotland part of a new United Kingdom and thus put Scots merchants on the good side of the Navigation Acts that had barred foreign participation in high-value trades like tobacco. London, Bristol, and Whitehaven had all benefited from being English ports within a nationally closed trade. But with the Act of Union, Glasgow, on Scotland 's west coast, quickly emerged as a new player in the tobacco trade. With full access granted them, Glasgow merchant firms found new ways to enter a marketplace that was heavily controlled by London, Bristol, and Whitehaven firms.[10] Their entry was not peaceful. Scotland, like England, had its own trade boards governing merchant activity. The Scots board, though, boosted Scotland's European markets by offering better rates and lower duties than English ports and very quickly drew business their way. For a time, English merchants were selling their tobacco north to Scots firms because that was where the European buyers were.[11] By 1711, fully 89 percent of tobacco was being shipped to Glasgow, and since it was entering Scots ports and not English ones, this meant a huge drop in the regular flow of tax revenues English treasury officials very much relied upon. Only an act of Parliament settled this internal trade war.[12]

Scots merchants were also disruptive on the Virginia side of the Atlantic. Their entrance into the trade meant that rather than shipping tobacco to a merchant firm who would send goods shipped back in exchange, merchants first shipped goods to Virginia and then sold those directly to planters in Virginia in exchange for their tobacco. Merchant firms set up stores in ports across the colony, where they could stock up the goods that planters wanted and then exchange them for tobacco. This allowed agents or factors to have a good look at the tobacco *before* it crossed the Atlantic and pick and choose what they liked best. As employees of their various firms, these agents were able to develop an on-the-ground understanding of tobacco production while always working for the financial good of their companies. There were advantages in direct sale for planters as well, the principal one being that they could haggle for themselves over the price of their crop. They might not always get the price they wanted or felt they deserved, but at least they had some control over the process. The downside was that direct sale planters were somewhat dependent on the goods the merchants brought from England. A smart seller

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[10] Jacob M. Price, "Glasgow, the Tobacco Trade, and the Scottish Customs, 1707–1730: Some Commercial, Administrative and Political Implications of the Union," *The Scottish Historical Review* 63, no. 75 (1984): 1–36.

[11] Jacob M. Price, "Glasgow, the Tobacco Trade, and the Scottish Customs, 1707–1730: Some Commercial, Administrative and Political Implications of the Union," *The Scottish Historical Review* 63, no. 75 (1984): 7.

[12] Jacob M. Price, "Glasgow, the Tobacco Trade, and the Scottish Customs, 1707–1730: Some Commercial, Administrative and Political Implications of the Union," *The Scottish Historical Review* 63, no. 75 (1984): 9.

would pay attention to what his buyers wanted most. But if a planter wanted something rather more bespoke, then buying the same goods as the neighboring hoi polloi might have felt like a bad option.[13]

We have no records to reveal how Augustine sold his tobacco. His peers almost universally opted for consignment selling, though, and that alone suggests that he would have as well. Because his family was three generations in Virginia, they already had a network of consignment partners in Britain. Likewise, Augustine's mine activities show the extent to which he was actively engaged with English partners in other arenas of commerce. It stands to reason that all of this points to Augustine having been a consignment system tobacco seller, even though there were several direct sale merchants at work on the Northern Neck.

Mary's First Child, February 11, 1732 (February 22, 1732)

Mary gave birth to her first child on February 11, 1732. In September of 1752, the entire British Empire made the change from the Julian calendar to the more commonly used Gregorian calendar. The result was that all Britons lost 11 days of their calendar lives. For some, this loss was too much to bear, leading to riots led by the battle cry of "Give us our eleven days!"[14] But the change quickly settled in and just became part of life. People who lived through it, though, did not always completely conform. Since George was born before the calendar change, his life was one that lost 11 days. After 1752, his new calendar birthday would be the one we know now, February 22. But he himself always considered his birthday to still be February 11.

Despite this event's significance for the nation, for the world, and of course for the park, there are no records that recount any details of the moment. There is an entry in the large family Bible now in the possession of George Washington's Mount Vernon, which reads, "George Washington son of Augustine & Mary his wife was born ye 1^{1t}h day of February 1731/2 about 10 in the morning & was baptized the 3th of April following Mr Beverley Whiting Cap't Christopher Brooks Godfather Mrs Mildred Gregory Godmother."[15]

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[13] Bruce A. Ragsdale, "George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 2 (April 1989): 156–57; Lorena S. Walsh, *Motives of Honor, Pleasure, and Profit: Plantation Management in the Colonial Chesapeake, 1607–1763* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2010), 302.

[14] Robert Poole, "'Give Us Our Eleven Days!': Calendar Reform in Eighteenth-Century England," *Past & Present* 149 (1995): 95–139.

[15] Washington Family Bible, Fred W. Smith National Library for the Study of George Washington, Mount Vernon, VA. There is a transcription in J. Paul Hudson, *George Washington Birthplace National Monument* (Washington, DC: National Park Service, 1956): 16. Note the recording of the year reflects a custom of writing dates in a fashion that accounted for both the current year and the one the calendar was heading into.

Despite the general silence, we do know some basic facts—and even though they may seem obvious, they are significant in their 18th-century context. The main fact is that both mother and baby survived the ordeal in good health. This was by no means guaranteed in 1732. Women going into labor knew that they were dicing with their lives. Tearing, internal hemorrhaging, hypertension, and a host of other complications all frequently led to mothers dying in childbirth. Likewise, breech births, umbilical cord strangulation, and failure to breathe were only some of the risks confronting a newborn infant—and all of that preceded the first years of life, in which even the slightest fever (let alone serious contagions like measles or chicken pox) could cut short a young life. The entire affair of childbirth was fraught with tension and anxiety, matched only by the joy and relief once the baby was born and happily nursing.

Early Modern Understandings of Conception and Pregnancy

Early modern English people understood pregnancy in very different terms from how we now see it. In all likelihood, Mary and Augustine would have understood the process that led to Mary's pregnancy in some version of the framework outlined by the second-century CE physician Galen of Pergamon, an ancient Greek authority frequently cited by 17th- and 18th-century physicians and medical writers. The "Galenic framework" held that blood was a fungible fluid that could change into other substances as it passed through different bodily organs. Just as they saw the kidneys as turning blood to urine, the testicles were understood as changing blood into semen, itself a substance that contained within it all that was necessary for the creation of a new life. This "seed" had to be "planted" in a "fertile" womb, and in this set of agrarian metaphors, the woman was principally a receptacle for the man's "seed."[16] Jane Sharp, the author of the very influential *Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672) summed up the mother's role this way: "The Mothers blood is another principle of Children to be made; but the blood hath no active quality in this great work, but the seed works upon it."[17] The agricultural metaphors of seed and fertility self-consciously pervaded all contemporary discussions of procreation. Sharp, for example, described the male penis as being "the Plow wherewith the ground is tilled, and made fit for production of Fruit."[18] A woman's main contribution to the process

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[16] Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1900), 40.

[17] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 83, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001/1, no. 5?rgn=div1;view=fulltext. See also Catherine Morphis, "Swaddling England: How Jane Sharp's *Midwives Book* Shaped the Body of Early Modern Reproductive Tradition," *Early Modern Studies Journal* 6 (2014): 166–94.

[18] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered"* (1672), 18.

in this model was in providing the womb and the needed "heat" that would ensure the growth of the seed. The marker of this "heat" was the female orgasm, something English people of this period understood as being essential for successful conception.[19] This agricultural model of male-centric conception was reiterated in 1724 by John Maubray in his *The Female Physician*. Maubray wrote that "since as the seed of plants requires the matrix of the earth, to nourish it well, and safely defend it; so doth that seminal virtue of men, the womb, in this act of conception."[20] Some theorists posited that both partners produced seed and that a competition of sorts took place in the womb to see whether the father's or the mother's would be implanted.

Timing was also essential, and both partners had to be in the proper state of mind and body. Maubray addressed these issues, averring that "both parties ought not to encounter with full stomachs, bellies, or bladders," nor should they attempt to conceive a child when "both or either, are weary, fatigu'd, depriv'd of sleep, angry, troubled in mind, or in any other real respect out of order."[21] If these problems did not lead to failure to conceive, they could create far more enduring trouble. Both early modern medical science and today's see a child's physical, and some temperamental, attributes as being determined by the parents' genetics. But 18th-century English people got there via an entirely different route. When a child was conceived while one or both parents was in ill health or ill temper, "all the affections or disturbances of their minds, virtually devolve upon the embryo," because when parents conceived while in the wrong humor, "it infallibly intails some respective evil upon the innocent production." On the other hand, the opposite was true as well. Maubray taught that conception was "to be undertaken with a serene and contented mind, a cheerful and indisturbed heart, so it ought to be perform'd with moderation and decency: not in any brutal manner or posture; but according to the rational law and proper instinct of nature."[22] All of this meant that for 18th-century Virginians, a child's mood and behavior potentially revealed the most intimate details about the child's parents' relationship—even down to their health, state of mind, and practice at the time of conception.

There is no reason to suspect that either Mary or Augustine had read Maubray, Sharp, or any other medical writer of the time. But this writing nevertheless reflected mainstream English thinking of the day about conception and birth. Furthermore, writers like Maubray and, particularly, Sharp informed how physicians—and some midwives—in Virginia practiced their trade. That meant that one did not need to read texts like this for

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[19] Thomas Lacquer, *Making Sex: Body and Gender from the Greeks to Freud* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1992), 38, 43–52; Kathleen Brown, "'Changed…into the Fashion of Man': The Politics of Sexual Difference in a Seventeenth-Century Anglo-American Settlement," *Journal of the History of Sexuality* 6, no. 2 (October 1995): 172–76.

[20] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 4.

[21] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 54.

[22] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 54.

their contents to have real and lasting effects on one's body. For the Washingtons, in all likelihood, the fact that George was a boy would have meant that his sex was determined at conception by one of a few possible ways. One was that "the seed had flow into the right side of the womb," whereas, had it moved to the left at conception, the resulting child would be a girl.[23] Maubray preferred the competing seeds model, writing that "both seeds are each of them naturally endued [*sic*] with the faculty of generating its like: I mean, the man's to produce a male; and the woman's, a female."[24] In other words, in Maubray's model, Augustine's seed had won the battle of the womb, and thus a boy was created. Heat could also play a role in determining the sex of the fetus. Sharp taught that "the cause why the child is a boy or a girl is the heat of the seed, if the mans seed prevail in mixing above the womans it will be a boy, else a girl."[25]

Family likenesses were explained similarly. Since both partners contributed liquid at the time of conception, the current thinking was that the one who contributed more determined the looks of the resulting child. As Maubray wrote, "If the Woman has contributed most seminal matter, it may be reasonably concluded, that the child will favor the mother most. If the man predominantly, the father." A third possibility was that "if both equally, it will resemble both."[26]

Although theorists differed, the Washingtons, like most contemporary English people, would have understood the sex of their children and many of their character traits to have been a direct result of the circumstances surrounding their conception. Their understanding of conception also meant that their friends, family, and neighbors imagined they knew quite a bit about the couple's intimacy simply by observing the resulting child.

Midwifery

Childbirth in 18th-century Virginia was powerfully shaped by class and British gender roles. Wealthier women had the aid of servants and slaves as they entered their travails, and their families could call for a highly skilled midwife or a (male) doctor should complications arise, although in this period, childbirth was almost entirely managed by women. Since almost all Virginia women were living on farms, most would have only those on hand to help them. Family and perhaps close neighbors would be expected to aid in the birth, and

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[23] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 55. See also Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990), particularly 11–12, 46, 80, 82–83, 133, 221.

[24] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 56.

[25] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 120, https://quod.lib.umich.edu/e/eebo2/A93039.0001.001/1, no. 5?rgn=div1;view=fulltext.

[26] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 55.

if labor endured, women might come to the bedside from farther way.[27] Poorer women, of course, would not have had the aid of slaves and servants. Likewise, enslaved Africans and servant white women would have had to rely primarily on the aid of their community members. In this, at least, the enslaved had some advantage since their births were not criminalized as were those of white servants.[28]

The most important role in childbirth was that of the midwife. It would not be until well into the 19th century that male doctors would wrest control over births away from female hands and create the style of medicalized and hospitalized births that dominate today's American maternity realm. But by the early 18th-century, theorists were already making a case for male "extraordinary midwives" to work with or even supervise the women. These were new ideas at the time of George's birth, and while there might have been "extraordinary midwives" in London, there were almost certainly none in Virginia. Childbirth in the colony remained, as it had so long been, a female-dominated arena. It was also entirely a domestic affair, usually (perhaps ideally) occurring in the same bed where the pregnant woman slept each night.[29]

Although midwives were key players in births, the term itself is tricky. Midwifery at the time of George's birth is best understood as a skill set held with varying degrees of ability and experience by most adult women rather than being an exclusive job held by a few women. Most Virginia women were familiar with at least the rudiments of midwifery, having learned them—just as Mary would have—within their parents' or guardians' households. Therefore, although there were locally preferred midwives, more often serving as a midwife was a role any number of women could perform with varying degrees of skill when called upon. Just who aided a woman at her bedside reflected her neighbors', her servants' and enslaved women's, and her kinswomen's skills. If the labor lasted long enough, the closest, most skilled women was sent for.

Nevertheless, there certainly were women whose talents and knowledge in this area made them prized and sought-out members of the community. Ideally, a midwife should have been "a woman of good middle age, of solid parts, of full experience, of a healthy, strong, and vigorous body with clever small hands."[30] She should have been patient and "pleasant; soft, meek, and mild in her temper, in order to encourage and comfort the

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[27] A. Pollock, "Childbearing and Female Bonding in Early Modern England," *Social History* 22, no. 3 (1997): 288. See also Martha Saxton, *Being Good: Women's Moral Values in Early America* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2003), 66–68, 146.

[28] For a review of early modern midwifery, see Samuel S. Thomas, "Early Modern Midwifery: Splitting the Profession, Connecting the History," *Journal of Social History* 43, no. 1 (2009): 115–38.

[29] The best-known study of an 18th-century midwife is Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *A Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990). For payment for services, see Linda Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 132–33.

[30] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 173.

labouring women."[31] At the same time, she should not be a "weak, infirm, or diseased person."[32] She should not herself be pregnant while performing her duties, and she should not be "lame or maim'd" or have "stiff or crooked fingers, hands, or arms," nor should she be "too fat" and possessed of "thick or fleshy hands, arms, or large-bon'd wrists."[33] She must not be "ignorant, stupid, indolent, or a dull person," nor should she be "a self-indulger, slothful," lazy, "inconsiderate, negligent or forgetful; not proud, passionate, or obstinate; neither peevish, morose, or surly; not fearful, doubtful, or wavering-minded neither ought she to be a tipler or drunkard, nor a tattler or vagabond, not a covetous, or mercenary person."[34] All of this was, in effect, an outline of what English people considered the ideal traits for a woman and wife. But for a woman to be known in her community as a skilled midwife in this model was for her to hold a particular place of standing. Because being known as a good midwife was such a strong endorsement of a woman's character, courts turned to midwives when they deemed their expertise was needed. This enabled midwives to serve as sort of semiofficial de facto representatives of women's concerns generally within a society that had offered women very few avenues to influence and social prestige.[35]

The most skilled and knowledgeable practitioners became experts in every dimension of women's medical care. Maubray provided a long list of the many areas of a midwife's expertise. She would have to possess a detailed knowledge of the "external and internal parts of generation" as well as a full mastery of female anatomy.[36] She would have to be able to distinguish between real and fake labor and, following the medical assumptions of the day, be able to detect "spurious or bastard labour-pains."[37] She needed to know how to handle umbilical cords and placentas, and know the methods for "turning an ill-situated infant" in utero.[38] She would have been adept at physical skills such as suturing closed tears or using birthing tongs in difficult cases, as well as the use of herbs and tonics for a host of ailments and complications. Midwives would know how to use surgeon's

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[31] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 174.

[32] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 172.

[33] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 172.

[34] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 173.

[35] Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 97–98.

[36] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 175; Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 46–47.

[37] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 175.

[38] John Maubray, *The Female Physician* (London: James Holland, 1724), 175.

tools to break apart a dead or aborting fetus while it was still in utero and remove it bit by bit while causing no injury to the mother—an occurrence that very much worried the writers of midwifery manuals.[39]

Midwives were also skilled in contraception through herbal methods of early forms of cervical diaphragms. Likewise, midwives performed abortions when called upon—a practice that was legal if performed before "quickening" (first movement of the fetus). Sharp commended a concoction that could induce labor and perhaps also act as an abortifacient: "Any of these herbs half a dram in powder drunk in white-wine will do much, viz of Bettony, or Sage, or Penny-Royal, Fetherfew or Centory, Ivy-berries and leaves, or drink a strong decoction of Master-wort, or of Hysop in hot water."[40] She also noted that labor could be eased and hastened if the midwife were to "annoint the passage with Ducks grease, or Oyle of Lillies, or sweet Almonds, or such things as may smooth the passage and ease womans labour."[41] Once the child was born, the midwife still had work to do. The first task was "the cutting of the navel string," which had to be done quickly, "for it keeps the blood and spirits in, after the Child is born," and done well, for "a Midwives skill is seen much if she can perform this rightly."[42] There was some disagreement about just where to cut the umbilical cord, but about four inches from the navel seems to have been common practice. The cord was understood as a special object and was the subject of numerous folk beliefs. Letting the cord fall on the ground, for example, would lead to bed-wetting, while keeping a bit of it or fashioning a ring from a length of umbilical cord could ward off "convulsion fits" and protect the wearer from "devils and witch-crafts."[43]

Tending to the mother was next. While the mother recovered, the midwife might "swathe the woman with a Napkin about nine inches broad, but annoint her belly with Oyl of St. Johns wort, and then raise up the womb with a linnen cloth many times

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[39] Laurel Thatcher Ulrich, *The Midwife's Tale: The Life of Martha Ballard Based on Her Diary, 1785–1812* (New York: Knopf, 1990), 251–52.

[40] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (London: Simon Miller, 1672), 198. See also Nicholas Culpeper, *A Directory for Midwives: Or, A Guide for Women in their Conception, Bearing, and Suckling Their Children* (London, 1762); Cornelia Hughes Dayton, "Taking the Trade: Abortion and Gender Relations in an Eighteenth-Century New England Village," *William and Mary Quarterly*, 3rd ser., 48 (1991): 19–49; Susan E. Klepp, "Lost, Hidden, Obstructed, and Repressed: Contraceptive and Abortive Technology in the Early Delaware Valley," in *Early American Technology: Making and Doing Things from the Colonial Era to 1850*, Judith A. McGaw, ed. (Chapel Hill, 1994), 68–113; Laura T. Keenan, "Reconstructing Rachel: A Case of Infanticide in the Eighteenth-Century Mid-Atlantic and the Vagaries of Historical Research," *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 130, no. 4 (2006): 361–85.

[41] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 204.

[42] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 212.

[43] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 216.

folded, cover her flanks, with a little pillow about a quarter of a Yard long, then swathe her, beginning a little aabove the hanches, rather higher than lower, winding it even; lay warm cloths to her breasts."[44]

The exhausted mother would need to eat and drink to recover her strength, but even this was for a time overseen by the midwife, and there were prescriptions for what was best. Sharp recommended light foods of "easie digestion," such as "chickens, or pullets" for a time, and outlined a detailed restorative diet. The woman might drink

> small wines with a little Saffron, Mace and Cloves infused, equal parts, all tied in a piece of linnen, and let them lie in the wine so close stopt, she may drink a small draught of it at dinner and supper for the whole month, and besides her ordinary food she may if she will take nourishing broths and Aleberries; with bread, butter, and Sugar. Let her drink her Beer or Ale with a tost, she may drink a decoction of Liquorish, Raisins of the Sun and a little Cinnamon: if the child be a boy she must lye in thirty dayes, if a girl forty daies, and remember that it is the time of her purification that her husband must abstain from her.

The newborn would also be swaddled and would begin nursing immediately. Although the mother would begin the process—one that could last up to two years—it was common in elite homes like the Washingtons' to have a wet nurse perform the role. In Virginia, these were frequently enslaved women.

Mary's First Childbirth

These are the sorts of ideas and practices that would have attended George's birth at the family home on Popes Creek. The birth was, in all important respects, unremarkable—in that no one remarked upon it. This was fortunate for all involved because it showed that the baby was born easily and the mother was fine.

Once Mary went into labor, friends and family would have gathered to be at the bedside. It is easy to imagine her sister Elizabeth coming over, as might have Augustine's sister Mildred and perhaps his sister-in-law Catherine as well. These women would have represented a considerable amount of domestic experience, but it would have made sense for a gentry family like the Washingtons to have sought out a midwife of good repute unless one of the sisters fit that bill. The atmosphere would have been a mix of excitement and anxiety, perhaps not all that different from many births today. Natal mortality, though, was no abstraction for 18th-century Virginians. On average, white colonial English women bore eight children, but only four of them survived.[45] These sorts of worries would have been very real to the Washingtons in particular. Mary had been

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[44] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 210.

[45] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 1819 of 8056.

there when her sister Elizabeth had lost an infant, and Augustine's mother herself had died in childbirth. These sad memories would have been lurking in the minds of the family members. But women understood bearing children as their specific duty, and that sense of obligation would have led to a certain resignation. Devotional writing for women by authors such as Mary's favored Mathew Hale and John Scott also offered lessons and solace designed to calm a nervous Anglican soul as she faced the travails and perils of childbirth. Most of that advice was to prepare for death and to accept one's fate as part of God's will. Christian theologians of all stripes also concurred that the pain and suffering of childbirth was legitimate divine punishment visited on women for the sin of Eve in the Garden of Eden. It is worth considering that the advice of these male clergymen was perhaps not the most soothing salve for a young woman feeling her first labor pains.

Keeping Mary warm, clean, and fed as well as possible would have been a priority. Bathing was a rarity for 18th-century Virginians. Instead, cleanliness was maintained through the use of coarse linen, both as rags and as night garments that could rub off dirt and dead skin while the wearer slept.[46] Childbirth complicated this routine, and the attendant enslaved women or family members would have been busy cleaning the expectant mother and then cleaning linens for reuse. The enslaved women of the household would have been kept busy feeding not just the expectant mother but also the visiting family and midwife. A Virginia folk belief held that not meeting an expectant woman's specific food desires had potentially deleterious effects for the child.[47] The good news for the cooks was that they would have already been familiar with Mary's food preferences and would have been ready to meet them. Because this labor took place in winter, it meant that Mary almost certainly would have been in a bed in one of the home's fireplace-heated rooms. As labor progressed, the midwife or the woman in that role would have taken more direct control over the action around Mary, directing people here or there or specifying material needs or help. The midwife also would have assisted Mary into the position that would aid in labor. Sharp wrote, "All women do not keep the same posture in their delivery; some lye in their beds, being very weak, some sit in a stool or chair, or rest upon the side of the bed, held by other women that come to the Labor."[48]

Some women had access to a "mydwyves chaire," sometimes called a "Dutch chair," specifically designed to support a laboring woman.[49] Sharp advised that as the moment arrived, the midwife should "annoint her hands with Oyl of lilies and the Womans

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[46] Kathleen Brown, *Foul Bodies: Cleanliness in Early America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2011), 26–33.

[47] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), Loc 1830 of 8056.

59 Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 199.

59 Linda A. Pollock, "Childbearing and Female Bonding in Early Modern England," *Social History* 22, no. 3 (1997): 289.

Secrets, or with oyl of almonds" so that she could more easily aid the child in birth.[50] "Ducks grease" was also an option and one perhaps more readily on hand in Virginia.[51] Sharp portrayed a vivid scene of the crucial last moments of labor that could serve as a stand-in for almost any early modern English birth:

> Particular helps to delivery, are to lay the woman first all along on her back, her head a little raised with a Pillow, and a pillow under her back; and another pillow larger than the other to raise her buttocks and rump; lay her thighs and knees wide open asunder, her legs must be bowed backwards toward her buttocks and drawn upwards, her heels and soles of her feet must be fixed against a board to that purpose laid cross her bed. Some woman must have a swathe-band above a foot board four double, this must be put under her Reins, and two women standing on each side of her must hold it up straight, and these two persons must lift up the swathe-band equally, just when her throws come, or else they may do her hurt, and two more of the standers by must lay hold on the upper part of her shoulders, that she may with more ease force the child forth. The woman must hold her breath in and strive to be delivered, and the Midwife must stroke down the birth from above the Navel easily with her hand, for that will, as I said before, make the Infant move downwards.[52]

At about 10:00 a.m. on Monday, February 11 (February 22 on the new calendar), Mary became the mother of a healthy baby boy. The midwife and attendants would have carefully cut the umbilical cord and examined the afterbirth for signs of potential illness. The child would have immediately had its nose and mouth cleared to make sure he could breathe with ease; if breath was slow in coming, a smack or pinch might hasten the process. The baby would then be quickly cleaned, swaddled, and set to nursing. If the mother was too weak or exhausted to nurse, then the child would begin nursing with an enslaved member of the household who had the mixed fortune to have her own pregnancy cycle coincide with that of her enslaver's. Having an enslaved nursemaid was a very common experience for the children of elite households. In the British Atlantic world more broadly, breastfeeding was of constant concern. Early modern English people understood breast milk as having something akin to medical properties—so much so that it was often employed in cures for adults as well as children.[53] Male medical writers and theologians were often quite critical of women who allowed other women to nurse their children because they saw this as both shirking their sex-specific obligation and also perhaps risking

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[50] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 199.

[51] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 199.

[52] Jane Sharp, *The Midwives Book, or The Whole Art of Midwifery Discovered* (1672), 204–5.

[53] Paula A. Treckel, "Breastfeeding and Maternal Sexuality in Colonial America," *The Journal of Interdisciplinary History* 20, no. 1 (1989): 25–51; Marylynn Salmon, "The Cultural Significance of Breastfeeding and Infant Care in Early Modern England and America," *Journal of Social History* 28, no. 2 (1994): 247.

the health of babies.[54] Even writers like Sharp were concerned that women serving as wet nurses were of the right character and form. She wrote that "a Nurse ought to be of a good Complexion and Constitution" and warned against "a woman that is crooked, or squint-eyed, nor with a mishapen Nose, or body, or with black ill-favoured Teeth, or with stinking breath, or with any notable depravation; for these are signs of ill manners that the child will partake of by sucking such ill qualified milk as such people yield."[55] Some English observers expressed some reservations about the advisability of black nursemaids for white children, particularly those from gentry families. But the constant familiarity and intimacy with enslaved people left white Virginians feeling at ease with the practice. There is no evidence about George's nursing habits. However, in the 1830s, there was an enslaved woman named Joyce Heth who had been sold into show business. Her most famous owner/impresario was P. T. Barnum. What made Heth an attraction was the claim that she was the still-living 166-year-old nursemaid of George Washington. The story was, of course, a fabrication, but it does reveal something of the ways that the nation was reflecting on Washington's infancy around the time of the centennial anniversary of his birth.[56]

George's Baptism, April 5, 1732

For the first few weeks after George's birth, Mary would have been in a sort of physical and spiritual seclusion. This was, of course, a luxury available only to wealthy women, but during that time, she would mostly have stayed in bed and been tended to by her kin and the women the family had enslaved. After six weeks, when what was seen as an initial period of danger had passed, the family would have attended church for a special ceremony to thank God for the successful birth. This "churching" ceremony was meant to be practiced in church, but enough Virginians were asking to do it at home that the colonial ministers found these home visits an undue burden.[57] Augustine and Mary owned a copy of Thomas Comber's *Short Discourses upon the Whole Common Prayer*.[58] Comber was an Anglican theologian who had been punished by King James for his disregard for Catholicism. We do not even know how much of his family's story Augustine actually

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[54] Londa Schiebinger, *Nature's Body: Gender in the Making of Modern Science* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1993), 41–74.

[55] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 363.

[56] Benjamin Reiss, *The Showman and the Slave: Race; Death, and Memory in Barnum's America* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001); James W. Cook, *The Arts of Deception: Playing with Fraud in the Age of Barnum* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2001).

[57] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 1863 of 8056.

[58] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 1875 of 8056.

knew, let alone if he saw in Comber some resemblance to the way his own great-grandfather had been punished more than a century earlier for his support of the Anglican rite. For whatever reason, though, Comber's book was one that helped shape how religion was understood and practiced in the Washington home. The theologian strongly disapproved of churching being done at home, arguing that the public dimension was a defining part of the ritual; therefore, "to do this in a private house is absurd, and contrary to the main end of the office."[59] Comber included his own annotated version of the Psalms, which Anglican mothers recited during the churching ceremony. Psalm 116 expresses delight, relief, and gratitude to God for having been delivered from mortal peril, while Psalm 127 addresses dedication to and reliance on God. Comber remade these to highlight the themes as they related to childbirth. For example, he wrote the 127 Psalm with the King James Version in brackets as follows:

> Ver. 1. Children are the support of families, but [*except the Lord*] please by giving children, and preserving them [*to build*] up [*a house*] or family, [*their labour*] is but [*lost*] who go about to secure succession in it. Ver. 2. If they should multiply into a city, [*except*] the [*Lord keep*] that [*city*] from its enemies, [*the watchman wakes in vain*] for he cannot forsee or prevent the ruin of it.[60]

During Mary's churching, she would have recited the King James versions of these two psalms, but for her own spiritual nourishment, she would have referred to her and Augustine's copy of Comber. Comber's framing of these psalms would probably have been in her mind.

The Anglican Church practiced, and still practices, infant baptism, and that ceremony would have been the next public event in Mary's motherhood and the first in George's life. The Book of Common Prayer outlined both the text and rituals for this ceremony. The ideal was for the ceremony to be public, held in church but not on a Sunday or a holiday. The baptism would take place in the morning following "the last lesson at morning prayer" or in the evening "after the last lesson of evening prayer."[61] In all likelihood, George would have been baptized at the Mattox Church, the one so long associated with his family. The altar cloth his grandfather had donated had been stolen and made into trousers, but the Ten Commandments and royal crest his great-grandfather had bequeathed might still have been on the wall overshadowing the small party that joined Reverend Roderick McCollough at the baptismal font. The convention for boys was that there be two godfathers and one godmother—the church held that one godfather was enough for girls. George's aunt—Augustine's sister Mildred Gregory—stepped forward as

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[59] Thomas Comber, *Short Discourses upon the Whole Common Prayer* (London: Robert Clavell, 1702), 488. See also Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019), 1875 of 8056.

[60] Comber, *Short Discourses upon the Whole Common Prayer*, 451.

[61] Book of Common Prayer, http: //justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1662/baptism.pdf.

his godmother, and the roles of godfather were filled by Beverley Whiting and Captain Christopher Brooks. Whiting was from Gloucester County and later served for a time in the House of Burgesses. He was about 15 years younger than Augustine, but his sister Catherine had married Augustine's older brother John, and that couple had settled in the Whitings' native Gloucester. Whiting was therefore Augustine's sister-in-law's brother, a role for which there is no simple term other than *kinsman*. There is very little surviving in the documentary record to link Augustine and the Whitings, but there is an interesting letter to George dated 1789 in which Elizabeth Whiting wrote to him about her financial woes. Elizabeth was the wife of Beverley Whiting's son Peter. In her letter, she recognized that the two clans had lost regular contact, writing that "you will no doubt be surpriz'd to receive a letter from one entirely unknown to you," but her outreach at least hints at some family memory linking the Washingtons and the Whitings.[62]

Captain Christopher Brooks, the other godfather, is a bit more mysterious. He was most likely the same "Captain Brooks" to whom Principio partner John Wightwick referred in his 1730 letter that referenced Jane Butler Washington's death. Wightwick recounted shipments of iron the Principio Company was receiving in England and noted a Captain Brooks "who [will] bring 50 tons for us."[63] There was no one active in the Northern Neck records at that time going by that name (or alternative spellings of his last name, which were often used interchangeably), making it almost impossible for the title of captain to have been a militia rank.[64] Instead, the "captain" here most likely referred to Brooks being a ship's captain, perhaps even of the *Monmouth*, which Wightwick also mentioned within that same discussion. There also was a Virginia vessel named the *Cambridge* at the time, captained by a Christopher Brooke.[65] If Brooks and Brooke were the same man, then that would point to Augustine having chosen for his and Mary's first son's godparents two family members and a Principio business associate, another sign of Augustine's deep commitment to the mine venture.

The ceremony itself, be it at home or in church, entailed readings from the Christian Bible and the Book of Common Prayer. Reverend McCollough would have tested the godparents' suitability for their role by asking them if they "in the name of this child, renounce the Devil and all of his works" and having them affirm their commitment to God and the Anglican Church. After they answered individually "I will," McCollough

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[62] "To George Washington from Elizabeth Whiting, 12 July 1789," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 3, Dorothy Twohig, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1989), 185–86.

[63] "John Wightwick to John England, October 2, 1730," The Principio Papers, Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD.

[64] My assessment of Brooks's invisibility comes from a review of contemporary court record and searches in the Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties database, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/index.php.

[65] J. Paul Hudson, *George Washington's Birthplace* (George Washington's Birthplace National Monument, VA: National Park Service, 1956), 17.

would then take the child and "say to the Godfathers and Godmothers, 'name this child.'" At that moment, Gregory, Brooks, and Whiting would say in public for the first time the name that would soon be known the world over: George. For Mary and Augustine, that was a name covered in significance. The Washington habit had been to repeat family names over and over, creating a long transgenerational parade of Lawrences, Johns, Mildreds, and eventually Augustines. The name George represented a marked deviation from practice.

There are at least four levels of meaning to this name choice. The most commonly referenced one was the recognition of the role that George Eskridge had played in both Mary's and Augustine's lives. The impressively elderly Eskridge was then two years away from his death at the age of 80, but he might have been in attendance for the baptism. The prominence of Eskridge in the Washingtons' lives makes their naming their first son after him a perfectly logical choice—and, in fact, a quite touching one. But Augustine's stepfather, George Gale, was also named George. This was the man who had brought Augustine to England and had him schooled at the Appleby School. Even though Gale ceased to be a force in his stepchildren's lives, the memory of a stepfather named George would have lingered and added a second layer of tribute to the name choice. In 1720, King George County was carved out of parts of the Northern Neck, making for a new county named for what was still a somewhat new king and ruling dynasty. By 1732, the name of George was well ensconced in the symbols of the monarchy and the documents of the empire. The choice of the name George unmistakably added a dimension of patriotic devotion. Most Virginians, unaware of the Washingtons' family reasons for choosing this name, would have heard a pronounced echo in the name of the man sitting at the top of the empire's secular and religious hierarchy. Religion adds a fourth layer of meaning. The third-century Greek George of Lydda was a soldier and Christian saint who became a favorite in many quarters. An 11th-century story told of St. George killing a dragon that had been terrorizing a city in Libya. From that point on, St. George's killing the dragon became a motif in art and writing, serving as both a model for the medieval crusader and a sort of Christian David facing a lizard Goliath. By the 1300s, St. George had become the patron saint of the English royal family and soon became the patron saint of the entire nation. The red cross on a white field was his banner, and this St. George's cross became the flag of England, eventually incorporated into the flag of the United Kingdom after the Act of Union. For these reasons, St. George played (and plays) a significant symbolic role in the imagery of the Anglican Church. All of this meant that the name George carried all this religious significance as well as family significance. Few names could have combined the intimate family meaning with the broader cultural, political, and religious punch as the name George. It was worth breaking with the pattern of Lawrences and Johns.

Once this resonant name was heard by the assembled, McCollough would "dip it [the child] in the water discreetly and warily" or "pour water upon it" if the ceremony took place at the Washington home, and say "I baptize thee in the name of the Father, and of the

Son, and of the Holy Ghost, amen," at which point the infant George became a part of the Anglican community. The ceremony, though, would not be over until there was a reminder of the inescapable fact of infant mortality. McCollough would read, "It is certain by God's word, that children which are baptized, dying before they commit actual sin, are undoubtedly saved." The rites completed, the family, McCollough, and godparents would have then enjoyed a celebratory meal, often paid for by the godparents.[66]

George Washington's Christening Cup

The Charleston Museum in South Carolina has in its collection a short silver beaker with a rimmed bottom and a delicate handle that makes it look a bit like a miniature beer mug. It is claimed to be George's christening cup. The cup was made by Alexander Kinkaid, a silversmith based in Edinburgh, Scotland, who was working in the 1720s and 1730s. The cup carries Kinkaid's mark on its base, and it carries the initials GW as well as a second set of initials, JS. The identification of JS is unknown, and it is an oddity to have two sets of initials on a christening cup—enough of an oddity to cast doubt on the cup's identity. The cup has no direct link to the Washington family; at least, it does not make any appearance in an inventory or family document. But it did enter the museum's collection by private donation, and its accession records show it to have come from a branch of the Washington family, although the records are not clear on just what they meant.[67] There is no reason to doubt the cup's attribution despite its unusual double engraving. Cups like this were common gifts at christenings due to their dual symbolism. They represented the cup that Jesus used at the Last Supper, itself recalled in Anglican ritual as in the communion cup. But these also are symbolic allusions to the empty vessel that is a child, ready to be filled with good teaching, good advice, and good example. This small silver cup may represent the only material link to the baptism that took place on Mattox Neck in 1732, when the world first heard the multilayered name of George.

Folklore about George Washington's Baptism

The Washingtons were high church Anglicans for many generations and likewise were heavily involved in the management of the local church and parish. What is more, George was a lifelong Anglican—the church that became the Episcopal Church after the

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[66] These previous quotations all come from the 1662 Book of Common Prayer as printed by John Baskerville in 1762. The entire book, broken into chapters, can be found at http://justus.anglican.org/resources/bcp/1662/baptism.pdf.

[67] Charleston Museum, https://www.charlestonmuseum.org.

Revolution—serving as a godparent for friends and as a member of the vestry. Nevertheless, Washington's status as an American icon has led to members of various religious sects trying to claim him as one of their own.

One of the most famous Washington religious myths is Mason Locke "Parson" Weems's story of the prayer at Valley Forge. Weems was himself a British-trained Anglican minister (one of the last Americans to be ordained in Britain as it happens) and was always interested in using—or inventing—Washington stories to promote his brand of religious patriotism. His cherry tree fable is the best known of these, but the prayer at Valley Forge is today a close second. The story focused on Isaac Potts, whom Weems shows coming across Washington alone in prayer during the darkest days of the winter of 1777–78 encampment. Potts then ran home to tell his wife that a cause led by a such a virtuous and pious man could only be a just one. The significance here was that Potts, in both the story and in real life (his home was, in fact, Washington's headquarters), was a Quaker. This sect was and is devotedly pacifist, and many Quakers condemned the Revolution as part of a greater condemnation of war itself. Pott's discovery of Washington in Weems's fable convinced the Quaker that war, in this case at least, could be virtuous and therefore worthy of support. This was Weems advocating for a large national umbrella by painting the Revolution as having been something *all* Americans could support. His work also gave cover for Quakers and others who were less confident about war through an invented story of a Quaker who saw pacifism anew in light of Washington's piety.[68]

Washington's baptism was another arena where Washington's biography was occasionally hijacked by religious partisans. Most of these stories date to well after Washington's life, and none of them are supported in any contemporary documentation. One was the tale that late in the war near New York, Washington approached a Continental Army Baptist chaplain named John Gano and asked to be baptized into his church. He told Gano that he had been studying the Bible and had come to believe that the Baptists had it right. Washington claimed that he did not wish to make a fuss or call attention to his change of heart (an odd claim given the significance of the matter), but he nevertheless wanted to be baptized anew. Gano gladly led the general down to the Hudson River, where a party of 42 celebrants witnessed the ceremony. The whole story, though, is a fiction brought forward by Gano's grandchildren decades after the alleged event.[69] Later variations of the story place the imaginary baptism in the Potomac or in

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[68] Blake McGreedy, "Revisiting the Prayer at Valley Forge," *Journal of the American Revolution* (October 15, 2018), https://allthingsliberty.com/2018/10/revisiting-the-prayer-at-valley-forge.

[69] Mary Thompson, *"In the Hands of a Good Providence": Religion in the Life of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 32.

Pennsylvania's Schuylkill River near Valley Forge. In part because of the story's changing narrative, there being no mention of the event in Gano's own writing, and, most problematically, because of the fact that Gano did not even serve under Washington's command, the tale has largely faded from memory.[70]

Another similar fiction held that upon his deathbed, Washington came to realize that Catholicism was the true path. With no time to spare, he dispatched an enslaved person to row across the Potomac to fetch a Jesuit priest from the Maryland side and return with him to baptize Washington into the Holy Mother Church. In the early 20th century, Catholic scholars took an understandable interest in the story, but their research found no proof for what is on its face an almost laughable fabrication.[71]

At some point a tale developed that the infant Washington was baptized in the waters of Popes Creek. None of the main Washington biographers from Weems forward mentioned this story. Where there is debate, it has been about whether he was baptized at home or in the church, but there is no evidence though with which to answer this question. The Popes Creek baptism sounds very much like an echo of the Gano fiction. It clearly serves the same religious/political purpose as casting the Washingtons in the style of Baptists and not the high church Anglicans they in fact were. It also might be a misread of Washington having been baptized *at* Popes Creek and recasting the event as having been *in* Popes Creek. In either event, the story is an invention and a fairly recent one at that.

The Washington Home and "Building X," 1732

There is very little documentary evidence providing a definitive understanding of the shape, size, and even precise location of the home where George was born. What is certain is that he was born at the family home on Popes Creek, the same property Augustine had deeded to his second son Augustine Jr. This also would have been the home that Augustine had paid Jones to work on before the latter's death. But that is all we can say with any degree of certainty at this point. The confusion over this issue comes from the fact that the Mattox Neck in general, and the GEWA acres in particular, had seen many English colonial inhabitants since 1650, and the area, especially those parts fronting rivers and creeks, were dotted with their habitations. By 1815, almost nothing of the 17th- and 18th-century

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[70] Jacob Hicks, "The Legend of George Washington's Baptism," The George Washington Digital Encyclopedia, https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/the-legend-of-george- washingtons-baptism, accessed 5/18/22.

[71] Mary Thompson, *"In the Hands of a Good Providence": Religion in the Life of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 33.

building landscape had survived aboveground. All that remained were a few cellar pits, chimney ruins, and local memories. The entire area, though, had a large number of home-site remains, with only some of them being associated with the Washingtons.[72]

Excavators of the 1920s and 1930s found several sets of brick features at the core of the park area. One set was the ones destroyed during the construction of the Memorial House. These were two adjacent square foundations, each of which had large semicircular bases for supporting some sort of superstructure. They were not consistent with domestic architecture, though, and were instead utilitarian buildings of some kind. The corner of the wide brick foundation was another Washington-era brick set located near the Memorial House. The only record created for it was a few written lines in the 1930s notes and a photograph. The excavation was not extensive, but the photographed corner was part of an unspecified building that remains on the site unexcavated.

The largest set of features was first located in 1930 and then was fully opened in 1936. Because the features destroyed by the Memorial House were too small and odd to have been a gentry family home, curators were quick to declare that these newly found foundations were in fact the Washington family home. National Park Service officials named the features "Building X" in order to avoid offending the still-active promoters of the Memorial House. But even though all the brick features were exposed in 1936, the surrounding area was not studied. Furthermore, 1930s excavators were unaware of the existence of post-in-ground buildings or structures that combined construction methods. Therefore, their inclination was to assume that what was in the ground was simply an outline of what had been aboveground. Regional archaeology abounds with contrary examples. Building X comprises four distinct units with a fifth very thin fragment of brick wall just to its north. Because 1930s analysis assumed these to all be part of a single structure, they named each of the units "rooms" and gave each its own letter.[73]

In 2013, GEWA commissioned a review of the 1930s archaeology in order to analyze the excavations' written records and match them to the artifact collection. That report concluded that the various units making up Building X were filled at different times—meaning that the different parts had somewhat different stories. The record also showed that most of the bricks in the filled cellars came from collapsed chimneys. The brick

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[72] Joy Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief: Archaeology and Meaning at George Washington Birthplace National Monument," in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Paul A. Shackel (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 197–220; Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 24–49.

[73] Joy Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief: Archaeology and Meaning at George Washington Birthplace National Monument," in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, ed. Paul A. Shackel (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 197–220; Philip Levy, Amy Muraca, and Alena Pirok, *George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia, Summer 2013 'Building X' Archaeological Reassessment Report*," National Park Service, George Washington Birthplace National Monument National Park, Colonial Beach, VA, 2014.

foundation walls were all different thicknesses as well, with only two units that had walls large enough to have supported brick walls. The few photographs do not provide a detailed enough record to provide any authoritative assessment of the dates or purposes of these foundations. In the spring of 2022, contractors re-excavated Building X for the first time in nearly a century. Their findings are invaluable and go a long way towards answering long-standing questions about the combination of brick-lined features.[74]

One important detail was that the space called Room C had never been a cellar. Maps and drawings from the 1930s showed the area as being a cellar of four feet or more in depth like the other spaces. But the 2022 excavation showed that this was not true and that this space was probably a frame structure that sat on three courses of bricks. It may also have been divided into two rooms based on its having two heating sources. The finds from this excavation promise to change our understanding of the sequence of site building.

The 2013 study showed that the artifacts from these features were not consistent with gentry domestic habitation and better resembled assemblages of dependencies such as kitchens. More than half of the artifacts were various coarse earthenware and wine bottles associated with food preparation and not food consumption, and tableware (plates for dining, etc.) were mostly early—not what one expects for a building living into the 1770s. There also were very few high-style ceramics of the mid-18th century and a few dating to after 1762. Many of these ceramics were in a damaged form called "sheet refuse," which refers to objects that had been dropped and broken during their use periods and gradually broken into ever-smaller fragments by clearing and people walking on them. Collections of sheet refuse usually mean that a feature, like these open-cellar pits, was being used as a trash dump from some other habitation nearby. Many of the fragments were burned, but there was no pattern to their burning; the percentages of burned fragments varied among ceramic types. This is also the expected pattern when trash is being dumped into a feature: some of the sheet refuse ceramics are burned and others are not. None, though, exhibit the kind of intense or extensive burning associated with house fires.[75] The most telling objects in the GEWA artifact collections are a few glass wine bottle seals bearing the initials AW, presumably for Augustine Washington. Unfortunately, these did not come from parts of the site where their presence would have been most helpful. They do, though, serve as a material confirmation of the father and son Augustine on these acres.[76]

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[74] Philip Levy, Amy Muraca, and Alena Pirok, *George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, Virginia, Summer 2013 'Building X' Archaeological Reassessment Report*, National Park Service, George Washington Birthplace National Monument National Park, Colonial Beach, VA, 2014.

[75] Mara Kaktins, "Some Like It Hot . . . But Probably Not This Hot: The Archaeology of a (Big) Fire," *Lives and Legacies* (blog), October 26, 2018, https://livesandlegaciesblog.org/2018/10/26/some-like-it-hot-but-probably-not-this-hot-the-archaeology-of-a-big-fire, accessed 5/18/22.

[76] This report is available in the GEWA collection. Philip Levy, Amy Muraca, and Alena Pirok, *George Washington's Birthplace National Monument Summer 2013 Archaeological Record Reassessment*, National Park Service, GEWA, Westmoreland County, VA, 2014.

The results of the 2022 excavations and GEWA's 2014 report on the 1930s excavations are, and will be, the sources to turn to for comprehensive information about these features. We can speak of them in two ways. One is what the excavations say about the building and its features. This we can address with increasing confidence. The second, though, is the far trickier question of who built these cellars and lived in the rooms they supported.

One of the foundation sets—commonly called Room A—was a very well-constructed and substantive rectangular cellar foundation built in one episode and having a chimney base and bulkhead stairwell on its north side. The chimney's location reveals a home oriented on a north–south axis, which had an eastward- or westward-facing front. At some point, a new cellar wing was added to the south of the original. This was called Room B and also had a bulkhead cellar entrance directly south of the one in Room A. This second entrance was of far poorer construction. In Room A, bricks that once supported the stairs' wooden treads are still in place. But in Room B, all that survived of the bulkhead entrance was the thin line of bricks that once held the wooden entryway off the ground. Room B also had a significant and partly completed repair on its east side.

Additions called Rooms C and D on the east side (south and north respectively) changed the overall footprint from being a rectangle of about 18 feet by 50 feet into a U shape. Neither of these sat on foundations as solid as those making up Rooms A and B, but the brick color and quality indicate that they were made at the same time. All of this reveals a building that endured long enough to have undergone a few repairs and additions. Silt layers in the cellars reveal it had been abandoned and its still-valuable building materials removed and used elsewhere on other buildings, either ones not yet found on the land or perhaps even the Blenheim or Haywood homes that William Augustine Washington built late in the 18th century. After abandonment, the remains sat as pits, gradually filling with dirt and trash from other nearby residences. All the features show no evidence of a catastrophic fire. Instead, they became open pits after the building above them was abandoned and pulled down. They gradually filled with the silt visible at the bottom layers and then with trash brought in from some other part of the site.

The 18th-century documents are not that helpful either. Between 1723 and 1725, Augustine dealt with his contract with David Jones, who died before his work on the Washington home was completed. Only a small part of Augustine's account book has survived, so it is very difficult to know much about this project, its scope, or even its location.[77] In 1726, though, Augustine and Jane indicated that they then lived on the Popes Creek land bought from Joseph Abbington.[78] All indications are that this was the main

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[77] *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1723–1746*, 74a.

[78] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 21–22.

family residence until the move to Little Hunting Creek (Mount Vernon) around 1735. There are a few possibilities for the Popes Creek building they then called home and by implication the one where Augustine and Mary lived at the time of their son George's birth.

1. The family lived in the Abbington home until the home David Jones worked on was completed. This would mean there would be two homes close by that Augustine and his family had inhabited.
2. David Jones's work constituted additions to the original Abbington home. This would mean that the core of the home was Abbington's with Washington-funded additions.
3. The Washingtons stayed in the older Lisson home on the far side of Bridge's Creek until the new home was built. This would mean that there would be two homes—the Washington and the Abbington one—but only one that the Washingtons had inhabited.

Unfortunately, there is nothing in the records to settle this issue. This sort of unclarity is not at all uncommon when trying to connect colonial-era people to specific sites. But then again, not every home was the one in which George Washington was born. In this case, the usual silences in the records are especially frustrating. Without a good set of artifacts to clarify occupancy and construction dates, assigning specific residencies to parts or all of Building X is at best guesswork. What remains certain is that the GEWA historic area contains the home in which Washington was born—that much the maps and documents make clear. What is rather less clear is exactly which of the few identified contenders (and perhaps some unidentified ones) is the best choice.

The Post-in-Ground Buildings in the Garden and the "Septic Field Area"

Excavations in 1974 and 1975 identified two small frame buildings in and near the main historic area. Very few artifacts were located in association with either of these two, making precise dating a near impossibility. Both structures, though, were of the size and type we would expect to see on an 18th-century plantation home lot. It is not possible to say with certainty that either of these was standing at the time Mary gave birth to George, but both were certainly in use during George's life.

The first of the two structures, designated Feature 11, was at the north end of what is now identified as the Garden, and the second, called the Septic Field Feature Site W2, was found near what was then called the Superintendent's Home but is now called Quarters 1. At the time of their discovery, the study of these types of buildings was in its infancy, but both features were well excavated and fully documented.[79]

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[79] Norman F. Barka, *Archaeology of George Washington's Birthplace, Virginia* (Williamsburg: Southside Historical Sites, 1978).

Feature 11 contained six wooden posts, which made up two bays or room spaces (the square of every four posts is counted as a bay since framing members would have attached at these points). The overall length was 15 feet on the north–south axis and 11.5 feet on the east–west axis. As is typical, the posts and the post molds produced no datable artifacts. The southernmost bay held a pit of the type alternately identified as cellars, root cellars, earthfast pits, or subfloor pits. It measured 5.4 feet on the east–west axis and 5 feet on the north–south axis, and was 1.5 feet deep at its deepest point, but that was measured from inside the excavation, meaning that the actual pit was far deeper when in use. At the time of excavation, very little was known about these pits; in fact, they were often misidentified as perhaps being tanning pits, a misread that led to confusion over what their enclosing buildings were in the first place. Extensive study of these over the past three decades, however, has made them one of the most-analyzed types of features in the Chesapeake region. These were simple cellars dug into the ground and covered either with boards or a wooden floor. Many were lined with boards to keep the sides from falling in. They were common in 17th-century English Virginia homes, but by the 18th century, only the poorest colonists had earthfast cellars for food and other storage. By the time of George's birth, these pits were almost entirely an attribute of enslaved housing, and today, archaeologists see them as something of a diagnostic feature revealing a structure to have been a residence for enslaved Africans. In some cases, homes for the enslaved were set directly on the ground, meaning that pits like these were the only archaeologically identifiable part of the home. These pits can also be an indication of the number of families or individuals living in a residence since each person or group would have had their own pit. Some larger quarters that stood for some time have multiple pits, with each one showing evidence of repairs. These pits were often located close to heat sources, presumably to help keep the contents dry and close to where cooking took place. As a result, today's excavations of these pits are painstaking since they often contain a wide array of very small artifacts and food remnants. Rather than screening these soils, archaeologists will use water-based methods to recover even the smallest seed or fish bone.[80] Earthfast pits have proven to be invaluable sources of knowledge about the diets of 18th-century enslaved people.[81]

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[80] Dan Mouer, "'Root Cellars' Revisited," *African American Archaeology Newsletter* 5 (1991): 5–6; Richard H. Kimmel, "Notes on the Cultural Origins and Functions of Sub-Floor Pits," *Historical Archaeology* 27, no. 3 (1993): 102–13; Theresa Singleton, "The Archaeology of Slavery in North America," *Annual Review of Anthropology* 24 (1995): 123–26; Amy Lambeck Young, "Cellars and African-American Sites: New Data from an Upland South Plantation," *Midcontinental Journal of Archaeology* 22, no. 1 (Spring 1997): 95–115; Ywone Edwards-Ingram, "The Recent Archaeology of Enslaved Africans and African Americans," in *Old and New Worlds*, Geoff Egan and Ronald L. Michael, eds. (Oxford: Oxbow Books, 1999): 155–64; Stephen A. Mrozowski, Maria Franklin, and Leslie Hunt, "Archaeobotanical Analysis and Interpretations of Enslaved Virginian Plant Use at Rich Neck Plantation (44WB52)," *American Antiquity* 73, no. 4 (2008): 699–728; Barbara Heath, "Space and Place within Plantation Quarters in Virginia, 1700–1825," in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg and Clifton Ellis, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscape of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 156–76.

[81] Norman F., Barka, *Archaeology of George Washington's Birthplace, Virginia* (Williamsburg: Southside Historical Sites, 1978).

Unfortunately, Feature 11's pit was excavated too early to have the benefit of detailed study. This feature contained two layers of fill. Both layers contained small amounts of brick fragments and oyster shells. A fragment of creamware, a type used for table settings for about 15 years after 1762, came from the upper layer of the earthfast pit. The overall structure also yielded gray and brown stoneware fragments, typical of drinking vessels, and coarse imported earthenware ceramics such as Buckley ware, which was commonly in use for food preparation and some consumption from the 1720s to the end of the century. The fact that the cellar pit was filled in two episodes and showed no evidence of repairs reveals that it was only in use for a fairly short period of time since the sides of the pits were liable to give in from repeated use. That could mean the pit and the entire building were only occupied for a decade or two in the 18th century and had come down, or were taken down, sometime after 1762.

When the building was located, excavators identified it as a utilitarian structure that stood until sometime after 1762. Since its excavation, though, there has been a huge increase in the number of these kinds of buildings that archaeologists have located and studied, so much so that they have become a species of subfield in and of themselves. We now understand that buildings like this were, in fact, dwellings for enslaved people. The presence of the earthfast pit and some small amount of brick chips (perhaps indicative of small chimneys or fireboxes, which were often built in conjunction with these sorts of pits) only make the case stronger. The small size of the building and the presence of only a single earthfast pit means that it would have been a dwelling for someone whose job or status granted them the right to live on their own or that it perhaps was a home for a small family. "Cabins" like this were also often homes for people too elderly to continue to labor but whose role in the overall community was too important to marginalize. Feature 11 was what we might call the garden cabin and was a residence for enslaved people living close to the main home. That means the resident or residents either worked in the home or in the home lot, or were tending the closest fields.

Since there is no certainty about the exact location and orientation of the Washington family home, this small slave dwelling is a vital clue to how the landscape was oriented, at least during the time that the garden cabin was in use. The cabin sits between the features of Building X and Popes Creek to the immediate north. English Virginians cared quite a bit about their vistas and viewsheds. It is highly unlikely that a gentry family would have allowed what would have been a plain slave cabin to block a prized view of the river or to mar the sort of grand presentation to visitors that was common on these estates. What the location of the cabin is telling us is that either the Washington home was located elsewhere on the land—an unlikely possibility—or that the home lot was oriented along an

east–west axis with the main, and more prestigious, view facing east toward that side of Popes Creek. This would put the garden cabin off to the side of the home rather than front and center.[82]

The Septic Field Area structure tells a somewhat different story. This building sat near what is now called Quarters 1 and the upper reaches of Dancing Marsh. This area is lower than the presumed home lot area, meaning that this building would not have been visible from where the home probably sat. The building was considerably larger than the garden cabin, measuring twice its size: 30 feet on its east–west axis and 20 feet on its north–south axis. It comprised eight posts and postholes, making for three bays. There were no earthfast pits in this building, nor was there any evidence of a chimney for heating. Excavators found large numbers of Late Woodland Native American artifacts in this area—not a surprise because there was a large shell midden there, and this sort of secluded creek was exactly the kind of provider waterway Algonquians, and Proto-Algonquians before them, preferred. There also were no datable English artifacts associated with the building. The only colonial-era English artifacts associated with the building were one fragment of lead-glazed redware, one fragment of a wine bottle, and several fragments of white clay tobacco pipes.[83] The lack of artifacts associated with habitations, the absence of a cellar, and the fact that there is no evidence of chimneys point to this having been a utilitarian building and not a dwelling. It served as some sort of storage building or unheated workshop. Its location close to Dancing Marsh may be telling us something significant about the history of this waterway. Today, that run is heavily silted and over- grown. But the location of a storage building near its banks suggests that it was navigable to at least small craft in the 18th century. The building is a good candidate for one of the many "rolling houses" that dotted the colony's coasts and were places for storage of packed tobacco casks as they were gathered for shipment to European markets. The building is also near what is now a paved road but that was, in the 18th century, a farm lane that linked up to the main road that ran across Mattox Neck and led west to the Mattox ferry and east to the main road along the Northern Neck. The proximity to the road also suggests that this humble structure was an important link between the agricultural produce of the land to the river and the English and European markets to which they led.

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[82] Norman F. Barka, *Archaeology of George Washington's Birthplace, Virginia* (Williamsburg: Southside Historical Sites, 1978), 65.

[83] Norman F. Barka, *Archaeology of George Washington's Birthplace, Virginia* (Williamsburg: Southside Historical Sites, 1978), 65.

Housing for Enslaved People

The Washington acres, like those of other elite planters, contained a few types of homes for the enslaved workforce. There was some change over time in the shape and style of slave housing, and in all times, the type of housing depended very much on the type of work a person or a family did. The number of enslaved people on a plantation also had considerable influence on the quantity and quality of the homes for them. Many of these buildings were quite ephemeral, meaning that they were unlikely to survive long when they were in use and, after that, did not leave much of an imprint in the archaeological record.

In the earliest days of enslavement, Africans would have lived much as white British servants did. In John Washington's day, most workers lived in their master's home and slept either in the loft or on pallets on the lower floor. The home on Bridge's Creek had no loft, meaning that enslaved workers would have slept either in an upper chamber or on impromptu beds on the floors. The home lot, though, contained outbuildings, and these would have served as homes as well as workplaces for enslaved people.[84]

By the end of the century, masters all over the British world were increasingly putting their servants—and in Virginia their enslaved people—in separate housing. This left only those workers whose labor kept the home running and the master's family fed continuing to live in and near the main home. Field-workers often lived far from the main home but close to the acres they worked. The lofts and floors of outbuildings, as well as separately built quarters, were where most enslaved people lived by the time George was born.

The only building on the GEWA acres with a certain association with enslaved people was the small post-in-ground structure that Barka located in 1975.[85] This was too small to have been a quarter for a large number of people. It was most likely the home for a single family or for someone like a cook or gardener, whose special skill made them needed close at hand but also gave them the right to live with some privacy. This building also could have been the home for an overseer during the times the Washingtons were not living in the main home. Despite excavations having found only one building like this, the size of the

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[84] Garrett Fesler, "From Houses to Homes: An Archaeological Case Study of Household Formation at the Utopia Slave Quarter, ca. 1675–1775," PhD diss., University of Virginia, Charlottesville, VA, 2004. See also Barbara Heath, "Space and Place within Plantation Quarters in Virginia, 1700–1825," in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscape of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010), 156–76.

[85] Norman F. Barka, *Archaeology of George Washington's Birthplace*, Virginia (Williamsburg: Southside Historical Sites, 1978).

land, the variety of activities that took place on the acres, and the many years of English colonization all mean that Mattox Neck would have had a full range of types and sizes of slave housing.[86]

There was a quarter on the Indian Town parcel on the west side of Bridge's Creek. At times, there were close to one dozen enslaved Africans calling this land home. These people would have lived in either a shared residence or separate cabins. Mount Vernon provides a useful comparison since it had a full range of well-documented slave homes. In the main home lot, enslaved people lived in the lofts and work buildings. Cabins were a cheap and easy way to house enslaved laborers closer to their outlying fields, and slave cabins were to be found all over the colony. Most commonly, they were small squarish log or board cabins, often set directly in the ground on thick sills. They might have small chimneys made of mud and wood, and in the best circumstances brick. Their not being set into the ground allowed them to be moved in case laborers had to move to another section of the land. This also makes them almost impossible to locate archaeologically since they lacked any ground-set framing members. Late-18th-century observers of the cabins at Mount Vernon did not have flattering things to say about them. One observer in the 1790s reported Mount Vernon's cabins as being so squalid and poorly built that "one can not call them by the name of houses."[87] Cabins, though, did provide something like privacy, so many small families or functionally married couples found this sort of housing ideal. In all likelihood, the people at Indian Town lived in cabins very much like those at Mount Vernon.

Larger plantations frequently had quarters that might house several families or a group of male workers. These structures could vary in size and building quality, but larger buildings required somewhat more substantive grounding than smaller cabins. Mount Vernon had a roughly 20-feet-by-40-feet quarter close to the main home. It was framed wood, but it sat on a brick foundation and had a large and well-built brick cellar. This Mansion House Quarter was part of the main home lot, so it was visible to Washington and

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[86] Carl Anthony, "The Big House and the Slave Quarters, Part 1: Prelude to New World Architecture," *Landscape* 20, no. 3 (1976): 8–19; Dell Upton, "White and Black Landscapes in Eighteenth-Century Virginia, *Places* 2, no. 2 (1985): 59–72. See also John Michael Vlach, *Back of the Big House: The Architecture of Plantation Slavery* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1993), 1–18. Earlier attempts to understand slave quarter archaeology include William M. Kelso, "Mulberry Row: Slave Life at Thomas Jefferson's Monticello," *Archaeology* 39, no. 5 (1986): 28–35; Terrence W. Epperson, "Race and the Disciplines of the Plantation," *Historical Archaeology* 24, no. 4 (1990): 29–36. Several essays in Clifton Ellis and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds., *Cabin, Quarter, Plantation: Architecture and Landscape of North American Slavery* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010) are of great use, particularly those by Barbara Heath and by Garrett Fesler. For a study of surviving examples of housing for the enslaved, see Barbara Burlison Mooney, "Looking for History's Huts," *Winterthur Portfolio* 39, no. 1 (2004): 43–70. Amy Lambeck Young, Philip J. Carr, and Joseph E. Granger highlight regional variation and point out that Virginia housing for enslaved people generally followed patterns of British architecture; "How Historical Archaeology Works: A Case Study of Slave Houses at Locust Grove," *The Register of the Kentucky Historical Society* 96, no. 2 (1998): 167–94.

[87] Julian Ursyn Niemcewicz, *Under Their Vine and Fig Tree: Travels through America in 1797–1799, 1805* (Elizabeth, NJ: Grassman Publishing, 1965), 100.

his family and visitors on a daily basis, which helps account for its size and unusually high-quality features.[88] It was common for the people living in these shared quarters to maintain their own earthfast pits for the food and belongings of each individual and family group. Collections of contemporaneous pits are often the only archaeological evidence of their having been a quarter on a site. There have not been excavations on the Indian Town acres, but the remains of just such a quarter might still be there. The Indian Town community was not the only group of enslaved people living and working on Washington acres away from the main home. Each of these outliers would have also had either a quarter or a set of cabins. The enslaved people working at the mill at the head of Popes Creek lived in cabins there. Meanwhile, there was closer housing for those enslaved people tasked with cooking, caring for horses and carriages, maintaining the functioning of the home, and other jobs that necessitated their being on hand at all times. Maids, butlers, footmen, and the like all would have lived in or very close to the main home. They did not have the daily autonomy of those living elsewhere in quarters or cabins or at the mill. But they did often have better food and clothing and a measure of social prestige that came from the responsibilities of specialized domestic tasks.

Enslaved people on plantations like the Washingtons' lived in a range of buildings. Given the numbers of people enslaved on the GEWA acres and the range of tasks they performed, almost every building on the land was home to at least some enslaved Africans.

[88] Dennis J. Pogue, *Summary Report on the "House for Families" Site* (44 Fx 762/40–47), Mount Vernon Plantation, Mount Vernon, VA (December, 1991), 44. See also Dennis J. Pogue, "Slave Lifeways at Mount Vernon," in *Slavery at the Home of George Washington*, ed. Philip J. Schwarz (Mount Vernon, VA: Mount Vernon Ladies' Association, 2001), 111–35; Dennis J. Pogue, "The Domestic Architecture of Slavery at George Washington's Mount Vernon," *Winterthur Portfolio* 37, no. 1 (Spring 2002): 3–22.

CHAPTER FOURTEEN

The Washington Family on the Move, 1733–1760

Elizabeth "Betty" Washington and Samuel Washington, 1733 and 1734

On June 20, 1733, Mary relived the experience of her first birth. This time, she brought into the world a girl they named Elizabeth in tribute to Mary's older sister. In the family, the girl would come to be called Betty, and she would be the child who was closest to Mary and the one most on hand as Mary grew old. Like that of her older brother, George, Betty's birth must have been fast and trouble free since it did not appear in the records. It is easy to imagine a repeat of the scene from the year before, with perhaps even the same midwife in attendance. The main difference would have been the temperament Mary brought to this birth; having been through one, the second one would have at least been a familiar experience. In November of the next year, Mary was again at the birthing stool, this time bringing forth a boy, whom she and Augustine named for Mary's brother-in-law Samuel.[1]

The potentially first written reference to George was recorded around this time. The actual record has not survived, but the colorful Virginia historian Moncure Conway claimed in 1892 to have learned from a Lawrence Washington, then living in Alexandria, that he had read a letter of Augustine's from 1733 to one "Mr Jeffries." Conway wrote that the letter reportedly said that Augustine planned that he and "his wife will make him [Jefferies] a visit on their way to Moratico, a homestead of the Balls on the lower Rappahanock." Accompanying them would be "baby George."[2] Conway concluded that this had to be the first mention of George since, in his estimation, the note about the birth and baptism inscribed in the family Bible was written at some later date.

By the winter of 1734, the Washington family on Popes Creek had three young children and two older sons, Lawrence and Augustine Jr., who were 16 and 14 respectively, and were probably in England at school. There also was the 12-year-old Jane, Mary's stepdaughter named for Augustine's first wife. In January 1735, at the age of 13, Jane died from some unrecorded cause. She would have been an invaluable aid to Mary, who had

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[1] "Mary Ball Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[2] Moncure Conway, *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1892), 56–57.

three infants and toddlers to care for at the time. But even so, her memory would have been a dim one for these younger siblings. Jane was buried near her mother in the family plot on Bridge's Creek. Until her father's death just under a decade later, hers would be the last family interment in that yard.[3]

The First Washington Family Move, Little Hunting Creek, 1735–1738

The actual date of the move is unclear, but soon after Jane's death and burial in the old family plot, Augustine and Mary agreed to move themselves and the children upriver. Beginning in 1660, the Washington line had been amassing land on Mattox Neck, adding parcels to their holdings, and burying the last generation in the yard on Bridge's Creek. Most of Augustine's cousins and siblings had left the area and settled in other parts of the Northern Neck while Augustine had built on his inheritance around the old family seat. Augustine had lived about five years in England, finished his childhood in his cousin's home at the western reaches of the county, lived about 10 years on his inherited land west of Bridge's Creek, and then spent another 10 along Popes Creek. Although he grew tobacco like his neighbors, Augustine seemed more invested in the mine venture with the Principio Company than any other enterprise.

Sometime in 1735, the family moved up the Potomac and settled on the western side of the neck of land that is now Mount Vernon along Little Hunting Creek. This was the property that John Washington had acquired around the time of the attack on the Susquehannock Fort (sitting just opposite, on the Maryland side) and that Augustine had purchased from his sister Mildred.[4]

Questions have long surrounded this move, and there is very little clarity. The first question is why exactly Augustine chose this moment to relocate the family (assuming that it was his choice). There were many reasons to *not* move, the first being that on Popes Creek, the family was surrounded by kinfolk and allies. The Vaulxes had a large estate at the head of the creek, and that prominent family was entwined with the extended Washingtons, both in business dealings and through marriages.[5] George Eskridge, too, was still a force in the family's life even though he was in his eightieth year. Moving also took Mary away from her sister Elizabeth, who had been both a guide and a constant presence

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[3] "Augustine Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I113473&tree=Tree1.

[4] Robert Morgan Moxham, *The First Hundred Years at Mount Vernon* (North Springfield, VA: Colonial Press, 1976), 40–47.

[5] Michael L. Marshall, *The Vaulx Family of England, Virginia, and Maryland* (Self-published, 2012), 25.

in her life. There also was the hard-to-define sentimental connection to the place itself. Even if the home was not all that special nor something to which Augustine attached much emotional weight, the same could not be said about the family burial plot.

But there were reasons *to* move—and, obviously, these won the day. Unfortunately, the Washingtons left little to outline those reasons. The most immediate, though, was that Augustine had made the Principio venture the crown jewel in his economy, and living 50-some-odd miles up the Potomac closer to the foundry would mean he would no longer have to endure the two-day trip from Popes Creek just to oversee operations. That year as well, the mine manager John England died, a concern that might have been on Augustine's mind.

The family settled in on the west side of the neck of land, but no record has turned up of the home in which they lived. A 1690 map of the land showed a house sitting about halfway up Little Hunting Creek. The law at the time required that landowners put at least a small home on new claims, and most likely that is what the 1690 map shows.[6] The question is whether a home standing in 1690 would be the one the Washingtons occupied 45 years later. Given the prevalence of post-in-ground building at the time, that would seem unlikely. A carved stone in the cellar of Mount Vernon bears crossed halberds and the initials "LW" set against a heart, which has sometimes been seen as evidence of an earlier home. The stone is often mislabeled as being a cornerstone when in fact it is a rather thin facing stone—in other words, an ornament and not a foundational stone. It was added to the stone walls of the Mount Vernon cellar during an expansion phase in 1774. All of this means that it is very difficult to definitively place this stone on any particular building at any specific time. Some writers have speculated that "LW" referred to Lawrence, George's grandfather, and that the stone was part of a home he had built on the land, perhaps even close to the current Mount Vernon mansion.[7] More likely, though, it was part of the home that brother Lawrence either built or inherited in the early 1740s.

All this leaves three options. One is that the family lived as the 1690 map shows, in an older home by Little Hunting Creek. The second is that the core of what later became Mount Vernon's mansion house was the 1735 family home. The third option is that both of the previous two options are wrong, and the family lived in a different, unknown site. Given the scale of development in the area, this problem is not likely to soon see a clear archaeological answer. Extensive study of the Mount Vernon mansion house is underway and might yet provide the definitive date of its first construction. What is not in doubt is that between 1735 and 1738, this neck of land was the place the family called home.

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[6] Robert Morgan Moxham, *The First Hundred Years at Mount Vernon* (Springfield, VA: Colonial Press, 1976), 73.

[7] Robert Morgan Moxham, *The First Hundred Years at Mount Vernon* (Springfield, VA: Colonial Press, 1976), 73.

While there, Augustine carried on with the accustomed activities of a gentry man. On November 18, 1735, he took a seat on the vestry at Truro Parish. His son George would eventually attend this same church and sit on the same vestry.[8] As a side note, this was also the church that Mason Locke "Parson" Weems, the author of the cherry tree fable, claimed had employed him as rector.

Life at Little Hunting Creek

Two significant family events took place during this sojourn. The first was that Mary gave birth to her third child, John Augustine, on January 13, 1736. This birth would have been something of a challenge. Her first two births would have been attended by local friends, her sister Elizabeth, and a familiar midwife. She also would have had her stepdaughter, Jane, to help both before and after the children were born. Giving birth at Little Hunting Creek was somewhat different. Elizabeth might have made the trip up—and indeed so might a favored midwife—but that all depended on how much time the labor allowed. In either case, Jane was gone, and her loss would have been felt. As with Mary's previous births, the lack of documentation suggests a largely trouble-free delivery. When it came time to christen the new member of the Washington family, naming patterns returned to form. The baby was named for his father and great-grandfather (or perhaps any number of cousins).[9]

The family had already relocated to Little Hunting Creek when they would have learned about the death of George Eskridge in 1735. His death represented the ending of an era for the small family.

Augustine Travels to England for the Third Time

The second documentable significant event at Little Hunting Creek was Augustine's 1736 or 1737 travel to England sometime after John Augustine's birth, presumably to tighten up more fine points of his partnership with the Principio Company. There are few surviving details of this trip and nothing like the earlier land deal that shed some light on his activities and travels on his previous journey. But on April 15, the partners signed a new agreement that granted Augustine a full twelfth of the entire American Principio venture instead

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[8] John C. Fitzpatrick, *George Washington: Colonial Traveller, 1732–1775* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1927), 2.

[9] "Augustine Washington," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/getperson.php?personID=I113473&tree=Tree1.

of the two-twelfths he was due from only the profits of the Virginia enterprise.[10] Here again was an example of Augustine working out favorable terms in this endeavor.[11] While in England, he also might have visited the Appleby Grammar School to see Lawrence and Augustine Jr., both of whom were in the middle of their school years.

Whatever his itinerary was in England, Augustine's return in the late spring of 1737 was reported by the *Virginia Gazette*, which regularly offered short notices of the comings and goings of prominent people. The light, breezy tone of the notice is at odds with what had to have been a hellish crossing. The casualness of the writing speaks to the degree to which difficult ocean trips were just part of colonial life—distressing, to be sure, but by no means unusual. Even so, Augustine's trip home shows in stark relief how hard these trips could be and why so many people, like Nathaniel Pope nearly a century before, drafted a will before setting foot on deck: "We hear from Potomack, that a ship is lately arriv'd there from London, with convicts. Capt. Augustine Washington, and Capt. Hugh French, took their passage in her; the former is arriv'd in health; but the latter dy'd at sea and 'tis said of the Goal Distemper, which he got on board."[12]

The blurb offers a stark view of Atlantic travel and shows that even the elite were not spared the worst of life at sea. A ship full of convict laborers to be sold into Virginia service was an ideal breeding ground for what we today would call typhus, which is spread by lice and flea bites. Hugh French was a resident of Stafford County who also had land in King George County. He knew the Washingtons, and it must have been either a happy accident or a plan that he and Augustine were returning to Virginia on the same ship. Of course, there was little happy about the actual trip. French had written up his will right before he left for England and included in it a request that "Mrs. Washington the wife of Capt. Augustine Washington have the care and tuition of my Dau[ghter] Marg[are]t. till she is of age or married and that immediately after my decease she take into her possession my said daughter's estate."[13] That estate included three enslaved Africans—Jenny, Phillis, and Sarah—who, along with nine-year-old Margaret, would join the Washington family and its enslaved workforce.[14] Margaret had not had an easy few years. Her mother, Mary, had died in 1735, and then her father completed the little girl's orphaning when he died

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[10] Although the sum of two-twelfths is not logical mathematically, it does reflect how profits from these enterprises were assessed and divided. Rather than getting one-sixth of the entire enterprise, Augustine officially received two-twelfths either because each one came from another part of the enterprise or because previous agreements committed to twelfths as the official dividable unit.

[11] Douglas Southall Freeman, *George Washington: A Life* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 1, no. 56.

[12] *The Virginia Gazette* 51 (July 15–July 22, 1737), 1.

[13] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Stafford County, Virginia Will Book (Liber M) 1729–1748* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1987), 66–67.

[14] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Stafford County, Virginia Will Book (Liber M) 1729–1748* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1987), 66–67. The names of these three women (or girls) were not listed by the Sparacios, but they are of course in the actual record in the Stafford County Courthouse; *Stafford County Wills, 1729–1748*, 247.

two years later. She only had adult brothers and sisters, who, for whatever reason, did not take her in. Knowing the risks of sea travel, though, French took legal steps to ensure that should he die, his young daughter would still receive the kind of training needed for her to get a good gentry marriage. So Margaret now found herself living on Little Hunting Creek, where French trusted that Mary Washington was the best (and perhaps closest) choice of a gentry woman tutor and role model. In the Washington household, Margaret also would have acted as a sort of surrogate older sibling to George, Betty, Samuel, and infant John Augustine, all of whom were under the age of six. We cannot know what her experience was, but being dropped into a house full of children might have been just the tonic she needed. The three enslaved people would not have found their disruption as potentially soothing, but in 18th-century Virginia, these sorts of moves and reorderings were commonplace. That might not have made it easier to bear, but at least it was not unexpected.

French's choice of Mary as Margaret's caretaker is significant. The move made Mary more than just a surrogate tutor role model; it also gave her financial control over Margaret's inheritances.[15] Biographers have seen Mary as somewhat underprivileged or at least disoriented by her many moves and changes of guardianship before her marriage.[16] But French's selection of her reveals quite a bit about her standing in the eyes of her peers and how others viewed her capacity as a mother and female role model. French's will is one of the first documentary mentions of Mary, and it casts her in a very positive light within the terms of her time and social class.

Soon after Augustine's return, Mary was pregnant again. Late in the family's stay at Little Hunting Creek, Mary gave birth to her fifth child, a boy they named Charles. The family had grown nearly to its largest size, and for one reason or another, Augustine and Mary were again considering a move.

The Second Washington Family Move, Ferry Farm, 1738

Soon after Augustine's traumatic return voyage, the family packed up and moved once again. This time, the move was to a curious place. Everything about Little Hunting Creek was much like life on Popes Creek. Both were places of homesteads set amongst tobacco fields, cornfields, and woodlots. These were landscapes punctuated with the utilitarian buildings of tobacco production and the homes of the enslaved laborers who did the hard work. Both were framed and defined by the wide Potomac bringing ships in and out of the colony. The move of 1738, though, took the family to a completely different sort of place.

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[15] Amy Louise Erikson, "Coverture and Capitalism," *History Workshop Journal* 59 (2005): 8–10.

[16] Martha Saxton, *The Widow Washington: The Life of Mary Washington* (New York: Farrar, Straus, and Giroux, 2019).

Augustine purchased a story-and-a-half wooden home and outbuildings that had belonged to the recently deceased William Strother. The two men had known each other in Westmoreland County and had led somewhat similar lives, except for Augustine being involved in mines and Strother serving in the House of Burgesses. Strother had daughters, too—six in total and all living on a few hundred acres on the Rappahannock, very close to the falls. This was an entirely different river from the Potomac—far narrower, more winding, and much more of a challenge to travel from mouth to freshes. An oceangoing vessel could make the trip, but it was far easier for smaller gaff-rigged sloops and schooners to have a go. The other crucial difference, and the thing that made this truly unique in Virginia, was the city of Fredericksburg. It was hardly Philadelphia or Bridgetown, Barbados, but there were few cities in Virginia, so each one carried a somewhat outsized weight. Fredericksburg was founded in 1728 as a market entrepôt for the farmers on both sides of the river. English people had had an interest in the land going back to the Brent family in the middle of the 17th century. But this was a contested area, where Native power was still quite strong. Near Fredericksburg, the first throes of the wars of the 1670s had been felt, and it would not be until the turn of the 18th century that English people really began to settle. One of the first was Maurice Clark, who built a small post-in-ground home in about 1710. That home stood only a few dozen yards from where William Strother later built his home.[17]

By the time Strother and his wife and daughters lived there, things had quieted down considerably. By the time Mary, Augustine, their children, little Margaret French, and the enslaved people they brought with them settled in, there were a few dozen families living in homes scattered along the Fredericksburg waterfront on the opposite bank of the Rappahannock from the old Strother place (later to be called Ferry Farm). They were an international lot, including Frenchmen and Italians as well as Germans associated with mining activities 30 miles deeper into the interior.[18] Towns had to have legal charters from the House of Burgesses, and Fredericksburg was granted the right to hold a market. There also was an extensive wharf and an Anglican parish church. The Lewises were the most prominent locals. They were distant relations to the Washingtons, and Betty Washington would eventually marry into the family and become the mistress of a new Lewis family home on the rises just behind the town. Augustine and his sons would own lots in town as well. When Lawrence was making his plans to return to Virginia after serving in what was called the American Regiment in the Caribbean during the War of Jenkins' Ear (1739–48), he wrote to Augustine, hoping to secure his title to the land at Little Hunting Creek as had

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[17] Philip Levy, *Where the Cherry Tree Grew: The Story of Ferry Farm, George Washington's Boyhood Home* (New York: St Martin's Press, 2013), 71–73, 40, 43, 192–94.

[18] Oscar H. Darter, *Colonial Fredericksburg and Neighborhood in Perspective* (New York: Twayne, 1957), 112; Paula S. Felder, *Forgotten Companions: The First Settlers of Spotsylvania County and Fredericksburgh Town* (Fredericksburg: American History, 2000), 36, 112.

long been planned. In time, he would get that seat and rename it Mount Vernon in honor of Admiral Edward Vernon, who led the less-than-successful enterprise in which Lawrence had served as a captain. But it was clear in 1741 that Augustine was not ready to let his son into his patrimonial inheritance. Lawrence was irritated since he was an adult and even, in fact, a ranked officer who had seen (but not really participated in) combat and seemed to resent having to come home to live under his father and stepmother's roof. He inquired as to whether his "lotts" were "secured" because these were to be his "dwelling" for the time being.[19]

For George and the other children, the move to Fredericksburg meant that they would now live in a place that by Virginia standards was busy and crowded with people. In 1749, George would express his concerns about this state of affairs when he wrote to Lawrence that he and the family at Ferry Farm "suffer enough from the Free Ferry."[20] That public amenity landed near enough to the home that the bell that called Stephen Pilcher—the ferryman—the chatter of the waiting passengers, and the clatter of their horses and wagons could all be heard in the Washington family home. From the home, one could also see all the comings and goings along the Fredericksburg wharf as well as the roofs and chimneys of almost every home in town.[21] This was a far cry from the world of fields and home lots typical of Popes Creek and most of colonial Virginia. But distinct as it might have been, this was the setting where Mary would raise her children and see them off to marriages and careers.

Ferry Farm had a few advantages for the Washingtons and was a superior family seat than the one they'd left behind at Little Hunting Creek. First, and perhaps most importantly, it was closer to the furnace at Accokeek. This had become Augustine's principal venture, so it made every sense to live as close to it as possible. The proximity of the furnace might have made the new city of Fredericksburg of special value as well. There had long been other mine operations up the Rappahannock, and the coming and going of goods in the city placed Augustine in the center of this rather unusual (by Virginia standards) trade. Augustine was also operating a store that was either in Stafford or King George County. There is very little information about this business, but there are several mentions of "Augustine Washington and Company" in accounts and wills in the 1730s and 1740s.[22] There also is some reason to believe that he was selling iron items such as firebacks, even

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[19] "Lawrence Washington to Augustine Washington, May 30, 1741," letter in private collection but can be seen at Heritage Auctions.

[20] "From George Washington to Lawrence Washington, 5 May 1749," *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 1, no. 7.

[21] *Virginia Gazette*, October 1772, in George H. S. King, "Washington's Boyhood Home," *William and Mary Quarterly* second series 17, no. 2 (April 1937): 275.

[22] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, *Stafford County Virginia Will Book, 1729–1748* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1987), 62.

though this was prohibited so as to protect English ironworkers.[23] All of this points to the ways that living on the doorstep of one of the colony's few cities made some business sense for the iron maker and entrepreneur.

Ferry Farm had some advantages for Mary as well. She owned a tract of land called Little Falls about four miles down the river from her new home. Living on the Rappahannock made it easier for her to stay active in the working of her own property.

In May 1739, soon after the family's arrival at Ferry Farm, Mary gave birth to her sixth child, a girl they named Mildred. Mary had had the rare good fortune to see all of her children live past infancy and make it to adulthood. In a world where infant mortality was a sad fact of life, it is easy to imagine Mary's pride and gratitude to God for her record of success. But that changed at Ferry Farm. Mildred lasted only about 18 months before she passed away. She was the only child Mary lost this way, and perhaps significantly, although Mary was only 30 years old at the time, Mildred would be the last child she would bear.[24] The girl's body was cleaned, wrapped, and laid to rest in a small walled-in cemetery a few dozen yards east of the home. This had been the Strother family plot, where William had been buried a few years before, and it might have been where Maurice Clark was interred as well. There is no way to know how many other servants and enslaved Africans also lay in or near that small cemetery. There is no question that the gravesite played a role in the family's sense of place. Mary would have seen the area virtually every day of her life—and she lived at Ferry Farm longer than anywhere else she had called home. When George set out to sell the farm in 1771, he began the process with a survey of the land. Significantly, that survey began at the gate of the little cemetery.[25]

On Christmas Eve, probably 1740, the family suffered a fire in the back room on the eastern side of the house. The event was recalled in 1791 by a former neighbor named Robert Douglas, who mentioned feeling "very sore heart that on a Christmas Eve, his [Augustine's] great house was burned down and that he was obliged with his good family to go and live in the kitchen."[26] Site archaeology showed that Douglas's memory was slightly embellished. In 1741, Augustine received a letter from Richard Yates, the Appleby School's headmaster, in which he condoled Augustine for what he called his "late calamity wch. you

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[23] A fireback attributed to Ferry Farm is in the DAR collection in Washington, DC. If it is in fact from the Accokeek, then it would be evidence that Augustine was making and selling illegal iron items. See Jack D. Warren Jr., "National Historic Landmark Nomination, Washington, George, Boyhood Home Site 44ST174," Washington, DC (January 1, 1999), 25.

[24] Saxton, 2249 of 8056.

[25] "13 Sept 1771 Ferry Farm Survey Notes," Research Files, Ferry Farm, George Washington Foundation, Fredericksburg, VA.

[26] "To George Washington from Robert Douglas, 25 May 1795," *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, Carol S. Ebel, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015): 18, no. 173–75.

suffered by fire."[27] Late in life as well, George noted for a would-be biographer—in a rare reflection on his childhood—that his "father's house burnt."[28] Excavations showed that there had been a fire in the easternmost rear room that did some damage, but it was far from a full house fire. The family quickly rebuilt the burned room and took the opportunity to add another to the back of the home, expanding what had been an L footprint into a full rectangle.[29]

Popes Creek after Augustine and Mary

The Washingtons' relationship to their Popes Creek acres had always been complicated. Although Augustine had inherited acres on the west side of Bridge's Creek and made his home there for a decade, he saw advantages in relocating to the Popes Creek waterfront. One can still see why such a move might appeal. Then as now, Bridge's Creek was far smaller than Popes Creek, and even though the Washington family's association with the place was strong, access to the wide and comparatively deep waters of Popes Creek might have been just too tempting. Augustine acquired more than half of the creek's west bank and then placed it in trust for his second-born son, Augustine Jr. Building an estate for his son might have been his plan all along, and that would help explain why the elder Augustine sold the land to Eskridge to hold in trust right as he committed himself to the Principio enterprise.

Augustine owned several tracts on Mattox Neck at the time the family moved upriver. Much of what he did not own belonged to his cousin John. But John was not living on these acres and had set himself and his family up elsewhere on the Northern Neck. By about 1740, there was almost no Washington presence at all on the land in general and on the GEWA acres in particular. At that time, Lawrence was at war, Augustine Jr. was still at school, and John and Augustine had moved their families away. Although the land was destined to belong to Augustine Jr.—in fact, in a certain read of the law, he *already* owned it—he was nevertheless not in the colony to make it his home. For the time being, the Popes Creek home was either empty or rented out. Augustine was already renting out the rest of

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[27] Moncure Conway, *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1892), 68–69; T. Pape, "Appleby Grammar School and Its Washington Pupils," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (October 1940): 500. See also *Where the Cherry Tree Grew: The Story of Ferry Farm, George Washington's Boyhood Home* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013); Philip Levy, *George Washington Written Upon the Land: Nature, Myth, Memory, and Landscape* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2015).

[28] David Humphreys, *Life of General Washington*, ed. Rosemarie Zagarri (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 59.

[29] Philip Levy, *Where the Cherry Tree Grew: The Story of Ferry Farm, George Washington's Boyhood Home* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013): 53–54; Philip Levy, *The Permanent Resident: Excavations and Explorations of George Washington's Life* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 13–38.

his Mattox Neck acres. Benjamin Weeks lived on the land at the head of Bridge's Creek, while Thomas Finch lived on the old Lisson Tract that Lawrence Washington had fought so hard for and left to Augustine.

John Muse was living nearby also. His family had been on Mattox Neck for some time. His grandfather, also named John, had immigrated from England and must have found Virginia conducive because he lived to the remarkable age of 89. His age was acknowledged by his neighbors in 1720 (three years before his death) when the court moved that "John Mewes [Muse], a very antient man, is upon his motion acquitt from future payment of levies in this county."[30] The Muse sons John II and Thomas fought a bit over their properties. John II went to court in 1706 claiming that he "did cutt down and carry away [20] oak timber trees of the value of L20 sterling" from land Thomas was leasing from John II.[31] For the most part, the Muses—and there were many of them; John II and his wife, Anne Hopkins, for example had seven children in eight years—lived quiet lives on their land, rented property from their neighbors when it was available, and served as jurors in the county court. John (Thomas's son) was farming John Washington's neighboring land just south of GEWA's southern property line in the 1740s.[32] When the Washingtons moved up the Potomac and left Popes Creek, Muse might have stepped in to farm the land on a lease.[33]

John and Augustine's Land Dispute, 1742

The best guide to what was happening at Popes Creek comes from an interesting 1742 land dispute between Augustine and his cousin John. The two men had inherited the bulk of the Mattox Neck land that their fathers and grandfather had amassed. But the two cousins fell into dispute over their exact run of some of the lines marking the border between their respective holdings. The problem stemmed from the fact that each of them owned lands on opposite sides of Bridge's Creek, but on the east bank, Augustine's was north of John's, and that order was flipped on the west bank. The borders were confused. This created a particular problem for the tenants farming the land. Land boundaries were an abstraction until suddenly one found someone else harvesting one's corn or tobacco because it was planted

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[30] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book 1705–1721 Part Eight, 1718–1721* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1994), 60.

[31] John Frederick Dorman, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Order Book 1705–1721 Part One, 1705–1707* (Washington, DC: Privately published, 1990), 55.

[32] *Westmoreland County, Virginia Deeds and Wills, Book 9*, Montross, VA, 279.

[33] For more on the Muse family, see Mary Hope West and Juliet Fauntleroy, "The Muse (Mewes) Family of the Northern Neck of Virginia (Concluded)," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 53, no. 4 (1945): 312–23.

on the wrong side of the line. Benjamin Weeks and John Muse, who lived on or farmed Augustine and his cousin John's land, seemed to have found themselves in a conflict very much like this thanks to the unclear lines between their landlords' respective holdings.[34]

But there was something else lurking beneath the conflict between the cousins. Normally, settling this question would have been easy—that is, as long as the two parties were willing to approach the matter amicably. That does not seem to have been the case in 1742. The extent of that dispute between Augustine and John is unclear. How much of it was just about land, and how much was about some other unrecorded internal family dispute? What is clear, though, is that the disputed property line had become a source of "several differences" that "have arisen and were like to arise" between Augustine and John.[35] The fight between two members of one of the area's most prominent families was made worse by the fact that neither was living on the lands in question. Had all the cornstalks or tobacco plants there been Washington crops, this issue might never have made it to court. But the land was being farmed by tenants who owed no allegiance to one another. The dispute was ugly enough that it became a major issue that had to be handled in Westmoreland County Court, with surveys and exchanges overseen by court-appointed officials. The dispute had echoes of the kinds of other property line fights that had cropped up on Mattox Neck over the years, but this time, the conflict pointed to a small but possibly significant divide between the Westmoreland Washingtons—perhaps even something that contributed to Augustine's leaving the community.

The cousins commissioned a survey of the bounds of Augustine's Popes Creek land to settle their "several differences." Their dispute was contentious enough that the survey's results were immediately drawn as a map, and that map was added to court records, a rare occurrence in the long history of local land disputes. The parties agreed to have surveyor Joseph Berry create the needed documents. Berry was an interesting choice because he was a King George County resident and neither Westmoreland's official surveyor nor another local trained in the craft. The choice of Berry is made even more curious by the fact that Benjamin Weeks, who lived on Augustine's land, was skilled enough in the craft that he would later become the county surveyor.[36] Joining the party were Richard Bernard of Stafford County and Daniel McCarty, at the time one of the most publicly active Westmoreland County residents. These two men served as the eyes and ears of the court, making sure everything was observed and aboveboard. Berry, the observers, his assistants, and the two disputants gathered at the "mouth of Bridge Creek" on Thursday, August 24,

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[34] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 23.

[35] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 23.

[36] Pamela S. Pearson, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders 1755–1758* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2009), 31.

1742, and from there they walked south and west along the line of the creek. Either they began late in the day or the weather turned against them, but that was all they got done on Thursday. They set off again the next morning, this time from the bottom of Augustine's land on the Popes Creek side, and headed along the disputed line between Augustine's and John's lands. They were still unable to finish the work and met for a third day on Saturday, August 26, this time to mark out the boundaries of the lands between the forks of Bridge's Creek, long known locally as Indian Town and owned by John.

Once the surveys were done, the parties met in court, and the observers declared the boundaries to have been fairly drawn. There were a few problems, though, mostly having to do with two triangular plots at the head of Bridge's Creek. For the most part, the cousins' claims made sense, but there was a deficiency on Augustine's side of the ledger, so the court ordered John to sell his cousin 16 acres for "the sum of eleven pounds, sixteen shillings current money" and, in so doing, considered the matter closed. To make sure that the issue did not reemerge, the court ordered that each of the two cousins "mutually entered and executed bonds each to the other in the penal sum of one thousand pounds sterling to stand and abide the arbitrators award and judgment."[37]

Berry's map is of special interest for GEWA's history. That map and the surveys are the sources of the names of the men living on and farming John's and Augustine's lands. But the map also shows that Augustine Jr. was probably living on the GEWA acres in 1742. There is no record of when he returned from England, but he seems to have been there still as late as 1740. He turned 21 in 1741 and would have been legally able to come into possession of the property his father had sold to Eskridge to hold for him. The 1742 map was very careful with how it listed people's names. It lists "Augustine Washington's land where Thomas Fitch lives" and "Augustine Washington's land where John Muse lives."[38] Since the tenants were part of the dispute, the inclusion of their names makes sense. But the specificity Berry showed in drafting the map makes the fact that the GEWA acres are listed as "Augustine Washington's Land" mean that this referred to Augustine Jr., who was by then the land's resident and not his father.[39]

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[37] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, 1732–1734* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1995), 25.

[38] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 9*, Montross, VA, 279.

[39] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 9*, Montross, VA, 279.

Augustine Washington Dies, April 1743

The documents of the land dispute were all created in August, September, and December of 1742, with another one drafted in March 1743. The last report on this was recorded in Westmoreland County Court on April 12, 1743. The people there could not have yet known that Augustine lay dying at Ferry Farm.

The date of his passing is unclear, as was the cause of his demise, although later a story would emerge that he had suffered from a stomach ailment. Augustine gathered family and witnesses on April 11 to add a codicil (an extra statement) to his already extensive and complicated will. Soon after that, Augustine Washington, planter, iron producer, and father of 10 children, passed away.

His will was filled with carefully thought-through allocations of property and people. He was very concerned to make sure that everything he left to his kin would stay in the family should misfortune befall his beneficiaries. Virtually all his bequests carried provisions that ensured that should one child die childless, the property would devolve to another, and if the same thing occurred with that child, then yet another. In this way, Augustine worked to control his holdings even after death. His children would live with those provisions for decades. George, for example, would not become the full owner of Mount Vernon until 1761. The will had left it to Lawrence and his children after him, so only when Lawrence's children and his wife, Anne, had died could George legally claim title. Augustine also gave Ferry Farm, half the land at Deep Run, and one lot in Fredericksburg to George.

The will carried some specific provisions for Mattox Neck. Augustine Jr. already owned the Popes Creek land, but the will gave to him all of his father's lands in the county with a few small exceptions and requirements. One was that Augustine Jr. was to give the crops of "Bridges Quarter" to Mary at Ferry Farm for a five-year period while she worked to get her land at Deep Run into production.[40] She was never able to make that happen, but at least she had five years of either the crops themselves or their value provided to her by her stepson.

The Enslaved People in Augustine's Will and Probate, 1743

The distribution of landed property, furnishings, and animals was a simple enough affair, but the reallocation of the people Augustine enslaved was a far more fraught matter. For one thing, they were not a single group of people. Mary had brought enslaved people into the marriage, and there was an unspecified number of other enslaved people working the

[40] Augustine Washington's Will, 1743, *King George County Wills, King George County, Virginia*, Book 1, 158.

land on Mattox Neck, another group at the Accokeek forge, and still others on outlying acres. In addition to these people, there also were 20 enslaved people working and living at Ferry Farm, who were counted later during the probate process. The legal ownership of all these people was divided between Augustine and Mary, and it is not clear where all the people mentioned in the will lived, since unlike a probate inventory, which was a document of a place, a will referred to a whole estate, and Augustine was enslaving people on several properties. All of this means that finding an accurate or complete number of the people Augustine enslaved and their location at the time of his death is difficult. [41]

Augustine's will, though, specified the fate of a number of people, some of whom were singled out by name. Frank was supposed to return to Popes Creek to serve Augustine Jr. There also were to be "three young working slaves" that would be bought for Augustine Jr. from money drawn from "iron works" profits. Ten unnamed people would go to George, although, as he was still a minor, their lives and the rest of his inheritance would be in Mary's hands. Augustine wished that the rest of the people he enslaved be divided between his minor children. Ned, Jack, Bob, Sue, and Lucy, however, were to stay under Mary's control. All five of these people were living at Ferry Farm.[42]

Who was Frank? There are two previous references to women named Frank in the records of Washington family enslaving. One was the woman the court required Jane and Augustine to give to Robert Vaulx in 1717. Frank could not have been that person. The other was a "negro girl named Frank" who appeared in the 1727 list of people sold to Eskridge and Lawrence Butler to hold for Lawrence Washington and Augustine Jr.[43] The people listed in that sale were not mentioned at all in the documents associated with the distribution of Augustine's estate. It would appear that these people—Molly and her minor children Lawrence and Frank (f), and Bess and her children Bett, Nan, Guss, Pricilla, and Little Sarah—were already allocated and living where the Washingtons intended them to be, the first group having gone to Lawrence and the second to Augustine Jr. None of them were listed in Ferry Farm's inventory, and Bess, Bett, Nan, Guss, Pricilla, and Little Sarah might have always remained at Popes Creek, maintaining the estate between 1735 and 1742 when the Washingtons were elsewhere. Some might even have still been there at the time that Augustine Jr. came into his estate. That leaves some confusion about just who was the person named Frank mentioned in Augustine's will. The simplest explanation is that this

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[41] Augustine Washington's Will, 1743, *King George County Wills, King George County, Virginia*, Book 1, 157–60.

[42] Augustine Washington's Will, 1743, *King George County Wills, King George County, Virginia*, Book 1, 157–60.

[43] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *Virginia Court Records: Deed and Will Abstracts of Westmoreland County, Virginia 1723–1726* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1994), 38–39.

was a third person named Frank who, at the time of Augustine's death, was living at Ferry Farm, though possibly elsewhere. What is clear is that Frank was not listed in the Ferry Farm "home house" inventory when it was taken shortly after Augustine's death.[44]

The fates of these enslaved people came up again in 1750, when the King George County Court appointed representatives to distribute them according to the terms of Augustine's will. At the time, George was 18 years old and might have been making a claim to some of his inherited people, even though he would call Ferry Farm home until at least 1752. In 1750, though, he made his first land purchase of some acres in King George County.[45] Messrs. Champe, Lee, and Innis created the following division:

> **"Mrs. Washington"**: Ned, Jack, Bob, Sue, Jane, Jack a child, Ned, Prince, Phillis, Judy, and Will.
>
> **George**: Fortune, George, Long Joe, Winna, Bellindar, Jenny, Adam, Matt, London, Milla, and Frank.
>
> **Samuel**: Dick, Ralph, Tommery, Rosa, Pegg, Milla, Sarah, Charles, and Virgin Will.
>
> **John Augustine**: Dublin, Tony, Short Joe, Winna, Nan, Patt, Jack, Jerimy, Gim, and Cate.
>
> **Charles**: Peter, Will, Prince, Cate, Beck, Cate, Jamy, Milla, Tom, Polly, Sucky, and Jerimy.[46]

This list includes 52 people. Until just before that count, there had been two more, Harry and Tame, but the former had killed the latter and then was himself executed.[47] The people in this list were all covered by the terms of Augustine's will, meaning that this is as close as we will get to an estimate of the total number of people Augustine was enslaving at the time of his death.

Fourteen of the people in the 1750 distribution had been on the Ferry Farm home house inventory list seven years before. It might have been 15, though, because "Jo" on the inventory could have been either Long Joe or Short Joe, who were named in the distribution. Ned, Jack, Bob, and Sue remained with Mary, and it would seem that Lucy either died or was sold away in the intervening years. George Washington received 11 people, even though the will called for only 10. In his list were George, Jenny, and London, who were listed in the Ferry Farm inventory. The remaining listed Ferry Farm enslaved people—Dick, Tony, Nan, and Jack—were split between John Augustine and Charles. Mary and her minor

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[44] Augustine Washington's Will, 1743, *King George County Wills, King George County, Virginia*, Book 1, 157–160.

[45] "Memorandum Division of Slaves, 1762," *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, vol. 7, W. W. Abbot and Dorothy Twohig, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1990), 172–74.

[46] Ruth and Sam Sparacio, eds., *King George County, Virginia, Deeds, 1735–1752* (McLean, VA: Antient Press, 1987), 114.

[47] Philip Levy, *Where the Cherry Tree Grew: The Story of Ferry Farm, George Washington's Boyhood Home* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 2013), 71–73.

children still lived at Ferry Farm, so for the time being, these people were not being split up—a community that remained intact for at least seven years but possibly longer. But in reallocating these people's legal ownership, the seeds were sown for future disruption and heartache as, one by one, the Washington children reached maturity and moved away.

When Lawrence Washington died in 1752, he left nine of the people he was enslaving at Mount Vernon to Augustine Jr. These people were Sambo, Camero, Judah (1), Judah (2), Anteno, Betty, Nan (1), Couta, and Nan (2). It took a while for the division of people Lawrence called for to be concluded. It would not be until 1754 that these nine people would have headed downriver to take up residence at Popes Creek, joining those already there.[48] In addition to Frank, these nine make up the named people we can identify who were working and living at Popes Creek during this period.

Even though Augustine was a King George County resident, the Westmoreland court also requested an inventory of his Westmoreland property, and on June 28, 1743, William Brown, Jonathan Price, and Original Brown (a descendant of the original Originall Brown) tallied up the value of the estate.[49] The resulting inventory contained no domestic items at all, only enslaved people, animals, and a small list of farm goods. The probators probably did not include the home's contents in their work because the home was empty or rented out or, most likely, because it was already occupied by Augustine Jr. The list they created also included the names and valuations of 14 enslaved people. These were Long Joe, Tom Merry, Kate and her daughter June, Beck and her daughter Peg, Prince, Charles, and Will. Two additional people were listed separately from the main list: "negro man named Fortune" and "negro man named Frank." These were all people living on Augustine's Westmoreland acres at the time of his death. They also might have been some of the people whose work would go to supporting Mary in the first years of her widowhood, as called for in the will.[50]

All these people except the two children were listed in Augustine's will, so they were already counted in the total. Because the will had been drafted earlier while Augustine was ill and at Ferry Farm, he probably did not even know about the births of Peg and June, who were not included in the will but *were* counted later in the inventory. The ownership of these new lives would not have been in question: Peg went to Charles Washington because that is who inherited her mother, and June went to either Charles or John Augustine—that is hard to tell because there was more than one Kate listed in the will,

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[48] W. W. Abbot, ed., *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 231.

[49] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1739–1743*, Montross, VA, 209.

[50] "Inventory of Augustine Washington, 1743," Westmoreland County Records, GEWA Transcriptions, 203–05.

and any one of the three could have been little June's mother. In any case, as Augustine lay dying, two babies were born to the people he enslaved. Thus life carried on in a slave-dependent colony. [51]

Augustine Jr. and Anne Aylett, 1743–1757

Around the time of Augustine's death, Augustine Jr. married Anne Aylett. She was the daughter of William Aylett, a Gloucester County native who had moved to the Nomini Creek area and become prominent in local affairs. Anne moved into the Popes Creek home and in 1749 gave birth to the couple's first child, Elizabeth. She would be followed by daughters Anne (b. 1752) and Jane Augustine (b. 1756), and in 1757 a boy named William Augustine.

The Ayletts were related to both the Eskridges and the Vaulxes, as was Augustine Jr. through his mother, and the affairs of the Vaulx family became a major concern for Augustine Jr. Like his father and grandfather, Augustine Jr. served as a justice on the county court, but it was the Vaulx business that made him a regular at court. Three generations of Vaulxes had built up a considerable trade empire with numerous accounts in the colony and in England. Robert Vaulx had made Augustine Jr. and John Bushrod executors of his estate, and settling it would bring the two into court repeatedly in the 1750s to handle dozens of claims against the estate. The claims were extensive and involved parties from both sides of the Atlantic.[52]

George and Popes Creek, 1743–1754

During the time George lived with his mother at Ferry Farm, he made many trips to visit his two older brothers. Few of these are well documented, but they can be inferred from other sources. Other than the record of his christening and perhaps the mention of "baby George" by his father, the first mention of place in the extensive records of George's life was in his diary entry of March 11, 1747, in which he noted that he had "travell'd this day 40 miles to Mr. George Neavels in Prince William County."[53] He later signed other documents as a resident of King George County and became a freemason in Fredericksburg in 1752. Nevertheless, trips to both Mount Vernon and Popes Creek were, most likely, regular events during these years.

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[51] "Inventory of Augustine Washington, 1743," Westmoreland County Records, GEWA Transcriptions, 203–5.

[52] "Anne Aylett," Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck, https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us, accessed 5/21/22.

[53] Donald Jackson, ed., *The Diaries of George Washington*, vol. 1 (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1976), 6.

In later years, many colorful tales emerged about George's time at Popes Creek and at Chotank in King George County. There were Washingtons and other kin all along this stretch of the Northern Neck, so there was no shortage of homes and cousins, close and distant, for George to visit. The 19th-century fabulist Benson Lossing related some stories that he claimed to have learned from a Washington cousin named Lawrence.[54] None of them have any supporting contemporary documentation, but if someone wanted to make up a cousin, Lawrence would be a good name to choose. One document, however, gives a contemporary glimpse into George's life with his friends and cousins on the Northern Neck. The author was a former Northern Neck resident named Buckner Stith, who had since relocated to the western reaches of Virginia. In 1787, he wrote to the famous Revolutionary War general, recalling times they had shared as children. Stith's was a colorful letter written in an "I knew you when" tone. He claimed that he had heard someone, whom he derisively called "the little man," boasting that he lived within three miles of "the General." Feeling the effect of "three full pipes," which, he claimed, "inebriates a good deal if the tobacco be strong," Stith set pen to paper to remind Washington that he was an old associate and was not impressed by the now-famous man's achievements:

> I am the same Man who marched with him [Washington] and old Laurence from Chotanck to Fredericksburg, how Laurence and him laughed at me for holding the wine glass in the full hand, but as I was five Years older than either of them, I thought I might hold the wine glass as I pleased; that we lost a Horse or two in the Trip, and were obliged to walk honestly in turn clear to Chotank again; and moreover I will tell him, that although Laurence and I might notice him on the Road when in turn to walk, a sound looking, modest, large boned young Man, still I would not defend the matter for a round sum, that were Laurence and I put to the oath, that we thought at the same time, we had each of us an equal chance at least with him, for a Generalship.[55]

The implication is unmistakable. Stith, not wanting to flatter George with more praise, continued, "I had rather see you in sound health bending over bushes and mire in full Chace with twenty-four Hounds, than to hear the most difficult point discussed of the most difficult RETREAT ever made, between your Honour and the old King of Prussia's ghost."[56]

Stith might have been trying to cut his old friend down to size in the way one could expect from anyone who saw a childhood companion grow to international prominence. But despite his tweaking tone, Stith's portrayal of a plain-looking but hearty and "large

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[54] Benson Lossing, *Pictorial Field-Book of the American Revolution* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1852), 2: 214; Harold Mahan, *Benson J. Lossing and Historical Writing in the United States, 1830–1890* (Westport, CT: Greenwood, 1996).

[55] "To George Washington from Buckner Stith, 22 March 1787," *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series*, vol. 5, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 99–101.

[56] "To George Washington from Buckner Stith, 22 March 1787," *The Papers of George Washington, Confederation Series*, vol. 5, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1997), 99–101.

boned" young man teasing his friends for their gauche manners and enjoying charging his horse across the countryside is the best glimpse we have of George before he became famous.

In his midteens, George took up surveying and conducted several practice surveys as he honed his new craft. The trade had long been a favorite of the gentry—Augustine even owned his own set of surveying chains. Living at the western edge of the colony during the early stages of a land boom made the possibility of making money through land acquisition a very real possibility. A brief suggestion from Lawrence and his powerful father-in-law, William Fairfax, that George go to sea had been wisely crushed by Mary and her brother Joseph. But that left George seeking something to do with his energy while he waited to come into his inheritance. His older brothers had spent their midteen years in England at the Appleby Grammar School, but if that had been in the cards for George, the opportunity died with his father. Following Augustine's death and the division of his estate, the 1740s were not the easiest time for the widowed Mary and her children.

Managing an estate as an unmarried woman was a difficult task. Mary was uniquely well suited to handle her own affairs, but times were tight at Ferry Farm, and site archaeology has shown that Mary cut every corner she could by buying cheap versions of high-end goods and repairing delicate ceramics when they had broken.[57] George, in fact, would later recall this period as one of the poorest in his life. So surveying made perfect sense as a way to fill the time not dedicated to English schooling and to make some money as well. George's exercise books show him to have had a steady hand in drafting and a fine grasp of mapping and mathematics, essential skills for a good surveyor.

He tested those budding skills out at family sites along the Northern Neck. On August 18, 1747, he did a survey of a plot of land near what he called "the school house" in Chotank. A few days later, he conducted a small survey for his older cousin John Washington in Chotank as well.[58] In October 1747, while visiting Popes Creek, he surveyed what he called "a piece of land" along the Potomac riverfront between Bridge's and Popes Creeks. Mostly George played a surveyor's game of connect the dots as he charted out lines between prominent trees on the land. The lines he drew were not actual property lines; the whole run was well within land long owned by his family. Unfortunately, the map did not locate any of the buildings that stood on the site, assuming there were some within the map's scope. The survey did note, though, a small island sitting just offshore from Bridge's

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[57] Laura J. Galke, "The Mother of the Father of Our Country: Mary Ball Washington's Genteel Domestic Habits," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 38 (2009), no. 38; Laura Galke, David Muraca, and Philip Levy, "Small Finds, Space, and Social Context: Exploring Agency in Historical Archaeology," *Northeastern Historical Archaeology* 40 (June 2011): 1–18.

[58] John C. Fitzpatrick, *George Washington: Colonial Traveller, 1732–1775* (Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company, 1927), 5–6.

Creek. Changes in the river have washed that island away. Even though the 1747 survey does not answer many questions, it was executed with skill and precision and serves as a document of one of George's Popes Creek visits.

On February 27, 1747, George conducted a survey of what he called "A Plan of Major Law. Washington's Turnip Field."[59] This map from Mount Vernon was far more elaborate than the Popes Creek map. George covered the entire page with a large directional star and situated his map within that star. He did not locate the turnip field within the larger plantation, but as with the Popes Creek survey, the document is a memento of George's time spent at Mount Vernon.

Augustine Jr. and John Bayn, 1757

The fighting in the Seven Years' War was remote from Popes Creek. Unlike the wars of the 1670s, the likelihood of French and allied Native people raiding the Potomac was remote. Virginia's legislators at the time were absorbed in conflicts over the wages and rights of the colony's Anglican ministers and not as concerned about the war grinding on both in Europe and on the frontiers of British North America. But the fact of war, and particularly its implications for maritime commerce, caused Virginia counties to keep their militias vigilant as well as having them perform their usual duties as guardians against servile insurrection. Augustine Jr. held the rank of colonel in the Westmoreland militia and so had some considerable responsibility in making sure his men were trained and ready should they be called upon.

In the spring of 1757, a Westmoreland County freeholder named John Bayn led a small patrol around the county. Along the way, some sort of dispute emerged between Bayn and a man named Job Shadrick. The matter was hot enough that Bayn "caused some soldiers under his care" to take Shadrick "into their custody" and then ordered them to "beat him in a barbarous manner."[60] The nature of the dispute was never stated in the record, but when news of the incident made it to Augustine Jr., he felt that Bayn had overstepped a line and acted improperly. As the colonel of the militia, Augustine Jr.'s job was to make sure things went smoothly and infractions were dealt with in a fair manner. Augustine Jr. wrote to Bayn requesting that the latter "come to him in relation to the ill

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[59] "A Plan of Major Washington's Turnip Field," https://www.loc.gov/resource/mgw1a.003/?sp=64.

[60] Pamela S. Pearson, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders 1755–1758* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2009), 185.

treatment the said Shadrick had met with."[61] But instead of meeting the colonel and settling the matter, Bayn was reported to have "flung" Augustine Jr.'s letter "in the fire" and announced that "Colonel Washington might kiss his backside."[62]

Bayn's insolence and the beating he ordered landed him in court, where he was ordered to pay two securities of 250 pounds each, one for each of his infractions. Henry Ludwell Lee and Richard Henry Lee put up the securities, and Bayn was bound to show "good behavior towards all of his Matys sovgn [Majesty's sovereign] subjects" for "one year and one day next to come," or the securities would be forfeited. There would be no more trouble from John Bayn, partly because he passed away later that year.

Mary Bowden

On August 28, 1758, Augustine Jr. was in court to hear the judgment rendered in the case of one of his servants who had fled Popes Creek. Her name was Mary Bowden, and the court record listed her as being a "molatto servant." She had fled the Washingtons in 1756 and had managed to keep herself hidden for two years before her luck ran out and she was hauled into court. By any standard, this was a remarkable achievement. Unfortunately, the records left very little to shed light on what Mary's plan was and how she'd executed it. Had she fled the county, or even the colony, and made her way far from Popes Creek, it seems unlikely that she would have ever been found. The color of her skin would have mattered immensely, though, and would have dictated the degree to which she could avoid being seen as a slave and thus immediately be handed over to one authority or another. If she was light-skinned enough to "pass" as a free woman or a white servant, she might have had a relatively easy time hiding in plain sight; she might even have worked for someone during her absence. Two years is a long time to hide out in the swamps as some runaways did, but that is at least a possibility. The most likely explanation, though, was that Mary was able to stay hidden for so long because people in the wider community helped her. She might have been able to find refuge in one of the many quarters that dotted the area's tobacco and corn fields. Many of these had only the slightest oversight from masters and their hired managers. Nevertheless, staying secreted for two years would have meant cooperation and perhaps even an overseer turning a blind eye.[63]

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[61] Pamela S. Pearson, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders 1755–1758* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2009), 185.

[62] Pamela S. Pearson, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders 1755–1758* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2009), 185.

[63] For more on runaway servants, see Simon Middleton, "Runaways, Rewards, and the Social History of Money," *Early American Studies* 15, no. 3 (2017): 617–47; Jonathan Prude, "To Look upon the 'Lower Sort': Runaway Ads and the Appearance of Unfree Laborers in America, 1750–1800," *Journal of American History* 78, no. 1 (1991): 124–59.

Mary's adventure in freedom ended in August when the court assigned her "four years six months and ten days" to make up for her lost time. She also had to pay "two pistols" to make up for the costs "expended in taking her up."[64] At that point, Mary vanishes from the records. Had she stayed in place, she would not have finished her extended term of service until 1762. By that point, Augustine Jr. had died.

[64] Pamela Pearson, ed., *Westmoreland County, Virginia Orders, 1758–1761* (Lewes, DE: Colonial Roots, 2008), 2–3.

CHAPTER FIFTEEN

Mattox Neck in the Age of Revolution, 1758–1795

Augustine Jr.'s Gout, Death, and Will

In 1758, Augustine Jr. was preparing to go to England, and in anticipation of the dangers of travel, he sat down to draft his will. As was somewhat common practice, he made his son William Augustine, who was still a minor, his principal heir, leaving him all of his lands "in this county as elsewhere."[1] That included "thirty negro slaves" who were living on and near Popes Creek.[2] In his will, Augustine Jr. tried to make sure that his wife, Anne, would be secured even after his death, while ensuring that title would fall to William Augustine. He requested that the people he was enslaving be granted to his son in tranches over time, with Anne having the right to pick and choose which people she wanted for herself. It was a complicated arrangement and one destined to set up conflict down the road. The will was also confused about what was to happen to Anne, leaving it unclear if she was to have rights to the home and land after her husband's death.

When Augustine died, he left his mine interests to Lawrence, who in turn willed them to Augustine Jr. When it was his turn to write a will, Augustine Jr. left them to Anne Aylett. The operation that had started off quite promisingly had slowly lost steam. Lawrence's interests were in western lands, and he did not put the effort into the mine project that his father had. By the time the papers went to Anne Aylett, the Virginia side of the venture had all but stopped even though, thanks to her father-in-law's deals, she was entitled to a share of the profits. As late as 1772, Anne was corresponding with Principio partners in England, ensuring that she would still get the dividends due to her.[3]

Augustine Jr. was in poor health. His trip to England was perhaps to visit spas, seek a skilled physician, or just escape Virginia's heat and humidity in hopes of helping with an unspecified ailment. While there, he enjoyed a "small share of health." But when he had returned to the colony by late September 1759, according to his brother George, he "had

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[1] "Augustine Washington's Will," GEWA Court Transcriptions, 1, no. 157.

[2] "Augustine Washington's Will," GEWA Court Transcriptions, 1, no. 157.

[3] "Thomas Rysell to Anne Washington, June 15, 1772," Principio Company Papers, British Library, London, England.

but little benefited in point of health by his trip."[4] The following year, Augustine Jr. wrote to George, noting that he hoped to visit Mount Vernon (by then George's seat) depending on the weather and his gout, a form of arthritis common among the British gentry in the 18th century. Gout caused painful inflammation in the extremities, which could turn red and lead to cracking of the skin and other problems. A bad case of gout could make something as simple as walking a painful or even impossible experience. The condition itself is not fatal but is usually, then as now, associated with a series of other problems that collectively point to larger issues. Its primary cause is uric acid crystals collecting in the joints; smaller joints can get congested more easily, so feet and hands are easily afflicted. The increase in uric acid is a result primarily of diet. Eating large quantities of red meat, shellfish, and sweet drinks will raise one's uric acid levels. It so happens that this also is a good description of many well-to-do 18th-century Britons'—particularly Virginians'—diets. Red meat and sweet wines made regular appearances on gentry tables, and their frequent consumption was seen as part of living the good life. Obesity, another factor that could severely aggravate gout, could easily result from elite planters' diets as well. High blood pressure, diabetes, and heart and kidney disease also accelerated gout.[5] Medical literature of the time was clear about what caused the affliction. "The gout most generally attacks those who live in ease and voluptuousness," wrote Samuel Wood in his 1775 *Strictures on the Gout*, and "who have been used to wine, and other spirituous liquors."[6]

Taken together, a picture emerges of a gout sufferer as a corpulent man (the condition afflicted men at a higher rate than women) whose wealth and comfort were slowly killing him. This is certainly how gout was portrayed in 18th-century popular culture. One cartoon of the time shows an overweight man of means whose nose and cheeks are flushed red and pocked from years of drink. In the cartoon, he guzzles down a glass of wine as he sits at a table covered with half-eaten sweets and fruits. Under the table is a small devil figure who holds a hot coal to the man's foot. The image is called *Introduction of the Gout*.[7] The artistic satirist Thomas Rowlandson's 1785 etching, called *Comfort in the Gout*, highlighted the irony of the affliction. In it, we see a fattened gentry man seated amid cushions with his swollen, bandaged leg elevated on a pillow. He is surrounded by

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[4] "From George Washington to Richard Washington, 20 September 1759," *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series*, vol. 6, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1988), 358–59.

[5] https://www.mayoclinic.org/diseases-conditions/gout/symptoms-causes/syc-20372897.

[6] Samuel Wood, *Structures on the Gout: With Practical Advice to the Gouty People of Great Britain* (London: John Bell, 1775), 20.

[7] https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/4/49/A_self-indulgent_man_afflicted_with_gout%3B_the_pain_is_represented_by_a_demon_burning_his_foot_Wellcome_V0010850.jpg.

family and servants, who are trying to ease his suffering but serving him glasses of sweet wine and silver tureens full of fancy food. The message would have been clear to all: the comfort that caused the gout was being used to comfort the sufferer.[8]

Gout could not have killed Augustine Jr., though his suffering is perhaps a window into his overall health. In 1762, he passed away and was laid to rest in the family cemetery beside so many of his relations. His burial was notable for being the last one of his line.

Augustine Jr.'s Inventory and Estate, 1762

Although Augustine Jr.'s estate was probated, it was done as a list of possessions and was not the result of a room-by-room walk-through. That means we lost the chance to see a possible layout of the home through the eyes of the probate officials. Instead, we have a very detailed list of the goods and furnishings that filled the home on Popes Creek as well as counts of livestock and enslaved people. The probators grouped the "goods" by categories, the first part of the list being domestic items, tools, and cooking wares. The second category was livestock, and the third was enslaved people. Organizing the Washington family possessions this way allowed for valuation breakdowns by category. That means we can see where the Washington family's wealth resided, apart from in the land itself. The numbers are revealing. Rounded up to the nearest pound, they are:

Goods: 964
Livestock: 640
Enslaved Africans: 2845[9]

This is perhaps the single most significant revelation in the inventory. All of Augustine Jr.'s possessions and livestock represented only two-thirds of the value he had invested in enslaved people. Land was, of course, the most valuable of Augustine Jr.'s holdings, but much of that had been granted him by his father and did not represent his own purchasing. But the family was more invested in enslaved people than anything other than land. Virginia law ensured that enslaved adults would produce enslaved children, making enslaving people itself a moneymaking proposition. Land could produce wealth only through tillage and the good fortune of weather and markets. Enslaved people, though, would create wealth for their enslavers simply by living their lives without regard to weather or markets. Dehumanizing as the parallel is, the enslaved made wealth for their enslavers much in the way livestock would. The principal financial difference was that enslaved people were worth considerably more than animals. For example, the single most valuable animal the Washingtons owned was a "fine bay stoned horse," which the probators

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[8] https://render.fineartamerica.com/images/images-profile-flow/400/images/artworkimages/mediumlarge/3/comfort-in-the-gout-thomas-rowlandson.jpg.

[9] These calculations and the subsequent references come from "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

assessed at 40 pounds. By contrast, a man named Will was valued at 80 pounds, as were both Camero and "Carpenter Dick." Peter was assessed at 60 pounds, and Saul and James were each valued at 70. The highest-valued women were those listed with their children, such as Barbara, Nan (A), Judy, and Nan (B), each of whom was listed as having a "child" and was valued at 80 pounds. The inventory highlights the degree to which enslaving people was not only a labor system for producing wealth but a considerable source of wealth as well. This helps explain planters' long-term commitment to the system.[10]

By any standard, the inventory is an impressive document. It is difficult to tell how many of the listed things had been in the home since Augustine's day and how many were comparatively new. Most of the more delicate ceramics would not have been that old (since they would break quickly under regular use). Likewise, the large number of livestock and horses would not have lasted all that long. But the trunks, silver plate, finery, and heavier furnishings could have been quite old, some perhaps even dating back to the time of John Washington. There are clues as well to how the home was decorated. Thanks to the presence of some surviving surplus stored away somewhere (but not hidden from the probator's prying eye), we know that at least one room had "royal blue and white" wallpaper, while another had "yellow flocked" wallpaper. Flocking was a process whereby woolen dust landed on the paper, which had been strategically covered in glue to create patterns. The result was a wall covering that had elaborate fuzzy patterns (paisleys were popular) set against a solid color. Flocked paper was a high-style rococo choice right out of the most fashionable salons in London or Paris. A garish yellow would have been right in keeping with current gentry taste.[11] The inventory also listed border papers in various patterns that could run along stairwells or at the top of ceilings. All of this points to a home with imported refinements very much in the style of the time.[12]

Most of the furnishings were made of black walnut or mahogany, dark woods (and probably imported) of a color that would have made a charming contrast to the yellow flocked wallpaper. Sealskin trunks, one of them dyed blue, were on hand to hold the acres of linens and fabrics commonly stored in most gentry homes. There were at least four "looking glasses" (mirrors), imported items that would have been among the most valuable in any Virginia home. Two of these were worth at least 10 pounds each, making them among the most expensive items in the home. The family had a huge collection of ceramic

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[10] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[11] Kevin Sweeney, "High Style Vernacular: Lifestyles of the Colonial Elite," in *Of Consuming Interest: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 37. See also Lois Green Carr and Lorena S. Walsh, "Changing Lifestyles and Consumer Behavior in the Colonial Chesapeake," in *Of Consuming Interest: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1994), 59–166.

[12] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

plates, a "horn punch ladle," and a few pewter plates as well. They did not seem to have much silver, though, and what they did have was in the form of specialized items such as a "silver watch," a "silver strainer" (used for soggy tea leaves), and a "silver stand and castors," which was a table set of matched tubular containers for expensive condiments such as sugar, pepper, and "mustard powder." Valued at 23 pounds, this was the single most expensive domestic possession the Washingtons owned. There were many tableware sets, but it is notable that none was made of silver. The fanciest was a cased set of "green ivory handled knives and forks." None of the other parts of the dining set were notable except that a few were declared "old," meaning they might have lineage in the family. There also were large numbers of wineglasses and decanters as well as a quantity of "Tenerife wine" imported from the Atlantic islands off the coast of Africa. Fashionable drinks were available in the Washington home as evidenced by cups for drinking hot chocolate and two pounds of the needed powdered chocolate. There also was a "cannister with coffee."[13]

Tea, the most popular of fashionable drinks, was widely drunk in the Washington home. This most complicated of drinks was also one that carried deep imperial significance. The entire habit of tea drinking was imported from China, meaning that few English people ever actually saw the so-called "tea ceremony" as its Asian devisers meant for it to be practiced. Instead, British fashionable tea drinkers created for themselves what they thought the ceremony was, and British merchants were eager to sell them the specialized accoutrements for its celebration. A fashionable tea set included small handless cups, saucers, a boiling kettle, a teapot, a strainer and slop bowl for the used leaves, a pitcher for milk, a sugar bowl or caster, and delicate spoons for stirring. Needless to say, this was an expensive "kit," and if one wanted to drink tea in the fashionable way, one would have to lay out a considerable sum.[14] The Washington home had parts of at least three tea sets distributed around its rooms and outbuildings. The tea itself was also costly. The inventory recorded the presence of a full pound of "Thyson tea." The tea in question was Young Hyson tea, a green leaf that was singularly prized in American markets. Black teas mostly were shipped powdered and pressed into rock-hard bricks, but Hyson teas were left in a dried leaf form and packed into sealed boxes. Seventy or so of these Hyson-loaded boxes were thrown into Boston Harbor in 1773 as a protest against duties Parliament had put on goods imported into the colonies. The choice of tea was no accident. Few commodities better symbolized the empire and its reach. For proud British colonial subjects, sitting in Virginia and drinking Chinese tea from either English, Chinese, or Japanese cups and saucers was a simple domestic way to participate in, and even celebrate, the empire itself.

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[13] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[14] T. H. Breen, "An Empire of Goods: The Anglicization of Colonial America, 1690–1776," *Journal of British Studies* 25, no. 4 (1986): 83–87; T. H. Breen, *The Marketplace of Revolution: How Consumer Politics Shaped American Independence* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2004), 304–305; Richard Bushman, *The Refinement of America: Persons, Houses, Cities* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993), 184.

When Parliament landed duties on goods like these, they politicized something that had been meaningful and fashionable. The response was to boycott and, eventually, destroy the now-reviled tea.[15]

One of the most expensive objects in the list, valued at 21 pounds, was a "clock," almost certainly a mantelpiece imported from Britain or Europe. There were several singular objects in the home, or at least counted in the inventory, that spoke to what life had been like in the Washington household. An "old back gammon" table hinted at the types of leisure-time activities that took place. There was a "fiddle," meaning that someone had at least some ability to play a tune. The estate also had what the probators labeled a set of "shoe making tools" as well as "sides" of leather that could have been worked by these tools. This is an interesting glimpse into the domestic economy.[16]

The home contained an impressive library. Augustine Jr.'s education was not put to waste, and it is tempting to imagine George looking at some of these volumes as well—but not the ones in Greek and Latin as he never learned to read either of those languages.[17]

The bookshelves groaned under the weight of six volumes of Shakespeare's plays and 13 volumes of Paul de Rapin's *Histoire d'Angleterre*, which were translated into English and published as *The History of England* beginning in 1727. Augustine Jr. had all but one volume (we cannot know which one he did not have) of this English version of this 14-volume Whiggish endorsement of the Hanoverian ruling dynasty. There were several volumes of "magazines" and literary gazettes, including *The Spectator* and *The Guardian*, as well as something listed as "2 vols abrid: of the Reformation." There were numerous books on this topic available at the time, but this book was probably Gilbert Burnet's 1705 *The Abridgment of the History of the Reformation of the Church of England*. There was a "Greek lesicon [lexicon]" as well as copies of Virgil and Homer, although it was not stated what language they were in, but there also were "sundry old English and Latin books." Here again, it is tempting to think that some of these might have been in the family library for generations. The library contained what was probably Antonio de Solis y Ribadeneyra's *History of the Conquest of Mexico*, translated and published in English by T. Townsend in 1724, and six volumes of Edward Hyde Clarendon's *The History of the Rebellion and Civil Wars in England*. There was something listed as "Webb's Ving'y Justice" and a copy of Patrick Gordon's *Geography Anatomized*. Given George's interest in surveying, it is easy to

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[15] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[16] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[17] See David D. Hall, "Books and Reading in Eighteenth-Century America," in *Of Consuming Interest: The Style of Life in the Eighteenth Century*, Cary Carson, Ronald Hoffman, and Peter J. Albert, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press), 354–72. For background on books and George Washington's reading habits, see Adrienne Harrison, *A Powerful Mind: The Self-Education of George Washington* (Sterling, VA: Potomac Books, 2015).

imagine him selecting this book from his brother's shelf one night at Popes Creek. The library contained a copy of Hannah Glassie's *Art of Cookery*, a very popular and widely published book of recipes. This book is particularly interesting because the GEWA collection contains a handwritten compilation of recipes, most of which date to the early 19th century. Bound into the same pages, though, are a set of papers that appear to be 18th century. Most of these recipes have a local flavor and complement those in Glassie's book.[18]

There was, of course, a Book of Common Prayer—a standard in any Anglican home—and "a large Bible," quite possibly the very one that contains the notation of George's birth and now resides under lock and key at Mount Vernon. There were, however, very few other Anglican devotional texts. There was one curious library standout: eight volumes of the sermons of Samuel Clarke. In the mid-17th century, Clarke earned a reputation for his Puritan principles, and these are reflected in some of his sermons. But with the restoration of Charles II, Clarke made his peace with political reality and settled into a less confrontational version of Anglican nonconformity. The fact that these sermons were on the Washingtons' bookshelf is noteworthy. By the 1760s, any sting that Puritanism had had was long gone and relegated to history. Puritan sermons would have just read like a rather austere type of reform theology–informed Protestantism but certainly were nothing to go to war over. Nevertheless, given the deep history of the Washington family—and the fact that in the 1670s, Originall Brown was reading very similar spiritual literature less than a mile from the Popes Creek home—makes the presence of Puritan thought in Washington hands and minds interesting indeed.[19]

The inventory did not specify where each item was located, but it is clear that the many farm tools and animals were residing in different locations. This means that the inventory-takers moved across Augustine Jr.'s properties, counting what they found in each one. But they nevertheless bundled together the animals and the enslaved people. There were more than 220 pigs and more than 190 heads of cattle of all types, including oxen living in at least four different locations across the Washington holdings. There were 100 sheep, and there also would have been flocks of chickens and doves, but these were free range and were rarely included in the inventories of the gentry.

The Enslaved People in the 1762 Inventory

The inventory shows that at his death, Augustine Jr. was enslaving at least 73 people, and they represented the bulk of his nonlanded wealth. Of those counted, 26 were men, 26 were women, 5 were boys, 10 were girls, and there were 6 simply listed as "child," usually

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[18] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[19] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

associated with their mothers. There were three "mulatto" servants on the acres, each of whom would be free at the age of 21. There were three English servants: William Cooper, Esther Wait, and Margaret Tabson. One of the most curious listings was a man named Frank, whom the inventory listed as being an "old negro miller." There were very few probatable goods at the mill at the head of Popes Creek—only a plate, some pigs, and some tools were worth listing. But Frank was there, and this was presumably his home. The way he was listed was revealing. Only one enslaved person was listed as having a trade: "Carpenter Dick." The way Frank was listed, though, suggests that he was a freeman working as a miller for Augustine Jr. because if he were enslaved, there would be no need to mention that he was a "negro." The story deepens, perhaps, because Augustine's will specified that a man named Frank was to go to Augustine Jr. This was the only enslaved person whom Augustine willed to his son, the rest having been set aside 20 years earlier in the sale to George Eskridge. There is at least the possibility that the two Franks were the same person viewed at different moments in his life.[20] If Frank were a miller in 1743, it would have made sense for Augustine to make sure Frank went to Augustine Jr. right at the time that the latter inherited all his father's Westmoreland County land, including the mill. There was also "a negro man named Frank" singled out in the inventory of Augustine's estate in Westmoreland County—again, possibly the same man listed in a similar way separate from the rest of the enslaved people.[21] It is by no means beyond the realm of possibility that "old" Frank was an enslaved miller whom Augustine Jr. freed late in the man's life.

Some of the names of the listed enslaved people hint at Washington family stories. For example, a man named Appleby was almost certainly a reference to Augustine Jr.'s education. Likewise, "Molbrough," named for the Duke of Marlborough, a British military hero of the early 18th century, harmonizes with the volumes of British history sitting on the bookshelf. Additionally, in the early 1780s, William Augustine Washington and his family would live about a mile inland from the old family home in a new house they named Blenheim in tribute to the Duke of Marlborough's palatial estate.

Appleby was valued at 80 pounds, while Molbrough was assessed at 30 pounds. The names of the other men and women in the list were either one or two syllables. They were primarily the common run of English diminutive names, like Ben, Will, Tim, and so on, that one would encounter on any Virginia estate, particularly for field hands. These names were designations as much as anything else, just a way to record people. They were not intended to be said often by masters or in formal settings. But the unusual formality and singular nature of Appleby's and Molbrough's names hint that these men had domestic

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[20] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

[21] "Inventory of Capn. Augustine Washington." I used a transcribed version of the original from the *King George County Inventory Book No. 1*, 289, which is in the Ferry Farm document collection database.

estate-based jobs, such as butler, footman, or coachman, in which their evocative names would be said frequently—and each time, the stories and patriotic values they symbolized would be recalled.

The Widow Anne Aylett Washington of "Wakefield," 1762–1774

Anne continued to reside in her home at Popes Creek for the rest of her life. She had to appeal to Augustine Jr.'s executors to secure her status as a lifetime resident since the relevant clauses in the will were ambiguous. Her minor son, William Augustine, was nominally the owner of the estate, with his mother acting as regent until his majority. This arrangement was exactly parallel to the one that had Mary acting as George's regent at Ferry Farm. In this case, though, Anne would not live long enough to see her son reach majority age and come into his inheritance. Also like Mary, Anne remained a widow and did not remarry.[22]

In 1758, Augustine Jr. designated four executors: Fielding Lewis (Betty Washington's new husband), Richard Henry Lee, and Augustine Jr.'s brothers, George and John Augustine.[23] On November 3, 1772, Augustine Jr.'s inventory was entered into the court records. At that time, two of the named executors, John Augustine and Lee, were on the bench. But in that same sitting, Anne appeared before the court as "widow and executive" and "renounced all benefits and advantage she may claim under the will of her said late husband."[24] This was a preparatory legal move within a larger plan. On June 29, the court appointed Samuel Oldham, William Barnard, John Monroe, Archibald Campbell, and Benjamin Weeks (who also sat on the court) to act as new executors with the charge to "a lot to Anne" her "dower in the estate" of her late husband.[25] Then, on October 22, 1765, Anne and the new executors finalized the renegotiation of the terms of the will. This all was a complicated legal dance designed to secure Anne in her property.

As a widow, Anne had limited power in the law to control her property. Two generations earlier, the Gerrard sisters had been quite adept at asserting their rights in legal documents, both when marrying John Washington and after his death. But the legal weight

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[22] Linda Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 44–70. Anne Aylett Washington's not remarrying echoes Mary Ball Washington's similar situation. This has been one of the major themes in the discussion of her life in part because it bears on her son George's upbringing; Terri L. Snyder, "Refiguring Women in Early American History," *William and Mary Quarterly* 69, no. 3 (2012): 446.

[23] *Westmoreland County Deeds and Wills, Book 14*, Montross, VA, 126–29; Laura J. Galke, "The Mother of the Father of Our Country: Mary Ball Washington's Genteel Domestic Habits," *Northeast Historical Archaeology* 38 (2009), no. 29–48.

[24] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1761–1764*, Montross, VA, 67.

[25] *Westmoreland County Orders, 1761–1764*, Montross, VA, 93.

white women of status had held in Virginia's 17th-century courts had been whittled down considerably over the course of the 18th century.[26] Anne was very much a child of the gentry, born to one of the most influential lines in the area, but the accident of the date of her birth meant that her life would be more dependent on male authority than that of her grandmother. Similar rollbacks of women's legal power were occurring all across the British Atlantic, but in the colonies, these trends cut deeper. Not only was Anne disadvantaged compared to her grandmothers, but she was even less able to represent herself and her interests than many women back in Britain proper were. Therefore, when Anne wanted to ensure a better deal in her widowhood—and one that did not necessitate her remarrying and thereby risking the loss of her property to a new husband—she had to work out a deal with the four executors that her husband had chosen.[27]

It would have been an easy matter for executors to push aside Anne's concerns and carry on with the will as written. But Anne's requests were also reasonable. In fact, they helped assure her ability to sustain herself in place and not become a burden to others. Likewise, her not marrying helped secure the property of George and John Augustine's nieces and nephew. Anne brought this issue forward and seems to have gotten her way. What we see in this is a gentry woman using the tools at her disposal—and with some skill—to protect herself and her livelihood in a system designed to roll over female power.

Anne's new deal secured for her "one third part" of the value of her late husband's "personal estate" (the legal term for non-landed property) for herself and a second third "in favor of her children."[28] She received "one third part of the negroes," but there was no attached allocation to reveal which people were included in this provision. There was somewhat more detail regarding the lands she received, though. The agreement offered the most detailed view of the Washington lands available to this point: "Mrs Washington Dower in the lands as settled by agreement of all the executors are as follows viz the Home Plantation, Billy Hurleys, the smithe Old Fields with the low grounde adjoining of the plantation called Finche's likewise one hundred and fifty acres of the land called the Barrens one third part of the Mill this also we are informed of by Mrs Washington."[29]

"The Barrens" referred to a parcel of land that was still known by that name well into the 19th century, sitting just north and east of Blenheim near the headwaters of the eastern fork of Bridge's Creek. Anne also received one-third of the mill at the head of

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[26] Linda L. Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women on Colonial Virginia* (New York: Routledge, 2002), 72–73. See also Kathleen Brown, *Good Wives, Nasty Wenches, and Anxious Patriarchs: Gender, Race, and Power in Colonial Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996), 283–85.

[27] Linda L. Sturtz, *Within Her Power: Propertied Women in Colonial America* (New York: Routledge,2002), 44–70.

[28] "March 29, 1774," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1767–1776*, Montross, VA, 259.

[29] "March 29, 1774," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1767–1776*, Montross, VA, 259.

Popes Creek. The location of the smith is unknown and not mentioned in other documents, so it is not clear if this operation was on Washington land or on a neighbor's property. Smiths, though, performed regular and vital functions on a working plantation.

An interesting detail was the reference to "the Home Plantation" as the name for the Popes Creek home in this period. The 1765 inventory and the records in court a decade later do not refer to the estate as Wakefield but only as "the Home Plantation."[30] By 1774, the home had a new name that some were using. In Anne's correspondences to the Principio partners, we find the first—and one of the only—references to the Popes Creek homestead being named Wakefield. A letter dated June 15, 1772, from Principio Company partner Thomas Russell carried the address "Anne Washington at Wakefield near Leed's Town Virginia."[31] How the name came to be attached to the estate is a mystery. Wakefield is a small town in York in England, coincidently just south of Leeds. The name might be nothing more than a simple reference to the place, perhaps stemming from an unrecorded personal connection. Many have assumed that the name was a reference to the then-popular 1766 novel *The Vicar of Wakefield* by Anglo-Irish novelist Oliver Goldsmith. If the name came from the novel, then it could not have been Augustine Jr.'s idea because he died before it was published. The Russell letter shows that the name was in use in 1772 while Anne was resident and more than a year before her 17-year-old son William Augustine took over. All of this means that if the novel was the inspiration, Anne was the mostly likely adopter of the name.

The novel is a typical midcentury sentimental story in which the protagonist, Dr. Primrose, confronts a series of incidents that challenge his faith that virtue will be rewarded. His daughter Olivia runs away with a seducer, his home burns, and he injures his arm trying to rescue his family. Debts force him to go to the county jail, and eventually Olivia takes ill and dies. Dr. Primrose's trials continue as he weighs the question of whether virtue can bring happiness.[32] Ultimately, the novel is a melodrama dealing with how to face adversity. If the novel was the source of the name, there remains no way to know what aspect of the story might have been compelling enough for Anne, or possibly her son, to want to name their estate in its honor.

Regardless of its origin, the name Wakefield had another specific meaning in the British Atlantic world. The town in Yorkshire was the site of a renowned late-16th-century house of detention commonly called Wakefield. It was built to detain especially dangerous or incorrigible prisoners, giving it something of a high profile in popular culture. By the middle of the 18th century, the old building was showing its age. A series of well-publicized

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[30] Inventory of Augustine Washington Jr.'s estate, 1765, Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[31] "Thomas Russell to Anne Washington, June 15, 1772," Principio Company Papers, British Library, London, England.

[32] Daniel McDonald, "The Vicar of Wakefield: A Paradox," *CLA Journal* 10, no. 1 (1966): 23–33.

escapes led to a reevaluation of the facility in 1764. That eventually led to the construction of an entirely new set of buildings. The buildings that still stand and are in use are 19th century and newer. It is hard to imagine anyone intentionally naming their home after a famous prison, but at the same time, there is no denying that many people in Britain, and in the colonies as well, would have first thought of the Yorkshire prison at the mention of the name Wakefield. It makes for a grim parallel to consider that for enslaved Africans, the experience of life on a plantation was only somewhat different from life in prison.

Soon after Anne's passing, the name again fell out of use. Her son William Augustine Washington never referred to it, although he did apply names to his other Mattox Neck estates. The name was revived, though, and applied to the land in the middle of the 19th century. It appears in an 1859 map of the land. The name seems to have appealed to the romantic sensibilities prevalent in the years around the Civil War, and it was this sentiment that the Wakefield Memorial Association drew on in their own romanticized preservation efforts. Eighteenth-century documents, though, show Wakefield to have been a creation of Anne Aylett Washington, and her choice of name reflected something about her own understanding of her home in the Atlantic world.

Anne Aylett Washington's Death and the End of Her Estate, 1774

As with so many Virginians, there was no record of the exact date of Anne's death or the cause that carried her away. Records only show that she was alive in April but was listed as "the late Mrs Anne Washington" in early June.[33] Her death created a rather confused situation thanks to the vagueness of Augustine Jr.'s will, the descent of the property to a minor son, and her being a widow with limited property rights in law.

The original will and its renegotiation were the prevailing arrangement in the last years of her life, but something had changed that the records failed to clarify. Anne's renegotiation was entered into the Westmoreland County records in March, along with an inventory of that part of the estate that Anne was claiming as her own. Several of the items listed were standouts in Augustine Jr.'s inventory, such as the green ivory-handled tableware set and the mahogany furniture. Anne had no interest in the fiddle or most of the books, but she did keep "1 large bible" and "1 large common prayer book."[34] She also claimed the "1 chariot and harness for 4 horses," valued both in 1762 and 1774 at 80 pounds—the single most costly item on the estate.[35]

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[33] "To Be Sold," *Virginia Gazette* (June 2, 1773), page 2, column 3.

[34] "Anne Washington's Inventory," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1767–1776*, Montross, VA, 259–61.

[35] "An Inventory of the Estate of Col'o Aug Washington Dec'd," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1756–1767*, Montross, VA, 178–80.

The division also included the human side of the estate. Anne retained the services of "William Cooper a servant" and made a claim to what the inventory labeled as "dower negroes exclusive of negros that are her own property." The number and names of the people who Anne enslaved in her own right were not listed. The list did include her claim from the larger population:

7 men: Charles, Appleby, Camero, Malbro, Joe, Lawrence, and Adam.

5 women: Poll, Penny, Judy, Sarah, and Barbara with her young child Simon.

6 girls: Chloe, Cary, Peggy, Bett, Cate, and Hannah.

The total valuation for these people was 725 pounds.

The division would have done little to disrupt life for the enslaved at Anne's Wakefield. But the transference of title would have set all of them on a path to be split up upon the death, marriage, or reaching of adulthood of whomever held the legal right to their bodies and labor. When Anne and the court divided up the people and the property, they might not have known that the death that would shake up the world of Wakefield's enslaved was just around the corner.

When Anne died, sometime between April 26 and June 2, she left no clear will. Moreover, because she had secured her section of the estate to herself, it was no longer overseen by the four executors Augustine Jr. had designated or by the five court-appointed estate dividers. Instead, her son-in-law Burditt Ashton stepped in to act as the executor of her portion of the Popes Creek estate. Ashton was 27 years old and had married Anne's daughter Anne in 1768. The younger Anne was entitled to part of the estate as listed in her father's will, as was William Augustine, who was to be the principal benefactor. The problem for him was that he was orphaned before he was legally able to claim his property, and his late mother had carved off a large chunk of his bequest while he was still a minor, perhaps even when he was in England in school. Now having secured her portion of the estate—with the agreement, of course, of the four original designated executors—her death placed her holdings in the hands of her son-in-law.

On June 2, 1774, Ashton took out an ad in the *Virginia Gazette* announcing an estate sale at "the plantation of the late Mrs. Anne Washington of Popes Creek" to be held the following Wednesday. For sale would be "considerable stocks of horses, cattle, hogs, and sheep" as well as "all the household and kitchen furniture." One special item was the "very good chariot, with a new set of harness for four horses."[36]

That was a clever bit of advertising. Augustine Jr.'s inventory valued this horse carriage at 80 pounds—the single most costly object on the estate. The chariot had made an appearance in the 1774 inventory as well, described and valued in exactly the same way. But by the time of Anne's estate sale, the carriage and harness were at least 10 years older than they had been when Augustine Jr. died. A well-kept carriage stored inside, away from

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[36] "To Be Sold," *Virginia Gazette* (June 2, 1773), page 2, column 3.

the effects of weather and the sun, could certainly retain its value; the leather goods, though, would suffer depreciation. In its way, the sale reveals that Anne probably did not ride out as often or in the same style as she had when her husband was alive. The outcome of the sale is unknown; the record of who walked away with these animals, these objects, and the carriage has not survived. In 1784, John Tuberville wrote to William Augustine, recalling that he had purchased "goods" at that sale but also confessing "the sum" he had "for got exactly."[37]

Why did Ashton sell off Anne's estate? Why did Anne not ensure that her property would go to her children—and specifically to William Augustine, who would soon become the master of the old estate? Where was William Augustine during all this activity that was so central to his own personal economy? Was he in England in school, and if not, where was he living while he was still a minor? There are no clear answers to any of these questions.

The Washington Chariot

Valued at L80, the Washington chariot cost as much as 11 horses or 800 days' wages for a skilled worker.[38] There were several carriage makers in the colonies. Williamsburg had its own as early as the 1730s, and in 1769, city carriage makers Kidd and Kendall broadcasted that they had brought over an English craftsman skilled in gilding and painting ornate crests and cyphers.[39] This shows that Virginians could acquire locally made carriages decorated in the highest style. Nevertheless, most Virginians—and most Americans—bought their carriages from England and had them transported.

There was a large and sometimes confusing array of coaches and carriages on 18th-century roads. The simplest were chaises, gigs, and chairs—all essentially a cushioned seat set on a rig and a single axle. These were light and could be quite fast even if they were a bit rattly on the colony's rough roads. Stanhopes and tilburies added some spring suspension that smoothened the ride, but they were open to the air. Cabriolets and shays were more elaborately sprung tilburies but with foldable roofs as weather protection.[40] After 1754, Virginia law taxed carriages based on their number of axles, so having a single-axle wagon was a bit of a cost-cutting measure in an otherwise extravagant

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[37] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 64.

[38] Currency converter, https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter/#currency-result.

[39] Mary R. M. Goodwin, *Wheeled Carriages in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Report Series, 181, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, VA, 1959, 25. Shared online at https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0181.xml&highlight=.

[40] https://www.gutenberg.org/files/46216/46216-h/46216-h.htm.

expense.[41] Smaller or single-seated mountings could also be set on four wheels as with phaetons, which also usually had collapsible roofs. Almost all of these were driven by the person sitting in the single seat.

Larger enclosed housings were also set upon four-wheel, two-axled rigs, and these almost always had a bench for a driver. These carriages could be quite elaborate since they provided many surfaces to decorate as well as having internal leather for seating and all sorts of trim. Larger carriages were often pulled by six horses, but Virginians generally preferred teams of four. A chariot like the Washingtons' was a roomy two- or three-seater, in which the bench was fully enclosed at the rear of the housing with windows to the front and on the sides. A driver sat on a bench at the front. Virginia's wealthiest families liked this form of elegant conveyance, and such chariots were to be found all over the colony.

There were even larger coaches, sometimes called Berlins or landaus, that were essentially double-sized chariots with facing benches and windows with a central door on both sides. These were less common. For a short time, Williamsburg's carriage makers offered landaus, but demand was small, and they soon dropped them from their repertoire. The only Berlin in Virginia was the one owned by Reverend Hugh Jones in 1720s Williamsburg.[42] Tax records from James City County in 1769 show there having been 7 chariots, 3 coaches, and 61 two-wheeled chairs.[43]

All of these carriages were high-end purchases only possible for the gentry. Riding to court or to church in one of only a very few imported chariots in the county—which in most cases would have had some sort of personalized cipher on its side—was a powerful statement of wealth and status. It is also worth considering that towards the end of his life, Augustine Jr. suffered from gout, a condition that would have made horseback riding a near impossibility. Investing in a fine and roomy carriage might have been a direct result of Augustine Jr.'s increasing incapacity. When Ashton put Anne Aylett's estate up for sale, he made sure that the chariot was featured in the advertisement because it was perhaps the most desirable item in the entire estate. Moreover, the sale took place right at a time

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[41] Mary R. M. Goodwin, *Wheeled Carriages in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Report Series, 181, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, VA, 1959, 25. Shared online at https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0181.xml&highlight=.

[42] Mary R. M. Goodwin, *Wheeled Carriages in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Report Series, 181, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, VA, 1959, 25. Shared online at https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0181.xml&highlight=.

[43] Mary R. M. Goodwin, *Wheeled Carriages in Eighteenth-Century Virginia*, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Report Series, 181, Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Library, Williamsburg, VA, 1959, x. Shared online at https://research.colonialwilliamsburg.org/DigitalLibrary/view/index.cfm?doc=ResearchReports%5CRR0181.xml&highlight=.

when status-conscious Virginians would have had a hard time importing a new carriage because a crisis within the empire was straining trade and was about to propel 13 of Britain's 26 American colonies toward independence.

Augustine Washington Jr.'s Enslaved People Distribution, October 31, 1775

Ashton's sales did not include the distribution of the people who had been living on the estate. These were allotted in Augustine's Jr.'s will, and those terms were still in force after Anne Aylett's death. Her death, though, ended her estate claim, and so the distribution of the enslaved people soon followed. In the mix were three white children who were serving on Augustine Jr.'s lands. These were most likely children born illegally to servant mothers whom the court had placed in the Washington home. Through no fault of their own, and certainly through no actions for which they were responsible, these children were bound to a master for their entire childhoods in a labor agreement that ended when they turned 21 or 31. Of course, the enslaved people were bound in the same way—also through no fault of their own—except that in their cases, their servitude was for their entire lives and the lives of their children.

On November 21, 1775, the county court's representatives Daniel McCarty, Philip Smith, and William Nelson created a thorough accounting of the estate's enslaved people, a few white servants, and a small quantity of livestock. All of this was to be divided among five beneficiaries named in the will. The inventory that the court created, though, constitutes the most detailed record of enslaved people living and working on the Washington acres on the eve of the American Revolution.[44]

His son, William Augustine Washington, was to receive 25 people. These were Will, Ben, Lawrence, Simon, Phill, Frank, Milly, Cloe, Sucki, Frank (2), Cary, Peg, Penny, Molly, Young Will, Carolina Matilada, Barbara, Joshua, Dinah, Sarah, (Old Mollis Family) Tom, Ned, Charles, Sappo, and Baptist.

Nephew George Washington was to receive 10 people. These were Jett, Ben, Walker, Sal, Ben (2), Dennis, Marian, Mul[lot]o Will, Kate, and Easter.

Major Alexander Spotswood was to receive the remaining contract time for a white child named Robinson Bryan, "said to be 9 years old to serve til he is 21 years old." In addition, he was to receive 10 enslaved people. These were Adam, Phil, Old Will, Frank (3), Judy, Hannah, Gus, Frank (4), Sue, and Phylis.

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[44] "Valuation and Division of Negroes and Stock, November 21, 1775," *Westmoreland County Records and Inventories, 1776–1790*, Westmoreland County Courthouse, Montross, VA, 92–93.

Burdett Ashton was to receive a white child servant named Kinkaid, "said to be 12 years old to serve till he is 31 years old." In addition, he was to receive nine enslaved people. These were Carpenter Lew, James, Nan, Bett, Isaac, Judy, "Minny in his possession 6 years," Roger, and Old Sarah.

Jane Washington was to receive a white child servant named Griffin, "said to be 9 years old and serve til he is 21 years old." In addition, she was to receive nine people. These were Sambo, Lucy, Siller, Grace, Jane, Sal, Patt, Joe, and Old Phyllis.

These people represented a considerable portion of the family's wealth. The court's representatives tallied up the value of the human gift Augustine Jr. left to his relations and associates:

William Augustine Washington: 884.10.0
George Washington: 345.0.0
Major Alexander Spotswood: 325.0.0
Burdett Ashton: 330.0.0
Jane Washington: 330.0.0

This all made a total value of 2,214 pounds and 10 shillings. That sum in current money is 288,800.00 pounds, or $375,928.00.[45]

The valuation reveals the extent to which Augustine Jr. had his wealth invested in enslaved people. There are some questions, though, about the distribution. Records of the enslaved people at Mount Vernon during this period do not include references to the most distinctive names in the allocation. There is no record of an Easter, a Jett, or a Walker living and working at Mount Vernon in the 1770 or 1780s. There was one entry in the Washington financial papers stating, "P[ai]d Easter for a broom," on September 17, 1792.[46] That Easter is possibly the same man, but it is unclear. The financial papers also show no record of value entering George's estate from Augustine Jr.'s during this period either. In all likelihood, therefore, George used the value of these people to pay off debts in Westmoreland County. This also might mean that many of these people continued to live in the area of Popes Creek, perhaps meaning that the distribution did not disrupt their social and familial relationships. This, though, is only the most optimistic possibility.

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[45] Converting past currency into contemporary values is always tricky since so many factors affect value. There are several online calculators that will do this work using a few different formulas such as inflation indices or comparisons in buying power. One of the most reliable was created by the National Archives in the UK: https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/currency-converter. Converting also must take into consideration that the UK decimalized its currency in 1971 and did away with the shilling. In the old system, 12 pennies (pence) equaled one shilling, and 20 shillings equaled one pound.

[46] " George Washington Financial Papers, Ledger B, 1772–1793," *The Papers of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2017), 343.

The Imperial Crisis, 1770–1776

All the activity around Anne's estate took place against a backdrop of a growing crisis in the mainland American British colonies. George Washington was central to bringing on that crisis, and he would be just as central in its resolution. In 1754, he led a small force to challenge the French presence in the contested Ohio Valley. His men ran into a party of French soldiers and Native allies escorting an emissary carrying a message to Virginia's governor Dinwiddie. George himself had performed the English version of this mission the year before, but this time, when his men saw the Frenchmen, a battle ensued. One result was the death of the emissary Sieur de Jumonville, and another was the subsequent defeat and surrender of George's small force. These events in the woods of western Pennsylvania lit a fuse that started a war that would spread across France's and England's global empires. By 1763, that war had ended, and France signed away its North American holdings. Before the treaty signing, George had resigned from the military and begun his longest period of managing an estate—the sort of life the Popes Creek Washingtons had long known.[47]

England won this Seven Years' War, but the victory was costly. The war devoured treasure, as did the new expense of maintaining a large British force along the perimeters of English North American settlements to ensure that his majesty's subjects and the Native American population did not stir up a new expensive war. To fund all of this, George III—a new king with new ideas on how to run an empire—and his allies in Parliament turned to the trade between the colonies and Britain as a possible source of revenue. The result was a series of new taxes on imports to the colonies with each new act met with increasing discontent and even outright resistance.[48]

Massachusetts might have been the most dynamic site of discontent, but Virginia was not at all exempt. Virginians had been active supporters of the boycotts and nonimportation agreements, and leaders such as Washington and Richard Henry Lee had emerged as early supporters of the American cause. In 1766, most of Westmoreland County's principal citizens met at Leedstown, the county's main Rappahannock port, and signed a nonimportation agreement called the Leedstown Resolves. Supporters of the American cause were drafting and signing similar documents all along the Atlantic Seaboard, and this one

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[47] Fred Anderson, *Crucible of War: The Seven Years' War and the Fate of Empire in British North America* (New York: Knopf, 2000), 94–108; Colin Calloway, *The Indian World of George Washington: The First President, the First Americans, and the Birth of the Nation* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018), 69–70.

[48] There are almost innumerable studies of the Revolution and its lead-up. See Edmund Morgan, *The Stamp Act Crisis: Prologue to Revolution* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1995). See also Benjamin Carp, *The Defiance of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2010); Eric Hinderaker, *Boston's Massacre* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2017). For general studies, see Bernard Bailyn, *The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2017); Gordon Wood, *The Radicalism of the American Revolution* (New York: Alfred Knopf, 1991); Woody Holton, *Liberty Is Sweet: The Hidden History of the American Revolution* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2021).

carried the signatures of George's brothers Charles, Samuel, and John Augustine.[49] With defiance in the air, Virginia governor Lord Dunmore dismissed the House of Burgesses, thus closing a legislative assembly that had sat continuously since the earliest days of the colony. This act turned most Virginians against the crown and his officers. Many of those who stayed loyal could read the tea leaves and made arrangements to leave the colony. In 1774, George William Fairfax, son of William Fairfax and formerly Lawrence Washington's brother-in-law, auctioned off his possessions and sailed for England.[50]

Dunmore also worried that the unrest he was stoking would turn violent. On April 21, 1775, he ordered the seizure of the arms stores in Williamsburg, but rather than ending the possibility of rebellion, it only ignited it. In response, Dunmore fled Williamsburg, and while on a ship off Norfolk, he issued a proclamation that demanded that every able-bodied colonist come to his aid or be considered a rebel—and subject to all the fitting punishments attached. He also declared free all the servants and enslaved people of rebels. This betrayal of his office and attack on the social order of the colony solidified Virginians' support for the American cause. What is more, Lord Dunmore's call for servile insurrection was one of the grievances listed in the Declaration of Independence. As the war unfolded, a man born at Popes Creek was not only the commander of the army assembled in the American cause but also became the very embodiment of that struggle.[51]

William Augustine Washington during the Revolution, 1776–1783

This was the setting in which William Augustine came of age. The records are unclear about his being educated in England, but if he had been, he would have been among the last Virginians schooled there as colonials. In fact, his whereabouts are not at all clear. He was old enough to have petitioned the court regarding the sale of his mother's estate had he been on hand and wished to stop it. It is hard to interpret his silence. He was 17 at the time of his mother's death, but his father's will allowed him to take possession of his

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[49] "Leedstown Resolution," Westmoreland County Museum (March 3, 2014), http://westmorelandcountymuseum.org/leedstown-resolution, accessed 5/20/22.

[50] Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 117–19.

[51] Woody Holton, *Forced Founders: Indians, Debtors, Slaves, and the Making of the American Revolution in Virginia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1999), 156–61; James Corbett David, *Dunmore's New World: The Extraordinary Life of a Royal Governor in Revolutionary America—with Jacobites, Counterfeiters, Land Schemes, Shipwrecks, Scalping, Indian Politics, Runaway Slaves, and Two Royal Weddings* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015); Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, *Colonial Virginia: A History* (White Plains, NY: KTO Press, 1986), 330–35.

estate either at the age of 21 or upon his marriage. But for some unclear reason, he waited until 1777 to marry his cousin Jenny Washington, the daughter of George's brother and Westmoreland County justice John Augustine.

William Augustine was in Fredericksburg on September 24, 1776, where he borrowed money from his brother-in-law Burdett Ashton, who might have been acting as a sort of unofficial guardian. In May, he purchased some "watches" and "knee buckles" from Ashton for 20 pounds, 8 shillings, and 9 pence.[52] In 1777 and 1778, William Augustine hired Lew and Ben from Ashton as well. Hiring out enslaved people back and forth between the estates constituted the bulk of the two men's long commercial relationship. Right around this time, Jenny and William Augustine had the first of their many children. Hannah Bushrod was born in 1778. A son, Augustine, was born in 1780, followed by another son named Bushrod in 1785. Corbin Aylette was born in 1787, but he died within a year. In 1789, Jenny gave birth to another boy, whom they named George Corbin, and in 1791, she had her last child, a boy named Laurence.[53]

William Augustine largely avoided service in the American Revolution. There is an undocumented story that he was wounded in military exercises early in the war. That might have been true, but if it were, he still would never have been too far from home during the Revolution.[54] He would later hold the rank of colonel of the militia and serve as Westmoreland County sheriff, but he does not seem to have been a soldier in the war that had made his uncle George an icon of liberty. He has often been confused with his cousin William Washington, though, who served in the Continental Army in several battles, amassed a considerable military record and rose to the rank of colonel, and became a brigadier general after the war. Many published and less formal sources understandably confuse the two cousins and have allowed the service of one to be attributed to the other.[55]

Jenny and William Augustine spent only a short time living in the old family home on Popes Creek. A century later, a story would emerge that there had been a house fire that drove the couple out of the home. Some writers have seen this fire as having caused the destruction of the home, but there is no contemporary evidence to support that story and quite a bit to challenge it as it emerged a century later. William Augustine's accounts from that period show no evidence of a family that had suffered a catastrophic fire. There were no expenditures showing an attempt to reassemble the many domestic items that would have been lost in such a fire. In fact, the survival of the account book itself argues against a

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[52] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 22.

[53] "William Augustine Washington Sr.," Geni.com, https://www.geni.com/people/Col-William-Washington-Sr/6000000001180345487.

[54] The story is mentioned here: Samuel K. Fore, "William Augustine Washington," Digital Encyclopedia of George Washington, https://www.mountvernon.org/library/digitalhistory/digital-encyclopedia/article/william-augustine-washington, accessed 5/25/22.

[55] See, for example, Francis B. Heitman, *Historical Register and Dictionary of the United States Army, Volume II* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1903), 1007.

calamity by fire. It is certainly possible that there was a smaller fire, something on the order of the one that damaged Augustine's Ferry Farm. Were that the case, William Augustine might not have seen a reason to repair the damage and just moved on to another home.[56]

HMS Savage *on the Potomac, 1781*

Nevertheless, the couple did seem to leave the Popes Creek home around 1780. Damage from a fire is one possible explanation for their move. The war itself might also have been a motivation. The river that was the artery of commerce in peacetime became a source of danger in war. As early as 1778, British commander in chief Sir Henry Clinton saw the Chesapeake region as the next theater of war. For all the men the region sent to war, it was perhaps ironic that there was almost no system in place for the defense of the vital and vulnerable Potomac. British privateering vessels or ships of those loyal to the crown periodically sailed into Potomac waters to raid homes and make a quick getaway. In the spring of 1781, a British sloop of war, the HMS *Savage*, became the only venture up the river undertaken by the Royal Navy during the war. She was a three-masted, square-rigged vessel with a low, flat deck; she did not have the types of more elaborate poop decks and forecastles of larger ships of the line. She carried eight six-pounder guns on each side and was designed to move quickly in most kinds of winds. She was perfectly at home on the high seas or navigating the turns of a wide estuarial river.

In March, the *Savage* brought troops over to serve in the new campaign in the southern colonies. Once in American waters, the ship's captain, Thomas Graves, received orders putting him "at liberty to carry on such desultory expeditions for the purpose of destroying the enemy's stores and magazines in any part of the Chesapeake as you shall judge proper."[57] Graves set off to see what he could find on the region's largest river. He might even have known that the river was the home to the rebellion's most infamous figure—George Washington.[58]

On April 9, the *Savage* was on the Potomac, off of Nomini Creek. The crew spotted some ships under sail and "fired ten guns" to bring them to a halt. These turned out to be British raiding vessels, so Graves let them go on their way. Later that day, the *Savage* slid past Popes Creek. News of the raid would have spread as fast as a horse could gallop, but events were moving so quickly that people on the Virginia shore might not have even

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[56] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC. The details are spread across several accounts.

[57] Fritz Hirschfeld, "Notes and Documents: 'Burnt All Their Houses,'" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 4 (October 1991): 515. See also Nathaniel Philbrick, *In the Hurricane's Eye: The Genius of George Washington and the Victory at Yorktown* (New York: Viking Press, 2018), 105.

[58] Mary Thompson, *"The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret": George Washington, Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 278–81.

learned the worst of it by the time they saw a sloop ominously float by their rebellious doorsteps. The fact that there were already British privateers sheltering near some of Westmoreland County's grandest estates would have been distressing enough. But the sight of a fully armed warship with its distinctive black sides and yellow stripe along its gunports and flying the large bright-red British naval jack must have felt like a body blow.

On April 10, Graves saw "a number of rebels armed on the Maryland shore" near where the river bends around Mathias Point.[59] A squad of marines went ashore to engage them, and while there, they set fire to a "linen manufactory." The engagement cost the British one man killed and one man wounded. From there, the ship continued upriver. On April 13, Graves stopped at Mount Vernon, where he welcomed aboard a party of 17 enslaved people, who saw their chance for freedom in the arrival of the frigate. The war had already disrupted Virginia's system of enslavement. At its outset, the colony's royal governor John Murray, Lord Dunmore, had urged the enslaved and servants to abandon their rebellious masters and come to his aid. This call for servile rebellion of course outraged and terrified Virginia's planters. Their anger even made it into the Declaration of Independence's list of ways that the crown had abrogated its responsibilities: "He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us."[60] Across Virginia, enslaved people took it upon themselves to claim their freedom and in so doing generated a significant crisis for the entire plantation system. The *Savage* was but one moment in this drama.[61]

When George left Virginia to lead the Continental Army in 1775, he left the Mount Vernon's management in the hands of his distant cousin Lund Washington. He was a great-grandson of Lawrence, John Washington's brother who came to Virginia about 1658. Lund was a few years younger than George, but what has survived of their correspondence shows them to have been on friendly, even intimate terms, although Lund was always sensitive to the hierarchy that placed his cousin above him. During the early years of the war, George wrote to Lund of his experiences and concerns and took great comfort in the planning of changes to Mount Vernon and Lund's reports on their progress.[62] The arrival of the *Savage*, though, was the greatest test of their friendship.

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[59] Fritz Hirschfeld, "Notes and Documents: 'Burnt All Their Houses,'" *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99, no. 4 (October 1991): 522.

[60] "Declaration of Independence," National Archives, https://www.archives.gov/founding-docs/declaration-transcript.

[61] See Alan Taylor, *The Internal Enemy: Slavery and War in Virginia, 1772–1832* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2013), 23–52; Silvia Frey, "Between Slavery and Freedom: Virginia Blacks in the American Revolution," *Journal of Southern History* 49 (August 1983): 375–98; Silvia Frey, *Water from the Rock: Black Resistance in a Revolutionary Age* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1991).

[62] Robert E. Dalzell and Lee Baldwin Dalzell, *George Washington's Mount Vernon: At Home in Revolutionary America* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), 104–11, 183–84.

After negotiating with George's Lund, Graves left Mount Vernon untouched, but he burned several homes on the eastern bank of Maryland's Piscataway Creek, homes very close to where John Washington had camped during his attack on the Susquehannock fort a century before. Lund had saved Mount Vernon from the torch for the price of a few baskets of food, but he was unable to recover the people who had fled to the ship. They had attained their freedom.

After stocking up on wood and water, the *Savage* turned around and headed back downriver. Word had gotten out about the raid and what it meant for enslaved people. On the return trip, every time Graves sent men ashore for supplies, they were met by "refugee negroes," whom they took on board where possible. On April 17 or 18, the *Savage* once more passed Popes Creek. By then, though, everyone along the Potomac shore had heard about the fighting, the house burning, and the flight of enslaved people, something that triggered memories of Dunmore's Proclamation. By Sunday, April 21, the *Savage* was back in the Chesapeake Bay.

A few months later, the ship was engaged in battle off the coast of Charleston, South Carolina, with an American sloop of war, the *Congress*. The *Savage* might have terrorized the Potomac, but in confronting the *Congress*, she had two of her rearmost masts "shot away"; her "main mast tottering with only three shrouds [sails] standing; the ship on fire"; and many men dead and wounded.[63] She had no choice but to limp to port as a captive. It was an ignominious end for the *Savage*, but the fear she left in her wake had done more damage than the fires its crew had started. The raid also began the end of Lund's tenure as Mount Vernon's custodian. Once the general learned that his cousin had parlayed with the enemy to save Mount Vernon, his faith in his cousin's judgment was shaken. He wrote:

> I am very sorry to hear of your loss—I am a little sorry to hear of my own—but that which gives most concern, is, that you should go on board the enemys vessels & furnish them with refreshments. It would have been a less painful circumstance to me, to have heard, that in consequence of your non compliance with their request, they had burnt my House, & laid the Plantation in Ruins. You ought to have considered yourself as my representative, and should have reflected on the bad example of communicating with the enemy and making a voluntary offer of refreshment to them with a view to prevent a conflagration.[64]

As if this admonishment were not enough, he continued, writing, "I am thoroughly perswaded that you acted from your best judgment—and believe, that your desire to preserve my property, and rescue the buildings from impending danger, were your governing motives—But to go on board their Vessels—carry them refreshments—commune

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[63] *The London Gazette*, December 18, 1781, 6.

[64] "From George Washington to Lund Washington, 30 April 1781," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99–01–02–05583.

with a parcel of plundering Scoundrels—and request a favor by asking the surrender of my Negroes, was exceedingly ill-judged—and 'tis to be feared—will be unhappy in its consequences, as it will be a precedent for others, and may become a subject of animadversion."[65]

The *Savage* caused all kinds of distress on its journey upriver. There is no saying just what role, if any, privateers or the *Savage* had in William Augustine moving inland from the old Popes Creek home. The fact remains that his move to another part of his land coincided with the only brush with war he and his neighbors had.

The Effects of the Revolution at Popes Creek

The American Revolution changed everything, and it changed nothing at Popes Creek. As it did for all Americans, the war placed Virginians under a new system of government. The Northern Neck proprietorship was gone, and the Anglican Church was no longer ruled from England and was hereafter called the Episcopal Church. Those settlers remaining loyal to the crown had fled the colony, either during the imperial crisis or during the resulting war—but there were few to begin with in eastern Virginia. The conflict created a population either supportive of the American cause or at least accepting of it. Westmoreland County had been fairly unified in the American cause, going back to the days of the Leedstown Resolves, so there was no mass exodus of loyalists. Some of the county's enslaved people, though, made use of the HMS *Savage* to attain their freedom. There is no record to say if any of those people came from Popes Creek.

At the county level, almost nothing changed. The court carried on as always, with the only major innovation being that statements of loyalty to the crown were no longer made at the start of every court session. Because the county and its elites were so unified against Great Britain, there was almost no change in who sat on the court; the colonial justices and officeholders were the same people who sat in the court when it was part of the Commonwealth of Virginia in the United States of America. It would be some time before the county officially dropped the old British monetary system of pounds, shillings, and pence, and older folks carried on accounting their domestic economies using the same valuations they had always used.

The war disrupted the tobacco trade but only temporarily. Once the war was over, traders on both sides of the Atlantic were eager to restore the commercial connections that had been their lifeblood, and soon the trade looked much as it had before. Tobacco, though, had been declining in prestige for decades—and not just for political reasons. Over a century of intensive tobacco growing had taken a toll on the soil, and more and more planters turned to other crops. George was a pioneer of this change, even though it did not

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[65] "From George Washington to Lund Washington, 30 April 1781," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99–01–02–05583.

happen in Westmoreland County. In 1766, he pulled out of the tobacco trade and switched to wheat. The result was a huge increase in his annual profits.[66] That change was not lost on other Virginians, and wheat became a more commonly grown crop.

This change in staple crops had enormous implications for Virginia's enslaved population. Their work had long been the cost-saving backbone of the labor-intensive tobacco economy. But as tobacco dropped in importance, many planters found themselves with more enslaved people than their economies needed. George Washington himself mused about this problem repeatedly in this era and fretted about the financial burden that slavery presented to him. Like other planters of that generation, he saw slavery as a thing that would eventually end due to its conflict with the Revolution's stated values and its economic problems. George wrote that he wished he could "get quit of negroes."[67] But he also opposed individual manumission, preferring to see the slavery question handled at the legislative level.

On the other hand, so many planters were deeply invested in enslaved people. The bulk of Augustine Jr.'s nonlanded wealth was in human beings, and his son carried on that division. These people were not about to simply give up such a huge investment. Any talk of changing Virginia's regime of slavery ended after 1800 when a new way to profitably grow cotton created a boom and expansion into what is now the Deep South filled with cotton-boom plantations. Slavery again was going to be the cheap labor that made these efforts profitable, and Virginia, with its large and underutilized enslaved population, was going to be the seedbed of the cotton boom's workforce. Virginia's great planters went from using enslaved people to grow tobacco to selling enslaved people to the growers of cotton, and a whole new type of slave-based economy was born.[68] Any talk of legislative manumission died then and there.

William Augustine and His Homes, 1780–1790

William Augustine would be the last of his line to live on Popes Creek. He would leave the region entirely around the turn of the 19th century and have his family relocate to Georgetown in Maryland. But before that move, he conducted a series of smaller moves

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[66] Bruce A. Ragsdale, "George Washington, the British Tobacco Trade, and Economic Opportunity in Prerevolutionary Virginia," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 97, no. 2 (1989): 132–62; Edward G. Lengel, *First Entrepreneur: How George Washington Built His—and the Nation's—Prosperity* (New York: Da Capo Press, 2016). For more on George Washington's faming business, see Bruce A. Ragsdale, *Washington at the Plow: The Founding Farmer and the Question of Slavery* (Cambridge: Belknap Press, 2021).

[67] Philip Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 403–29; Kenneth Morgan, "George Washington and the Problem of Slavery," *Journal of American Studies*, 34 (2000): 279–81; Mary Thompson, *"The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret": George Washington, Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 295–305.

[68] Sven Beckert, *Empire of Cotton: A Global History* (New York: Vintage Books, 2014).

around his land. He had already begun building a new home by the time the *Savage* sailed past Popes Creek. Over the subsequent decade, he oversaw the building or expansion of two homes. One was Blenheim, located just short of a mile inland from the Popes Creek home, and the second was Haywood, which stood on the Potomac riverfront on what had been the Lisson tract, which had descended to William Augustine through his father, grandfather, and great-grandfather. Jenny would pass away in 1791, and William Augustine would remarry twice, first to Mary Lee in 1792 and, after her 1795 death, to Sarah Tayloe, who would have their own children—Sarah Tayloe in 1800 and an unnamed infant who died very close to birth.

Much of what we know about the movement of William Augustine and Jenny comes from small references in journals, letter signatures, and William Augustine's account book, which he kept in 1776 and 1795. He had several commercial irons in the fire, something not at all unusual for people like him. In addition to his farm and tobacco growing, he hired out the labor of the people he enslaved and also had an interest in, or perhaps owned outright, what he called "the Store at Mattox Bridge."[69] This makes for a complicated and confusing string of evidence that combines personal, farm, and business accounts, and in the end contains as many silences as answers.

Even though it is hard to cite specific dates for the moves, or even which homes were being built or enlarged, following this chain of quotations and entries reveals the path of the family from 1780 until they finally left the area in the early 19th century.

In 1780, William Augustine complained to the Westmoreland County Court that the road leading to Mattox Bridge ran "immediately thro' his yard, and within thirty feet of his dwelling house."[70] This put the public traffic up and down the neck far too close than most planters were willing to put up with. George Washington had a similar complaint about Ferry Farm in 1749 when he wrote, "I think we suffer enough with the free ferry," referencing the busy road to the landing and the bell used to call the ferry from one side to the other, all of which were virtually on the family home's doorstep.[71] The road that concerned William Augustine, or a version of it, is still there in the woods south of GEWA, although now heavily overgrown. That road is about 200 feet from the walls of Blenheim, but William Augustine might have cut the truth rather closely and said "dwelling house" when what he really meant was property line. In either case, though, that road does not go anywhere near the Popes Creek home as it turns westward well south of the Popes Creek property line. All of this means that William Augustine's family was living in Blenheim in 1780 when he complained about the road.

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[69] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 13.

[70] Camille Wells, "Social and Economic Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Housing on the Northern Neck of Virginia," diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1994, 207.

[71] W. W. Abbot, ed., "George Washington to Lawrence Washington, 5 May, 1749," *The Papers of George Washington, Colonial Series* (Charlottesville, VA: University of Virginia Press, 1983), 6–8.

In August and September 1780, William Augustine paid Warner Bashaw to do over a month of bricklaying.[72]

In September and October 1781, William Augustine paid John Nunn for a "month work at bricklaying" and another "21 days" for what he listed as "your brother worked at do" ("do" is a standard account book short form for "ditto").[73]

In 1782, William Augustine paid Bashaw once again for "bricklaying from 29th July until 15th Novem'r."[74]

In early November 1782, Washington relations and friends visited Blenheim, "the seat of Mr. W. Washington."[75] This was the first reference to Blenheim being the family home.

On August 10, 1783, William Augustine paid John Higdon for the following:

plastering the half of one room and 2 closets
white washing 4 ½ rooms
building a dairy 16 feet square
mending plastering and laying a harth
2 days work to brick my [wall][76]

This work was probably done on Blenheim, either via repairs or expansion. Blenheim is currently a two-story brick home with a smaller wood-framed wing on the east side. An architectural study of the home shows its brick section to have dated to this period. It originally had a low-hipped roof, but that was later replaced with a peaked roof.[77]

In 1784, William Augustine paid Warner Bashaw for "7284 bricks laid in the strait walls of the cellar."[78] This was most likely some of the early work on Haywood. That same year, William Augustine paid Henry Lake for a considerable amount of lumber. Some of that material was specifically designated for a new tobacco house.[79]

In 1785, Bushrod Washington was born at Blenheim.

In December 1787, William Augustine received a revision of accounts from James Anderson. The letter listed Blenheim as William Augustine's address.[80]

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[72] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 13.

[73] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 25.

[74] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 13.

[75] *Journal of a Young Lady of Virginia, 1782* (Baltimore: John Murphy and Co., 1871), 46.

[76] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 38.

[77] Camille Wells, "Social and Economic Aspects of Eighteenth-Century Housing on the Northern Neck of Virginia," diss., College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, VA, 1994, 207.

[78] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 104.

[79] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 112.

[80] "James Anderson to William Augustine Washington, December 26, 1787," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

In 1787, William Augustine paid John Higdon for the following:

laying 40371 bricks
1 chimney
1 ditto
1 ditto
1 ditto
making 122 bricks[81]

This is almost certainly part of the building of Haywood.

In 1787, William Augustine paid George Fowles for the following:

304 yards of plastering.
213 ditto ditto ditto.
the passage when finished.[82]

This would have been the finishing work on Haywood. There could be no plastering until the roof had been put on the walls and the doors and windows were completed. All of this points to Haywood being very close to being a viable home.

On November 11, 1788, William Augustine's cousin and brother-in-law Corbin Washington visited his sister Jenny and her husband. He wrote a letter that contained some of the only detail available about the Washingtons at that moment. He recounted, "Mr Washington had the misfortune last night to have a new and valuable barn burnt down full of tobacco; this is the second lose of the kind he has met this year."[83]

This was probably the same barn that Henry Lake had recently built. The fact that there had been two fires of this kind that year may help explain why a memory of fires in that period lingered in parts of the family memory. Corbin also noted that "all here are well, except poor little Corbin, who continues extremely ill." This was a reference to the infant child who would die soon afterward. The letter, though, was confused as to location. On the one hand, it was labeled as being sent from Haywood, but in the text, Corbin wrote that "Sister Jenny, Hannah, and the family of Blenheim join me in love and best wishes for you and yours."[84]

In 1789, William Augustine again paid George Fowles for the following:

116 yards plastering in the parlor.
64 yards do in the study.
78 ¾ yards over study.[85]

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[81] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 116.

[82] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 124.

[83] "Corbin Washington to Elizabeth Smith, November 11, 1780," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[84] "Corbin Washington to Elizabeth Smith, November 11, 1780," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[85] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 124.

This would appear to be the last work on Haywood, and after 1788, all the letters from or to William Augustine referenced Haywood as being his home.

Work continued, though, either on the home, outbuildings, or other construction projects. In 1789, William Augustine paid Thomas Whitley for the following:

5760 oak shingles
2950 boards[86]

And on April 4, 1790, he paid Henry Lake for the following:

2125 feet ¼ inch plank
646 do inch do. [87]

Around 1802, the family moved away to Georgetown and thus ended 130 continuous years of John Washington and his descendants living on these acres.

The Popes Creek Enslaved and the Building of the Capitol

Like many Virginians of his class, William Augustine both hired and rented out the labor of enslaved people. In such deals, the money of course went to the planter, although some enslaved people were able to make some money selling their skills. In the second half of the 18th century, enslaved people constituted about half of Westmoreland County's population.[88] They were central to every aspect of the economy in a variety of ways. As early as 1777, William Augustine repeatedly hired Lew, who was a carpenter, and Ben, sometimes for periods as long as "82 days."[89] Lew and Tom worked the estate for "107 days" in 1779, and Kate and George also came over to work for shorter periods.

In 1793, George wrote to William Augustine "on the practicability of hiring negroe carpenters."[90] The latter replied on May 14, writing that "I fear it will be difficult at this time to procure them, most that were to hire with us, being engaged in square timbering for the federal buildings."[91] There were several projects then underway as the government began the work of creating a new federal capital at the falls of the Potomac. Among those

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[86] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 151.

[87] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 158.

[88] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 99.

[89] "William Augustine Washington, Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC, 2.

[90] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 14 May 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 574–75.

[91] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 14 May 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 574–75.

projects was the building of what would become the White House. There are no records to reveal exactly which projects the enslaved people from Mattox Neck—some of whom presumably had personal histories on the GEWA acres—worked on, but their labor was part of what built the new capital.

CHAPTER SIXTEEN

The Washingtons Move on, 1785–1815

William Augustine and George Washington, 1785–1799

William Augustine maintained a correspondence with his famous uncle. Their letters show a nephew eager to be of aid to his celebrated kinsman in a variety of family, local, and rural affairs, and an uncle who leaned on his kinsman for supplies but was also happy to offer advice on a range of family matters.[1] Fifty of the letters have either survived or are known because of references to them in other letters; half of these were penned by William Augustine and the other half by George. William Augustine's letters were often signed with statements like "and believe me to be my d[ea]r uncle your very affectionate nephew."[2] George in turn replied with signatures like "with much truth am your affect'd [affectionate] friend and uncle."[3] In 1785, William Augustine was at Blenheim, busy "collecting the holly berrys" that George had asked after. The former also was looking to secure "some wild goose and swans" for the general.[4] Although George knew the land somewhat from his childhood visits, there is no evidence that he visited the area after the Revolution. In 1793, George complained to William Augustine that one of his building projects had stopped for "the want of lime" and because of the "difficulty" he had "in procuring oyster shells," which could be crushed and burned to make the lime needed for mortar.[5] William Augustine, by then living at Haywood, took some of the blame himself, writing of his

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[1] For Washington's understanding of family, see Cassandra Good, "Defining the Family of Washington: Meaning, Blood, and Power in the New American Nation," *Journal of Social History* (2021): 1–26.

[2] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 14 May 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 574–75.

[3] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 21 October 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 14, David R. Hoth, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008), 254.

[4] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 1 June 1785," *The Papers of George Washington*, Confederation Series, vol. 3, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1994), 30–31.

[5] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 14 May 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 574–75; "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 17 February 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and

John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 162–63.

distress that "you seem to have relyed on me for procuring it."[6] This discussion was probably about the building of the greenhouse and new slave quarters that soon would sit on Mount Vernon's North Lane. These were in the last stages of completion at the time.

In the early 1790s, much of their correspondence dealt with the problems George was having in securing labor for his many Mount Vernon projects. William Augustine had a number of his enslaved laborers hired off to work on buildings for the new capital, and that left him mostly unable to help his uncle. On September 28, 1794, George let his nephew know that he was soon to leave Philadelphia to head west to "proceed with the troops against the insurgents."[7] This was a reference to the antitax revolt in western Pennsylvania known as the Whiskey Rebellion. Farmers refused to pay taxes on their distilled liquors, and when pressed, they took up arms against the government, invoking the rhetoric of the American Revolution. Washington saw it differently and took their refusal as a challenge not only to the United States but to his personal rule as well. His response was to personally lead a force of federalized militiamen against the rebels, Washington attired in his old Continental Army uniform to make a statement. Despite some early fights, the rebellion melted as Washington and his army marched into the area.

When William Augustine was looking for a school for his sons Bushrod and George Corbin, he turned to his well-connected uncle for advice. George had good things to say about Andover Academy in Massachusetts and, in a few letters, shared details about the school, its admissions practices, and the surrounding area. In 1796, George even acted as a go-between, facilitating correspondence between William Augustine and "Mr. Phillips of Andover."[8] When it came time, George Corbin did his schooling at Andover, no doubt with the help of his celebrated great-uncle.[9]

In 1797, Hannah Bushrod passed away, and the following year, her brother Augustine died as well. The two siblings were 19 and 18, respectively. George wrote to his nephew, referencing this "afflicting event," and offered consolation that these losses were "the decrees of an Allwise Providence, against whose dictates the skill, or foresight of man can be of no avail" and that his nephew's grief "may be greatly ameliorated by

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[6] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 14 May 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 12, Christine Sternberg Patrick and John C. Pinheiro, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2005), 574–75.

[7] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 28 September 1794," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 16, David R. Hoth and Carol S. Ebel, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2011), 733–34.

[8] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 28 September 1796," *Founders Online*, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99–01–02–00985.

[9] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 18 February 1795," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 17, David R. Hoth and Carol S. Ebel, eds. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2013), 544–45.

philosophical refection and resignation."[10] These words were so different from the pious, Christological, deeply Anglican phrasing preferred by their ancestors, even though the message of accepting fate was essentially the same. The rest of the letter, though, was devoted to more practical earthly affairs.

The correspondence also included one of the only times George discussed his family's ancestry.[11] This also makes for one of the most interesting and intimate portions of the entire correspondence. In 1791, Sir Isaac Heard of the British Heraldry Office had recently written to George about the Washington family's background. George's reply was lukewarm, professing little interest in or knowledge of the topic.[12] Washington knew his male family line of descent as evidenced by a genealogy chart he drafted sometime between 1748 and 1750.[13] But by his own account, he was less informed about the lines of the other parts of his family. Two years after Heard first reached out to Washington, he sent to Mount Vernon a "table of the Washington pedigree" that he had prepared.[14] But in letters to William Augustine, George showed rather more interest in the topic that united both uncle and nephew:

> Did you ever receive a letter from me, transmitting the request of Sir Isaac Heard, of the Heraldry Office in England, respecting the Genealogy of our family? and my own desire to be furnished with the Inscriptions on the Tombs of our Ancesters in their burying ground at Bridge Creek? Among your fathers Papers, I thought it was likely you might obtain some information on this head. From the coming over of John & Lawrence Washington, two brothers, in the year 1657 I have been able to trace the descendants of the former; being the one from whom our family came; those of Lawrence, from whom the Chotanckers proceeded, I have not been able to get any correct account; and that is the Branch to which Sir Isaac Heard's enquiries particularly point, being tolerably well informed of the descendants from John. The enquiry is, in my opinion, of

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[10] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 27 February 1798,"*The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 2, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 109–11.

[11] For more on Washington's engagement with his family story, see Karin Wulf, "George Washington, Genealogist: Why Didn't We Know?" Washington Papers (July 19, 2019), https://washingtonpapers.org/ george-washington-genealogist-why-didnt-we-know.

[12] Philip Levy, *George Washington Written Upon the Land: Nature, Myth, Memory, and Landscape* (Morgantown: West Virginia University Press, 2015), 30–31.

[13] Karin Wulf, "George Washington, Genealogist: Why Didn't We Know?" Washington Papers, July 26, 2019, https://washingtonpapers.org/george-washington-genealogist-why-didnt-we-know, accessed 5/22/22.

[14] "To George Washington from Isaac Heard, 9 August 1793," *The Papers of George Washington*, Presidential Series, vol. 13, Christine Sternberg Patrick, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2007), 404–6.

> very little moment, but as Sir Isaac has interested himself in the matter & seems desirous of tracing the family from whence we are descended back, I wish to give him as correct information of it as I am able to procure.[15]

William Augustine replied on July 24 with his own understanding of the family story:

> Inclosed I send you an old Will of one Martha Hayward dated 6th May 1697, which I got from Mr John Washington; its probable it may throw some light on the inquiries of Sir Isaac Heard, the Lady appears to have been the relation of our ancestors, and Wild (one hundred & [one] years ago) the chief of her Estate—to the Sons of John & Lawrence Washington of Westmoreland The question is whether this John & Lawrence be the original John & Lawrence who migrated to America, The Will is of no importance now to Mr Jno. Washington & he begs you will keep it If this Lawrence & John should have been those who migrated to America, then Lawrence must have been the Eldest & our Progenitor; as he left only two Sons John & Augustine; the one your Father, the other the Father of Colo. Warner Washington[.] from the Sons of this John mentioned in the Will must have sprung the various other branches of the Washington family—that Lawrence was our progenitor is convincing to me from the following inscription on a Tombstone near my vault—"here Lyeth the Body of John Washington Eldest Son to Capn Lawrence Washington who departed this Life the 10th of Jany 1690 aged Ten Years & Six Months; also Mildred Washington Eldest Daughter to said Washington who departed the 1st of Augt 1696 aged 5 Months" from this inscription it appears that Capt. Lawrence Washington must have had two Sons by the Name of John, the first died 1690, for after this in 1697 Martha Hayward makes a devise to John Washington the son of Capt. Lawrence Washington, which John must have been the Brother to your Father—In your Lettr to me you say John & Lawrence migrated to America about the year 1657—which makes me think it must be the same John & Lawrence mentioned in the Will, in 1697—as they appear to have had considerable families, & must I think have been too old to have been the Sons of John & Lawrence who came over in 1657—for in the year 1690 Cap. Lawrence Washington lost a Son aged Ten Years, which must have been born in 1680 only 23 Years after their arrival in America.[16]

William Augustine was reaching out to other local family members and thereby making this an issue for more relations. George responded on October 3, 1798, writing,

> I thank you for the old document(s) you sent me, respecting the family of our Ancestors. but I am possessed of Papers which prove beyond a doubt, that of the two brothers who Emigrated to this Country in the year 1657, during the

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[15] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 27 February 1798,"*The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 2, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 109–11.

[16] "To George Washington from William Augustine Washington, 24 July 1798," *The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 2, W. W. Abbot, ed. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1998), 450–52.

> troubles of that day, that John Washington, from whom we are descended, was the eldest. The Pedigree from [Isaac Heard], I have, and I believe very correct; but the descendents from Lawrence, in a regular course, I have not been able to trace. All those of our name, in and about Chotanck, are from the latter. John, was the Grandfather of my father and uncle, and Great grand father to Warner and me. He left two Sons, Lawrence & John; the former, who was the Eldest, was the father of my father, uncle, & aunt Willis. Mrs Hayward must have been a daughter of the first Lawrence, & thence became the cousen of the second Lawrence, & John.[17]

More than any document other than his Bridge's Creek survey, this small discussion reveals George's familiarity with Popes Creek and the depth of his knowledge of his family's story. One thing of note in this discussion is that Washington referred to that portion of the GEWA acres as the "Estate at Bridge Creek."[18] There is also something undeniably charming about these two kinsmen trying to make sense of their shared family story. Some of the details they got right and others they got wrong, but we today have access to so much more information than they had and can make so many more connections than either of them could have then looking at a few family documents. It is remarkable to see just how little information carried down in family stories and how even the Washingtons themselves could get lost in the recurring sequences of Johns and Lawrences and Augustines. Nevertheless, what we see here are an uncle and nephew discussing their shared ancestry right on the eve of the younger of the two leaving the old family seat for good and the elder about to leave this life.

George Washington and Slavery

George Washington's attitudes toward enslavement were not fixed throughout his life. As a child and the scion of a wealthy slaveholding family, he would have understood the ownership of other human beings to have been simply part of the world's order. He became an enslaver in his own right at the age of 11 upon Augustine's death and his inheritance of 10 of the enslaved people at Ferry Farm. For the remainder of his life, he held enslaved people, purchased other people, and profited from their labor. He was a keen observer of enslaved labor and was always looking for new ways to wring more work and profit from their time and minimize what he considered waste. In 1761, as he settled into the management of Mount Vernon, he invested in a whip and soon also issued orders that forbade "strange Negroes" from staying in quarters on his land and disallowed the people he enslaved

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[17] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 3 October 1798," *The Papers of George Washington*, Retirement Series, vol. 3, W. W. Abbot and Edward G. Lengel, eds. (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1999), 76–77.

[18] "From George Washington to William Augustine Washington, 14 November 1796," Founders Online, National Archives, https://founders.archives.gov/documents/Washington/99–01–02–00005.

from "running about and visiting without his consent."[19] People fleeing his ownership was a recurring event and one he had to deal with at least 47 times in his career. When people were caught and returned, Washington ensured that they were dealt with harshly. Sometimes this meant using the whip; other times it meant selling a shackled person off to an even harsher form of slavery in the West Indies.[20]

Like all enslavers, he devoted a considerable amount of time to keeping his labor force healthy and up to the tasks he assigned them. He was concerned that the treatment of the people he enslaved maintain the "proper humanity and discretion."[21] But this should not be confused with emotional attachment or concern. For Washington, enslaved laborers were part of the functioning of his complicated and ever-changing plantation machine, and in order for that machine to function at maximum efficiency, all of its parts had to be in working order. Illness, pregnancy, injuries, and so on were all his concern because they slowed down the work of the plantation and therefore cost money. Washington and other enslavers always walked a fine line between keeping people able to work while not spending a shilling more on that project than was minimally necessary. In this respect, he was very much like his contemporaries. There is no escaping that a significant part of Washington's wealth and prominence rested on the stolen labor of hundreds of enslaved Africans.

But Washington also lived at a time when many Americans—many enslavers themselves—asked challenging questions about the institution at the heart of so much of the American economy. For Washington, that questioning began when he pulled his land out of tobacco production and moved it to wheat. That change in crops drastically reduced his need for a large enslaved labor force since grains required far less care and special handling than tobacco. That dramatic change in economy also dramatically changed Washington's relationship to the practice of enslavement. What was essential to the profitable production of tobacco became too many underused people to house, clothe, and feed for grain production.

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[19] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 410; Mary Thompson, *"The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret": George Washington, Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 295–301. Washington received antislavery and anti-slave-trade pamphlets from friends and admirers. The extent to which they influenced his thought is unclear, but he did keep them and had them bound; Francois Furstenberg, "Atlantic Freedom: George Washington, Slavery, and Transatlantic Abolitionist Networks," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (April 2011): 247–86.

[20] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 411. The most notable of the people who fled Washington's enslavement was Ona Judge, who left the President's House in Philadelphia and made a free life for herself in New Hampshire. See Erika Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: 37 Link, 2017).

[21] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 410.

The American Revolution's language of liberty was clearly at odds with the very real fact of enslavement, and that glaring contradiction was not lost on contemporaries. Dr. Samuel Johnson, the celebrated English essayist, dryly observed at the outset of the Revolution, "How is it that we hear the loudest yelps for liberty among the drivers of negroes?"[22] Enslaved people themselves also spotted the flaw in the colonists' logic and used it to make a case for their own equality both during and after the Revolution. In New York, for example, enslaved people erected their own Liberty Tree—a wooden pole that in the 1760s became a common symbol of protest of British authority—but this one bore a banner saying, "Freedom to Africans."[23]

Washington was by no means blind to this inconsistency, although when he first raised doubts about slavery, his rationale was far from ideological. In 1778, amid a war-stalled economy, Washington began to consider selling off portions of his enslaved workforce and even wrote to a confidant that he "wished to get quit of Negroes."[24] His close friendship with the French general and ardent abolitionist the Marquis de Lafayette pushed the matter further. The Marquis challenged Washington on the inconsistency of liberty and slavery and urged him to join in plans to create communities of freed Africans. Washington applauded the idea but also took no steps in that direction.[25]

As Washington's global stature grew as the great hero of liberty, abolitionist admirers sent him antislavery pamphlets, some of which Washington bound and kept on his shelf.[26] He privately expressed a desire that the states themselves might introduce legislation to end slavery, at least in the future, but he also opposed the freeing of enslaved people by masters at their whim. In 1793, he signed the Fugitive Slave Act, which called for the return of people who had fled bondage regardless of the laws of the state to which they had fled. He also found himself confronting this issue directly in 1796 while he was president and residing in the then-capital city of Philadelphia. Martha Washington's half-English enslaved maid Ona Judge made use of Pennsylvania's liberal laws to take her own

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[22] Jack P. Greene, "'Slavery or Independence': Some Reflections on the Relationship among Liberty, Black Bondage, and Equality in Revolutionary South Carolina," *South Carolina Historical Magazine* 101, no. 1 (2000): 15.

[23] Wendy Bellion, *Iconoclasm in New York: Revolution to Reenactment* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2019), 44.

[24] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 416.

[25] Francois Furstenberg, "Atlantic Freedom: George Washington, Slavery, and Transatlantic Abolitionist Networks," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (April 2011): 247–86.

[26] Francois Furstenberg, "Atlantic Freedom: George Washington, Slavery, and Transatlantic Abolitionist Networks," *William and Mary Quarterly* 68, no. 2 (April 2011): 247–86.

freedom and make her way to New Hampshire. The Washingtons were rather stunned at her flight and subsequently devoted considerable time to failing to persuade Judge to return to her enslavement.[27]

Washington entertained the possibility of manumitting his people (freeing them legally) but did not act on his schemes. He was unable to shake the idea that these people represented financial outlays. Therefore, all of his unacted-upon plans foundered on his insistence that manumission come with some sort of financial recovery for his "loss." He never acted on selling western land to cover the costs of freedom or leasing out enslaved labor to make up for their lost value.[28] Even at the end of his life, he contemplated moving people from Mount Vernon to western lands.

Washington's 1799 death brought with it the manumission he couldn't bring himself to pay for in life. Several prominent Virginian enslavers in the years after the Revolution chose to end their people's bondage upon their passing. Robert Carter of Nomini Hall began to free close to 500 enslaved people as he edged closer to his death.[29] Others wrote manumission into their wills. That was what Washington did. But the massive slave uprising in Haiti that began in 1791 and drove the French from their longtime colony had established the Americas' only nation born in slave rebellion. The prospect of a similar event in the United States sent chills up the backs of every southern slaveholder. Fear of uprising was always in the back of their minds, and so, even as some prominent planters moved to free their enslaved people, Virginia's lawmakers worked to slow down or reverse that impulse so as to keep Africans subjected and under tight control. This meant that Washington's freeing his people was not a harbinger of things to come but rather was a last gasp of dwindling options. Slavery was far from over in the American South; in fact, the early years of the 19th century saw an increase in demand for enslaved labor that transformed the population of idle hands that kept Washington awake at night into sources of great wealth.

At death, Washington freed the people to whom he had legal title. But after long years at Mount Vernon, many of these people were intermarried (even though legal marriage did not exist for enslaved people) with those legally owned by Martha Washington. Post–Haitian Revolution changes in Virginia law meant that freed enslaved people would

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[27] Erica Armstrong Dunbar, *Never Caught: The Washingtons' Relentless Pursuit of Their Runaway Slave, Ona Judge* (New York: Atria, 2017).

[28] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 423.

[29] Philip D. Morgan, "'To Get Quit of Negroes': George Washington and Slavery," *Journal of American Studies* 39, no. 3 (2005): 427.

have to leave the commonwealth. In order avoid breaking up families, Washington stipulated that their freedom was deferred until Martha's death (in 1802)—a cruelty blended with a kindness.[30]

William Augustine was of a completely different mind regarding the people he enslaved on Mattox Neck. He shared his uncle's sense that these people were there to make money for their enslavers. But he seemed to have been troubled neither by the economic problems of slavery nor by the language of liberty deployed during the Revolution. Like his uncle, William Augustine leased out his enslaved people at every chance, and his account book is filled the deals and profits made from these leases. Unlike his uncle, though, there is no reason to think that he saw in these leases anything other than profit and certainly not the possible beginnings of these enslaved people's freedom.

William Augustine Buys Chickens

William Augustine's account book is filled with records of his transactions dating from the 1780s into the early 19th century. Like all account books, it is ordered by name. Each person with whom he had a business relationship of any kind got their own folio in the book so that value coming into his estate from the person could be listed on one side of the ledger and value going out listed on the other.

For the most part, the names of the people he enslaved appeared in the accounts themselves as he either sold their bodies or their labor, or rented enslaved people from others. There was one notable exception at the very end of the book, though. The last page contained a list of small transactions with enslaved people. None of these were dated, so we cannot know if these transactions were at Popes Creek, Blenheim, or Haywood. But these certainly involved the people enslaved by the Washington family on Mattox Neck. The list shows William Augustine buying chickens and ducks from the people he enslaved. Raising and selling fowl was a common way the enslaved could make some money for themselves. Moll, Sarah, Violet, and Phyllis—all women who appear in other parts of the family records—sold dozens of chickens to William Augustine. Carpenter Lew, whom William Augustine hired out on many occasions, also was an active chicken seller. Lew was in a position to use his craft skills to make money for himself, so his selling chickens as well shows something of an entrepreneurial spirit, perhaps. On the other hand, Cripple Lew may well have been in the opposite condition with only the birds he could raise or catch as a way to get some money for himself. He sold ducks to the Washingtons, but it is unclear if

[30] Mary Thompson, *"The Only Unavoidable Subject of Regret": George Washington, Slavery, and the Enslaved Community at Mount Vernon* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2019), 295–307.

these were live animals or ones he had hunted himself for sale. Someone named Banco sold William Augustine a dozen eggs, and in one case a man listed only as "a negro of Mr McCarty" sold him a dozen chickens.[31]

This unusual document shows that this chicken economy was not limited to single plantations but that local enslaved people were on occasion able to find markets off of their enslavers' lands.[32] In some slaveholding areas, the sale of poultry and other food items was at the core of an informal economy that saw enslaved people meeting the dietary needs of poor whites.[33] On plantations, these economies coexisted alongside the common use of enslaved cooks except that in this case, enslaved people received some remuneration for their efforts.

William Augustine Almost Sells Haywood, 1803

In 1803, William Augustine took the first steps to sell off all of his Mattox Neck holdings. He took out an ad in the Georgetown newspaper, *The Washington Federalist*, that offered a detailed overview of Mattox Neck at the end of the Washington tenure, when almost all of it was owned by the last resident of the line:

> I wish to sell my estate called Haywood, situated in Westmoreland county Virginia.
>
> It contains by computation six thousand acres of land lying on Potomack river between Mattox and Popes Creek, more than a moiety of which is in cultivation, The land is all level, and the greater part of it equal, if not superior to any on Potomack between Alexandria and the bay. It is peculiarly adapted to the production of Indian corn, wheat and barley; and produces annually heavy crops of wheat and corn of an excellent quality, This estate possesses a large quantity of meadow lands, that may be reclaimed at a moderate expense; and several hundred acres of natural mowable meadow—Nearly one half of this land is in wood, which affords an inexhaustible supply of timber, [rilin] firewood and cedar. It is at present cultivated as four farms, upon each of which are all the improvements essential to agriculture. The mansion house is a commodious two story framed house in good repair, with twelve rooms, large enough for the accommodation of any gentleman, with the usual out houses, carpenters and blacksmiths shops, and c. pleasantly situated on the bank of the river, There is a large commodious garden and yard lately paled in with red cedar posts and

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[31] "William Augustine Washington Account Book," Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[32] Philip D. Morgan, *Slave Counterpoint: Black Culture in the Eighteenth-Century Chesapeake and Lowcountry* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1998), 359.

[33] Jeff Forret, "Slaves, Poor Whites, and the Underground Economy of the Rural Carolinas," *Journal of Southern History* 70, no. 4 (2004): 783–824; Christa Dierksheide, "'The Great Improvement and Civilization of That Race': Jefferson and the 'Amelioration' of Slavery, ca. 1770–1826," *Early American Studies* 6, no. 1 (2008): 186.

> chestnut pailings, containing a great variety of fruit trees; and on the different farms are upwards of 1,000 bearing apple trees, and 3,000 peach trees, with a variety of other choice fruits.
>
> There appertains to this estate a very productive grist mill, with two pairs of stones, and a never failing stream of water to supply it.[34]

The advertisement's silences are as interesting as its details. William Augustine painted a lovely pastoral picture of the land that, by his time, was far quieter and less populated than it had been only a century before. He made no mention of the many homes or what remained of them. He did, though, mention the orchards. It is quite possible that these trees were descendants of the ones that were so praised in 17th-century land records.

The claim that the estate contained six thousand acres means that what William Augustine called the Haywood Estate was in reality the entirety of Mattox Neck. That means that the old Popes Creek homesite was included in the sale, swallowed up by the name Haywood and subdivided into one of the four farms that William Augustine noted. But noticeably absent was any mention at all of George Washington. Even though his popularity had waned somewhat as his presidency wore on, George was still an iconic figure, and his 1799 death was attended by nationwide public performances of grief.[35] The fact that a parcel of land contained the home of the world-famous symbol of liberty could at minimum be considered a selling point. Yet William Augustine made no mention at all of his uncle's connection to the land he now tried to sell.

Samuel Lamkin's Survey, 1813

In the end, William Augustine reconsidered the sale and instead left the land to his sons. He passed away in 1810, leaving a will that divided Mattox Neck between two of his adult sons—and echoed the division that led to conflict between Augustine and his cousin John in the 1740s. In the division, Bushrod received the Mattox Neck land west of Bridge's Creek. George Corbin was to receive the lands to the east of Bridge's Creek as well as the Indian Town tract between the forks of the creek. The will invoked both old and new names for places of long Washington family association. The name Indian Town dated back at least to John Jr.'s day, while references to "Wise's Field" and "the Barrens" dated back at least to Augustine Jr.'s time.[36] There were entirely new names, such as "Pea Hill," which referred to

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[34] "A Valuable Estate in Lands," *The Washington Federalist* 444, March 16, 1803, 1.

[35] Gerald Kahler, *The Long Farewell: Americans Mourn the Death of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2008); Matthew R. Costello, *The Property of the Nation: George Washington's Tomb, Mount Vernon, and the Memory of the First President* (Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2019). Both books discuss the public meaning of Washington's death and the role of its material memorial.

[36] "William Augustine Washington's Will, 1810," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

a part of the land between Blenheim and the old family home on Popes Creek, and "Mont-Rose," referring to land closer to what is now Route 3. Notable in its absence was the name Wakefield. That name seems to have had a fairly short life and really was in use only during Anne Aylett's lifetime and residence. It seems clear that her son had no use for the name and never referred to it. It is also interesting to note that by 1810, there was no mention whatsoever of George Washington. There were tourists in Fredericksburg having his childhood home pointed out as early as 1777, and Mason Locke "Parson" Weems, author of the cherry tree fable, noted the presence of visitors in 1809. But in the place where George was born, the landscape bore no visible or useful memory of his presence.

George Corbin had little or no personal experience of or connection to the land. He also had no use for it. So by 1813, he had arranged to sell the entire parcel to John Gray of Stafford County. In preparation for the sale, George Corbin hired Samuel Lamkin to run a survey of his inheritance. The resulting map is the most detailed of all the Popes Creek maps and shows several parts of the landscape as they were known in the latter part of the 18th century. Several key details are missing, including the location of Blenheim in relation to other parts of the landscape and any specific location of the Washington birth home. Another map from the same period did locate Blenheim. Lamkin's map, though, showed the point of land that came to be called Burned House Point after the Civil War when federal mapmakers charted the area. Significantly, that name was not in use in 1813. Locals then, and presumably up until that time, called the same spur by the name of Good Point.[37]

Lamkin's survey of the land noted a fork in the road he called "the road to the Burned House."[38] The map, though, only showed the road where it bounded the property. Therefore, the location of its ultimate destination and perhaps its namesake is a bit unclear. The drawn road ended at a fork of Bridge's Creek and ran north and parallel to Popes Creek. This, though, was on an old road on the land and also the one that William Augustine thought was too close to Blenheim. This was a public road like those mentioned in court records, but a private farm lane would have led from the public road to the site of the old Washington home. By the early 19th century, the remnants of the many homes that had dotted the land would have disappeared as the Washingtons consolidated their land holdings. In all likelihood, the old Washington home would have been the only home worth noting then in that part of the land, meaning that any burned home worth recalling was probably that one. It had been more than 30 years since William Augustine had moved his family out of the home, meaning there had been plenty of time

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[37] " William Augustine Washington's Will, 1810," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC; Samuel Lamkin 1813 Survey Map, GEWA Collections.

[38] "Samuel Lamkin Survey of Mr. Washington's Land," GEWA Archives.

for a home to have been burned and become the eponymous Burned House.[39] Nevertheless, it is odd that no place name recalled Washington in the early days of the republic he helped found.

The map also shows a large stretch of the public road that ran across Mattox Neck, parallel to but north of the current run of Route 3 and where it then turned northward toward the head of Bridge's Creek's east fork. Lamkin labeled this "the road to the burned house" but only showed its run as far as the head of Bridge's Creek, where it either turned or ended. There would have been a farm lane that came from this road and gone to the old Popes Creek homestead. A later 1859 survey map of the same land directed by John Wilson incorporated Lamkin's map but showed what was then the network of farm lanes that linked the public road to the old Washington homestead. Even though this map was made well after the Washington occupancy, there is little doubt that the road system and farm lanes it showed in 1859 were the same roads that were in use in Augustine Washington's day. The 1859 map also carried the name "Good Point" for the birthplace promontory and revealed that by the 1850s, the name Wakefield was back in use for the area.[40]

Roads and Berms

Several stretches of the roads are still on the land today, though not on GEWA acres. The northward turn of the Mattox Bridge road is still in use as a private drive and can be seen quite clearly. These roads also show the unique ditch-and-berm system that was employed on Mattox Neck. No documents discuss these extensive features, but they are an interesting and important part of the landscape. Their primary purpose was to keep roads dry and usable. Colonial Virginia law called for the maintenance of public roads and frequent inspections. Soggy roads were a constant problem for people relying on them for commerce and other duties. Lining the roads with ditches and berms provided places for runoff water while protecting roads from fields that might flood. The model was a common one in England, adopted to the needs of Virginia. The colonial records are filled with official and private concerns over road quality, and the court was regularly commissioning freeholders as the surveyors of the public byways. Maintaining roads was costly and time consuming. On top of that, the county had a right to claim workers (servant or enslaved) even at the expense of labor needed on private fields. Any method that kept the roads from flooding was of great public interest.

There are a few places where these berms and ditches have survived on GEWA land. The most visible ones—the line that runs along the current Bridge's Creek Road between the historic core and the Potomac beach—are most likely modern machine-made copies

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[39] "Samuel Lamkin Survey of Mr. Washington's Land," GEWA Archives.

[40] 1859 Survey Map, GEWA Archives.

dating to the early days of the park. This road in its current run was a creation of late-19th-century commemorators. The 1859 map showed a farm lane running from the old home-site to the cemetery, and the current run is a wider and more formalized paved version of the original, which would have begun as a path to and from John Washington's home. The current ditch and berm are too far from the road when compared with other off-site examples, such as those that can be seen near Blenheim. Of course, these have been altered and maintained over the years, so to one degree or another they have been changed. None should be considered as direct 18th-century remnants, although many might be considered the "grandchildren" of originals. The berms along the current road also do not sit on anything that was a property line in the 18th century. This points to their being a later commemorative addition or improvement.

There also are smaller sections of ditches and berms in the more wooded portions of the park and in neighboring properties not owned by the park. Archaeological investigation of a selection of these revealed that their useful life dated to the middle of the 19th century and perhaps a bit earlier. These dates were based on small core samples; more extensive excavation might reveal different results.[41] Some of the area's best ditch and berms can be found on the road to Blenheim. These line roads identified on early-19th-century maps and are of significant size. Although these have not had archaeological study, their location and historical land use patterns suggest that these are the best candidates for being colonial-era features. Fortunately, these resemble the berms and ditches in GEWA, meaning that even though the largest of these are more modern constructions, they nevertheless are very good copies of more venerable examples and therefore make excellent interpretive tools.

Memory Begins, 1813–1815

As George Corbin prepared to sell the land, he secured for his family two small but significant parts of the old place. These were the "family burying ground at the Great Quarter" and what he called the "sixty feet square of ground on which the house stood in which General Washington was born."[42] Whether or not George Corbin was correct about where his famous kinsman's birth home once stood, it would be debated from then on, but what mattered most in his move was that he was the first to recognize that Washington's significance to the nation would in some way need to be recalled on this landscape. For him, this was still a personal or family matter but significant all the same. Unfortunately, the 1813 survey map

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[41] R. Grant Gilmore, Paul Moyer, and Carrie Alblinger, *An Archaeological Assessment of George Washington's Birthplace National Monument* (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2001), 129–30.

[42] Transcription of George Corbin Washington's sale documents, David Rodnick, *Orientation Report on the George Washington Birthplace National Monument*, GEWA Archives (George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA), 10.

that Samuel Lamkin prepared for the land sale did not record where were the two reserved plots of land. The 1859 Wilson map did show the locations of these two plots of land, labeling them as the presumed "birth place" site and the family "graveyard and vault."[43] But by then, anyone with any firsthand knowledge of the old landscape was long gone.

In the summer of 1814, the incident of the HMS *Savage* repeated itself but this time in magnified fashion. During the War of 1812, British admiral Sir George Cockburn had led a small flotilla along the same route that Graves had taken in America and Britain's last war, this time burning more estates along the way. Their incursion ended with a land battle and the burning of the nation's new capital of Washington, DC.[44]

The following year, George Corbin's showboating cousin George Washington Parke Custis and some friends visited Popes Creek to place a specially engraved "first stone" bearing the words "Here the 11th of February 1732 George Washington was Born."[45] The recent war and its destruction were very much on the party's mind as they cast their commemorative mission as a sort of rededication of the United States in the form of a George Washington tribute.

Parke Custis had no experience of the land, but fortunately, the current overseer was all too happy to lead the party to the "hallowed spot" where they thought the home had once stood.[46] Finding only a "few scattered bricks" remaining, they "reverently placed the First Stone" right "upon the remains of the old Mansion-House, in which the Hero first saw the light."[47] In all likelihood, the local folks made sure that Parke Custis placed his stone near the sunken remains of a cellar and a chimney that was still standing. No one at the time noted it, but this was probably on the small patch of land George Corbin had saved for himself two years before. There were still the remains of several structures, all in varying states of visibility. Which one of these Parke Custis anointed as *the* home would never become quite clear.

The First Stone, though, represents an important juncture in the history of the GEWA acres. It was the transitional act between the history of a landscape as living place to one ossified by the priorities of commemoration. From then on, a set of canonical stories would take form—some true, some half-true, some entirely fabricated. As this land became

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[43] 1859 Survey Map, GEWA Archives.

[44] Peter Snow, *When Britain Burned the White House: The 1814 Invasion of Washington* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2014).

[45] Benson J. Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book of the Revolution* (New York: Harper Brothers, 1850), vol. 1, no. 218.

[46] Lossing, *Pictorial Field Book*, 1, no. 218. See Joy Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief: Archaeology and Meaning at George Washington Birthplace National Monument," in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, Paul A. Shackel, ed. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 197–220; Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 24–50.

[47] George Washington Parke Custis, *Recollections and Private Memoirs of Washington* (Washington, DC: William H. Moore, 1859), 128. See also Edward G. Lengel, *Inventing George Washington: America's Founder in Myth and Memory* (New York: Harper, 2011), 33–36.

conceptually a national possession, bits of its story spread through newspapers articles, maps, and annual visits from outsiders. Few, if any, of these enthusiasts had access to the sorts of documents we have explored in the previous chapters. But repetition is a powerful force, and through it, an official story coalesced. It was one inspired more by Parson Weems than by clunkier sources like the Westmoreland County Court records. It focused on the experience of George above all others, and in so doing, it silenced the many people—men and women, free and enslaved—who made their lives here. In the 1920s, the quest to memorialize the birth home became the overarching concern for all of those interested in this land. They imagined that the object they sought could only be found by reference to Parke Custis and stories of burned homes. Their desire to find the home was such that it made them too willing to credit any story as long as they could say it came from someone claiming a Washington ancestry.[48]

Washington Family House Fire Stories

It remains unclear if the set of brick foundations that park promoters named Building X in the 1940s is in fact Augustine Washington's home where George was born. The evidence that could definitively prove or disprove this hypothesis remains in the ground, but it will probably be some time before we will achieve real certainty. For now, all we have is possibility.

The story, though, of this building having burned down in 1779 or 1780 (depending on the version) has been coupled with the features ever since their discovery. One version of the story or another has become a significant marker in the home's story. House fires were common if tragic occurrences, and the region is dotted with place names that recall burned or "burnt" houses. After 1810 or so, the road running up part of Mattox Neck was known as the "Road to the Burned House," but no map showed its actual terminus—any number of old homes could have qualified.[49] Excavators in the 1930s found burned ceramics in the debris and dirt inside Building X's cellars, but these were too small and inconsistent to have been the result of a house fire. This question was covered in the 2014 report in Building X. But even though archaeology did not support the suggestion that Building X burned badly, the fire story took on a life of its own regardless of the evidence that supported it. The fire stories have become powerfully associated with GEWA, and their repeated repetition over time has only strengthened that connection. Additionally, there are several overlapping and mutually informing fire stories associated with the Washingtons and their many homes. Sorting them all out and using them to locate the family as they moved has been a project since the early 19th

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[48] Philip Levy, *The Permanent Resident: Excavations and Explorations of George Washington's Life* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 13–38.

[49] "Samuel Lamkin Survey of Mr. Washington's Land," and Mr. Wilson's 1859 Map, both in the GEWA collection.

century. The result is a confusing array of stories that have been put to multiple uses. For these reasons, it is valuable to walk through the various documented stories and create as much clarity as the scant record allows.[50]

A: In 1741, Augustine received a letter from Richard Yates, the Appleby Grammar School's headmaster. Yates consoled Augustine for what he called his "late calamity wch. you suffered by fire."[51] The Washingtons were living at Ferry Farm at this time, and the 1741 date matches the archaeological evidence of the fire at that home that took place around that time. Some 19th-century Washington biographers mistakenly placed Yates's fire at the birth home and saw it as accounting for the family move up the Potomac. This fire took place at Ferry Farm.

B: Just after the American Revolution, one of Washington's staff officers set about creating a biography of the general. Connecticut native David Humphreys had considerable access to Washington and his papers as he did his work. The book was not published during Humphreys's lifetime, but he did provide Washington with a draft, and Washington added a few margin comments to augment or clarify some of Humphreys's claims. One of these noted that his "father's house burned."[52] This is the sum total of Washington's statements on the matter but would seem to refer to the same fire mentioned by Yates. The timing might allow for this to be a reference to a fire at GEWA, but by that time, Washington would have called the home either his brother's or his nephew's. This was also probably a reference to the 1740 fire at Ferry Farm.

C: In 1795, Robert Douglas, a former Fredericksburg neighbor of the Washingtons, wrote to the then-president that it had given him a "very sore heart that on a Christmas Eve, his [Augustine's] great house was burned down and that he was Obliged with his good family to go and live in the kitchen."[53] Like the other two documented fire references, this was also about the Ferry Farm fire. The main addition here, though, was the introduction of the seasonal Christmas reference.

These are the only references to Washington house fires in 18th-century documents and the only ones that date to Washington's lifetime. They all refer to the Ferry Farm fire. George and William Augustine had a correspondence of about 60 letters, none of which mentioned a fire at the latter's home, nor does William Augustine's account book from the period show evidence of his having to purchase new items for a home after a fire.

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[50] Philip Levy, *The Permanent Resident: Excavations and Explorations of George Washington's Life* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 13–38.

[51] Moncure Conway, *Barons of the Potomack and the Rappahannock* (New York: The Grolier Club, 1892), 68–69; T. Pape, "Appleby Grammar School and Its Washington Pupils," *William and Mary Quarterly* 20, no. 4 (October 1940): 500.

[52] David Humphreys, *Life of General Washington*, Rosemarie Zagarri, ed. (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2006), 59.

[53] "To George Washington from Robert Douglas, 25 May 1795," *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, Carol S. Ebel, ed. (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2015), 18, no. 173–75.

D: On November 11, 1788, Corbin Washington visited William Augustine Washington while he and his family lived at the Blenheim estate. He wrote a letter that contained some of the only detail available about the Washingtons in that moment. He recounted that "Mr Washington had the misfortune last night to have a new and valuable barn burnt down full of tobacco; this is the second lose [*sic*] of the kind he has met this year."[54] These fires are the only documented ones associated with the Washington family, but exactly which barns burned and which part of the land they sat upon is unknown. The handwriting on the letter itself is challenging, leading to the 1788 date sometimes being mistaken for 1780.

E: The next description of a Washington house fire came from the writing of Mason Locke "Parson" Weems. His 1807 edition of *The Life of Washington* is most famous for its inclusion of the well-known cherry tree fable. Later in the book, though, he offered another story, this time about a house fire when Washington was five years old and envisioned as a prophetic dream of Mary Washington. In the dream, Mary was "sitting in the piazza" of the family's "large new house" while her son George "was in the garden with his corn-stalk plough" when she suddenly heard "a kind of roaring noise on the eastern side of the house." On running over to see the cause, she "beheld a dreadful sheet of fire bursting from the roof." Her shock was so great that it nearly threw her "senseless to the ground." Fortunately, George did not also react with such panic. Instead, he confidently said, "God almighty will help us," and with that pious sentiment, he scampered up a handy ladder "with the nimbleness of a squirrel" while the panicked enslaved people "supplied him with water," which he threw on the flames using an "American gourd." Just when the battle seemed in doubt, an elderly gentleman in a "tall cap" offered George a wooden shoe, and with that vessel, he finally extinguished the blaze. While the assembled wept and wailed over the damage done to the home, George proclaimed that there was no need to worry, for they could "make a far better roof than ever this was" and one that would "last for ever."[55]

Weems explained that this obvious fiction was in fact a parable of the American Revolution, the fire on the eastern roof being the war breaking out in Boston, the old man being Benjamin Franklin, and so on. Although Weems invented the story, elements of it flowed into later retellings of Washington family house fires.

F: Samuel Lamkin's 1813 survey map and some of the documents around William Augustine Washington's sale of the land refer to the "road to the burned house." This road was a public one that was also a property line. Lamkin showed the road running north parallel to Popes Creek. Unfortunately Lamkin did not show the ultimate destination of

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[54] "Corbin Washington to Elizabeth Smith, November 11, 1780," Henry Woodhouse Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC.

[55] Mason Locke Weems, *The Life of Washington* (Philadelphia: Joseph Allen, 1807), 61–62. This recitation of the story was also in Philip Levy, *The Permanent Resident: Excavations and Explorations of the Life of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 13–38.

this road, leaving unclear just where this namesake burned house was. What the survey makes clear, though, is that in 1813, there was a building or place memory that was recalled in local naming traditions. Lamkin also labeled the point of land now called Burned House Point as being named Good Point. The burned house name was added considerably later.[56]

G: In 1859, Richard Claybrook commissioned a survey of what is now the GEWA and neighboring lands. The landowner John E Wilson directed the survey, and some of his local knowledge was incorporated into the resulting map. The draft also contains Lamkin's original notes but adds on details of how place names had changed in the intervening half century. The map repeated the Road to the Burned House name, showing that it in fact ended at the head of Bridge's Creek. A farm lane to GEWA, though, spurred from it. By this time, the farm had been rechristened with the name Wakefield, and the 1859 map showed Good Point and was also the first to show the small parcel of land where the George Washington birth home was said to have sat.[57]

H: United States Geological Survey mapmakers drafted the GEWA acres in 1879 and again in 1897 after physical commemorations were in place. These additions were included in the second edition of the map, which also changed the name Good Point to Burned House Point.[58]

This was the state of affairs by the time of the Civil War. Local memory recalled a burned home somewhere on the land and had restored Anne Aylett's Wakefield name to the land. After the war, though, and into the early 20th century, an interlaced trio of highly detailed fire stories emerged. They are all suspicious for a few reasons. The first is that there is nothing in the 1780s written record to support them. Nor were they part of the first commemorations dating to just after the land sale.[59] Secondly, they all borrow details from one another and draw on the other documented fire stories, all of which were available to readers by the turn of the century. Lasty—and most problematically—two of them draw on details from Weems's dream of Mary Washington, a story that was a self-conscious fabrication.

I: The first of the principal stories is in an 1883 letter in the GEWA collection. The letter is unsigned and was intended to validate the provenance of a table also in the GEWA collection. The letter recounts a story credited to Sarah Tayloe Washington, who had then just passed away in her 80s. The letter's author claimed that the table was "supposed"

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[56] Samuel Lamkin Survey of Mr. Washington's Land, GEWA Archives.

[57] 1859 Survey Map, GEWA Archives.

[58] A. Lindenkohl, "Birthplace of George Washington, USGS Survey Map," 1879, reprinted with additions in 1897, Map Collection, Library of Congress, Washington, DC, accessed 10/12/21.

[59] Joy Beasley, "The Birthplace of a Chief: Archaeology and Meaning at George Washington Birthplace National Monument," in *Myth, Memory, and the Making of the American Landscape*, Paul A. Shackel, ed. (Gainesville: University Press of Florida, 2001), 197–220; Seth Bruggeman, *Here, George Washington Was Born: Memory, Material Culture, and the Public History of a National Monument* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2008), 48–50.

to have been a gift from "General Washington" to William Augustine, his nephew and Sarah Tayloe's father.[60] The letter noted that "the house was burned which happened during the Revolutionary War"; the undamaged table was supposedly a survivor of that conflagration.[61]

J: Around the same time, John E. Wilson owned the land and had a long experience with the area. He married a descendant of Sarah Tayloe Washington, took a great interest in the growing commemorative movement at what is now GEWA, and shared information with the Army Corps of Engineers when it conducted an excavation at the site of the Memorial House, which Wilson was convinced was the site of the birth home.[62] He also outlined another version of the fire story in an 1898 letter. He was careful, though, to note that his stories relied "merely on tradition" and that he was "not able to refer to any contemporary record" to corroborate them.[63] His sources for his version were "details" he had learned from "Mrs Sarah Tayloe" as well as stories "from the two old house servants who remembered the house and its destruction."[64] He noted that the furniture made it out of the house—the same claim as in the 1883 letter. But this new version added that "on Christmas Day" of 1779, Colonel Washington was out for a ride with some friends and in returning found the "roof in a blaze." The suspected culprits were "sparks from the chimney" that "had blown through the garret into a pile of cotton in the seed stored in the garret."[65] Wilson's story is partly a retelling of Sarah Tayloe Washington's with some element of Parson Weems's story added on.

K: The last of the fire stories came from the Washington-descended New York banker and artifact forger William Lanier Washington. W. Lanier was a favorite of the WNMA promoters who were impressed—and somewhat duped—by his genuine connection to the Washington family. In the years around World War I, W. Lanier used that family pedigree to pass off actual 18th-century relics as having belonged to George Washington. He made several attempts at this, with each one meeting with successively less success, and

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[60] "Unsigned Letter 1883," George Washington Birthplace National Monument Collections, Colonial Beach, VA. The uncorroborated letter tells the story of a table that the NPS owns. That table is alleged to be a family heirloom that had been in the house at the time of the fire. The table has yet to be authenticated as an actual 18th-century relic, but it superficially fits the bill. There is little, though, to either support or deny the story. On its surface, it suggests that there was an independent family memory of a Revolutionary War–era fire at Wakefield.

[61] This letter is housed at the George Washington Birthplace National Monument, Westmoreland County, VA.

[62] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 175.

[63] "John E. Wilson to Hilary Herbert, 1898," typed contemporary copy, George Washington Birthplace National Monument Collections, Westmoreland County, VA. This letter was quoted in part in Charles Hatch, "Popes Creek Plantation: Birthplace of George Washington," Washington's Birthplace, VA, Wakefield National Memorial Association in Cooperation with the National Park Service, 1979, 61.

[64] "John E. Wilson to Hilary Herbert, 1898."

[65] "John E. Wilson to Hilary Herbert, 1898."

buyers became wise. Auction houses closed their doors to him, and the Mount Vernon Ladies Association saw him for what he was. Nevertheless, his name won him favor with the members of the WNMA, who became champions of his version of the Wilsons' fire story.[66]

W. Lanier claimed the home "was destroyed on Christmas Day of the year 1780" when William Augustine Washington was "entertaining a company of his friends." The enslaved workers had made "large fires" in "the cook house to prepare food for the guests." These fires sent sparks up the flue that eventually landed "among some cotton seed that was spread out to dry on the loft of the ell [perpendicular wing] of the house." The references to Weems are unmistakable as the image of cotton seed drying on the roof of a 1780s Virginia planter's home is preposterous. Nevertheless, with the bravado he had developed in passing off faked items, W. Lanier assured readers that he had heard the story from his father, who was "a man of remarkably clear and retentive memory" who never uttered "any statement of which he was not sure."[67]

What is certain is that the Washington family suffered a house fire in the early 1740s at Ferry Farm. It is also clear that William Augustine suffered significant barn fires in 1788. What is also clear is that there was a burned home somewhere on Popes Creek by 1813 and that its memory had imprinted itself onto the landscape. What is also clear is that the documented details of known fires had been borrowed piecemeal over the years to create a second set of fire stories for something that lacked any documentation.

Last Words

On February 15, 1949, GEWA's first superintendent, Philip R. Hough, addressed an audience in Washington, DC. He "selected as a topic" the story of the Washington Birthplace. He began by addressing the confusion caused by calling the site a "national monument," a term he admitted was perhaps "unfortunate" as he preferred the term "national historic site" for such significant places.[68] With that confusion cleared up, Hough set in to tell the story of the Washingtons on Mattox Neck in a way that perpetuated far more confusion than the differences between a monument and a historic site ever could. He recounted the then-standard version of the story his audience had expected to hear. He told of John Washington's arrival in Virginia, noting that he "must have fallen in love" with Anne Pope

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[66] Philip Levy, *The Permanent Resident: Excavations and Explorations of the Life of George Washington* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2022), 24–38.

[67] Charles Arthur Hoppin, "The House in Which George Washington Was Born," *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 8, no. 2 (October 1926): 85.

[68] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 167.

almost on sight, and mistakenly called Anne's 700 acres a "wedding gift."[69] Hough told of John's "protecting the settlers" from the many "still hostile Indians present" in the area, and his loyalty to Berkeley during Bacon's Rebellion. He noted the marriages of John and Anne's sons and Lawrence's acquiring the "Liston Tract."[70] Hough moved on to Augustine's time in England and his two marriages back in Virginia. His talk was full of the type of praise for Augustine's supposed masculine virtues that had been commonplace for over a century. George's father was "a very active man, vigorous, energetic, and prosperous."[71] Hough of course noted George's birth, recounted the family's moves, and described Augustine's death and what that meant for George. Hough then leapt ahead to the 1770s to tell his preferred version of the fire story before moving through the various preservation efforts.

Hough's tale was a mix of folklore, documentable data, and wishful thinking. It was a story of male heads of household who passed along property and manly virtue. For a nation coming out of a world war, the Great Depression, and then another world war, it was just the kind of soothing if somewhat banal narrative people wanted and expected from the state.

Hough ended his tale by returning to the Sarah Tayloe Washington table now stored at GEWA. In Hough's day, the table was displayed "in the dining room of the Memorial House," and the superintendent proclaimed it to be "our most cherished object."[72] The reason for this veneration was clear to Hough. He recounted the undocumented story that the table had descended to "the Father of General Washington from his ancestor who came from England." This chain of ownership mattered because it allowed Hough to imagine that on the table's "rosewood top young George Washington may have practiced his arithmetic, or written his famous 'Rules of Civility.'"[73] This all, of course, is pure fantasy. Anyone having read this report will recognize that Hough was referencing Augustine Washington and his grandfather John. If we take Hough's claim seriously, the table in question would have been made and purchased before John Washington's 1677 death. In fact, the table is a workmanlike piece of furniture, perhaps English in origin, but certainly not a product of the 17th century. Instead, it was made when George was an adult, even though its true provenance is unclear.

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[69] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 169.

[70] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 171.

[71] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 172.

[72] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 178.

[73] Philip R. Hough, "The Story of 'Wakefield', Birthplace of George Washington," *Records of the Columbia Historical Society, Washington, D.C.* 50 (1948): 179.

The point here is not that Hough was mistaken; he was only sharing the information he had been given and doing so in a good cause. What the story shows is the deep and abiding desire—even need—to be able to touch something of Washington, even if the story had to be fabricated. This impulse was central to creating GEWA as a preserved site, and, indeed, we today still have our own version of the same desire. That desire to connect across time still drives visitors to GEWA and animates in some way or other the work of all who study and manage the site. Today, though, our scope is wider. We are still interested in George and want to know all we can of his life. But we are also interested in the many people of his world. The Gerrard sisters are at least as interesting people, as was their husband, John Washington. We want to know all we can about people like Black Betty and Indian Ned, even though we will have to work hard to understand them. The intensity of our interest has not lessened since Hough's day. Instead, it just extends to more people, more situations, and more corners of Virginia.

The story that Hough told was the one that has sat on the GEWA land since the 1920s and perhaps a bit earlier. It was, though, very much a story of its own time. Parts of it are right, parts are misread, and parts are outright fiction. In all cases, though, the story has given short shrift to the region's Native people, the enslaved, and even the women of prominent families. The last five decades have seen historians give space to all of the era's actors and widen the scope of the story in ways unimaginable to Hough and his audience. New databases and record access allow us to see more and much farther than have previous generations of historians trying to understand the GEWA story. We can see the Washingtons and everyone in the area and the world they inhabited more clearly now than perhaps ever since they walked the earth. This report has aspired to return to the hardly used records of the region, reread them in light of the many changes and innovations in the historical scholarship, and in so doing do justice to the many people who have lived, worked, labored, and died on the land where George Washington was born.

APPENDIX A

Washington Family and Associates Genealogical Charts

The following is a genealogical overview of the Washington family and some of the principal people discussed in the report. It is roughly chronological, but as new people enter the stream, the clock moves backwards a bit. Married couples are the main organizing unit, with each couple's children listed numerically below them. The first time a person is listed, they appear with the year of their birth and death and the locations of both where known. The second time a person appears, they are listed with only their birth year.

The data for this overview came from the Early Colonial Settlers of Southern Maryland and Virginia's Northern Neck Counties database (https://www.colonial-settlers-md-va.us/index.php). This list is best understood as a GEWA-specific guide to the database designed to make it easier for interested parties to quickly get to the pages for the people of most interest to the park and its stories. Please note also that any variations in the spelling of names reflects variation in the records as written into the database.

All those people in George Washington's direct lineage are highlighted in bold text.

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Rev. Lawrence Washington (1602 Northampton, EN—1653, Middlesex, EN)
Amphillis Twigdon Washington (1601 Northampton, EN—1655, Hertfordshire, EN), married c. 1631–1653

1. **John Washington** (1631, Essex, EN—1677, Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Lawrence Washington (1635, Essex, EN—1677, Old Rappahannock County, VA)
3. Elizabeth Washington (1636 Hertfordshire, EN—unclear)
4. Margaret Washington (c1639 Hertfordshire, EN—unclear)
5. William Washington (1641 Hertfordshire, EN—unclear)
6. Martha Washington (1660, Hertfordshire, EN—1697, Stafford County, VA)

Nathaniel Pope (1603, Bristol, England—1660, Westmoreland County, VA)
Lucy Fox Pope (1611, Gloucester, EN—1660 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1636–1660

1. Margaret Pope (1624 unclear—1669, Northumberland County, VA)
2. **Anne Pope** (1635, St Mary's County, MD—1669 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Thomas Pope (1639, St Mary's County, MD—1685 Bristol, EN)
4. Nathaniel Pope (1642, St Mary's Country, MD—1675 Westmoreland County, VA)

Margaret Pope (1624)
William Hardidge (1618 England—1669 Bristol, EN), married 1659–1669

No children

Thomas Pope (1639)
Joanna Dowle (c. 1647 unclear—c. 1711 Bristol, EN), married 1663–1685

1. Charles Pope (c. 1664 England—1700 England)
2. Richard Pope (c. 1665 England–c. 1686 London, EN)
3. John Pope (1666 Bristol, EN—1702 Kent, EN)
4. Thomas Pope (1667 England—1694 Bristol, EN)
5. Elizabeth Pope (c. 1668 England—unclear)
6. Johanna Pope (1669 Bristol, EN—1685 Virginia)
7. Mary Pope (c. 1670 England—unclear)
8. Martha Pope (c. 1670 England—1688 Bristol, EN)
9. Nathaniel Pope (c. 1670 Bristol, EN—1730 Westmoreland County, VA)

Hercules Bridges (1606 Stratford Upon Avon, EN—1658 Westmoreland County, VA)

1. Jane Bridges (c. 1642 Westmoreland County, VA—1683 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Mary Bridges (1641 Westmoreland County, VA—1686 Westmoreland County, VA)

Nathaniel Pope (1642)
Mary Bridges (1641), married 1659–1675

1. Nathaniel Bridges Pope (1666 Westmoreland County, VA—1719 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mary Bridges (1642)
Lewis Nicholas (c. 1641 unclear—1677 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1675–1677

1. Lewis Nicholas (c. 1675 unclear—1699 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mary Bridges (1642)
David Wickliffe (1642), married 1677–1693

1. Deborah Wickliffe (1677 Westmoreland County, VA—unclear)

John Washington (1631)
Anne Pope (1635), married 1658–1669

1. **Lawrence Washington** (1659 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. John Washington Jr. (1661 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Anne Washington (1662 Westmoreland County, VA—1694 Westmoreland County, VA)

Dr. Thomas Gerard (c. 1608 Lancashire, EN—1673 St Mary's County, MD)
Susannah Snow (c. 1613 Staffordshire, EN—1667 St Mary's County, MD), married 1629—c. 1671

1. Anne Gerard (c. 1630 England—1675 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Justinian Gerard (c. 1633 Lancashire, EN—1689 St Mary's County, MD)
3. Susannah Gerard (c. 1635 Lancashire, EN—1681 St Mary's County, MD)
4. Frances Gerard (1637 Lancashire, EN—1680 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. Temperance Gerard (c. 1639 Lancashire, EN—1713 Westmoreland County, VA)
6. Elizabeth Gerard (c. 1641 Lancashire, EN—1716 St Mary's County, MD)
7. Thomas Gerard (c. 1644 St Mary's County, MD—1679 Westmoreland County, VA)
8. John Gerard (1645 unclear—1679 Westmoreland County, VA)
9. Mary Gerard (c. 1652 unclear—1708 St Mary's County, MD)

John Washington (1631)
Anne Gerard Broadhurst Brett (1630), married 1670–1675
No children

John Washington (1631)
Frances Gerard Speke Peyton (1637), married 1676–1677
No children

Lawrence Washington (1635)
Mary Jones (c. 1645 Bedfordshire, EN—c. 1667 Old Rappahannock County, VA), married 1661–1667
1. Mary Washington (c. 1663 Bedfordshire, EN—c. 1665 Bedfordshire, EN)

Lawrence Washington (1635)
Joyce Jones Hoskins Fleming (c. 1645 Bedfordshire, EN—c. 1685 Old Rappahannock County, VA), married c. 1667–1677
1. John Washington (1671 Old Rappahannock County, VA—1721 Stafford County, VA)
2. Anne Washington (1673 Old Rappahannock County, VA—1677 Old Rappahannock County, VA)

Martha Washington (1660)
Samuel Hayward (1641 London, EN—1696 Stafford County, VA), married unclear
1. Samuel Hayward (c. 1690 Stafford County, VA—c. 1741 Greece)

Augustine Warner (1611 Norwich, EN—1674 Gloucester County, VA)
Mary Townley (1614 Derbyshire, EN—1662 Gloucester County, VA), married c. 1638–1662
1. Sarah Warner (1638 Gloucester, VA—1638 Gloucester, VA)
2. **Augustine Warner** (1642 Gloucester, VA—1681 Gloucester, VA)

Nicolas Martiau (1592 France—1657 York County, VA)
Wife name unknown (c. 1627), married c. 1620—c. 1627
1. Nicholas Martiau (c. 1623 York County, VA—c. 1657 York County, VA)
2. **Elizabeth Martiau** (c. 1625 York County, VA—c. 1682 Cape Fear, SC)

Elizabeth Martiau (c. 1625)
George Read (1608 England—1671 York County, VA), married 1641–1657
1. **Mildred Read** (1643 York County, VA—1695 Gloucester County, VA)
2. Elizabeth Read (c. 1646 York County, VA—1646 York County, VA)
3. Thomas Read (c. 1654 York County, VA—1714 Gloucester County, VA)
4. Robert Read (c. 1661 York County, VA—1713 York County, VA)
5. Benjamin Read (c. 1666 York County, VA—1731 Gloucester County, VA)

Mildred Read (1643)
1. **Augustine Warner** (1642), married c. 1665–1681
2. **Mildred Warner** (c. 1665 Gloucester County, VA—1701 Whitehaven, EN)
3. Mary Warner (c. 1665 Gloucester County, VA—1700 Gloucester County, VA)
4. Augustine Warner (1667 Gloucester County, VA—1687 Gloucester County, VA)
5. Elizabeth Warner (1672 Gloucester County, VA—1721 Gloucester County, VA)

Lawrence Washington (1659)
Mildred Warner (c. 1665), married 1690–1698

1. John Washington (1692 Westmoreland County, VA—1746 Gloucester County, VA)
2. **Augustine Washington** (1694 Westmoreland County, VA—1743 King George County, VA)
3. Mildred Washington (1695 Westmoreland County, VA—1696 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Mildred Washington (1696 Westmoreland County, VA—1747 Fredericksburg, VA)

David Wickliffe (1610 Yorkshire, EN—1642 St Mary's County, MD)
Jane Rokely (c. 1622 England—1672 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1636–1642

1. Robert Wickliffe (1638 St Mary's County, MD—c. 1672 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. David Wickliffe (1642 St Mary's County, MD—1693 Westmoreland County, VA)

David Wickliffe (1642)
Elizabeth [name unknown] (1646 St Mary's County, MD—1676 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1662–1676

1. Anne Wickliffe (c. 1663 Westmoreland County, VA—1704 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Henry Wickliffe (c. 1665 Westmoreland County, VA—1699 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Robert Wickliffe (c. 1666 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. David Wickliffe (c. 1668 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1719)

John Washington Jr. (1661)
Anne Wickliffe (c. 1663), married 1658–1698

1. John Washington (c. 1689 Westmoreland County, VA—1713 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Nathaniel Washington (c. 1691 Westmoreland County, VA—1718 Stafford County, VA)
3. Lawrence Washington (c. 1692 Westmoreland County, VA—1740 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Henry Washington (1695 Westmoreland County, VA—1748 Stafford County, VA)

Anne Washington (1662)
Francis Wright (1660 Northumberland County, VA—1713 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1682–1694

1. John Wright (c. 1685 Westmoreland County, VA—1738 Prince William County, VA)

John Washington (1692)
Catherine Whiting (1694 Gloucester County, VA—1744 Gloucester County, VA), married c. 1712–1744

1. Elizabeth Washington (1717 Gloucester County, VA—1735 Gloucester County, VA)
2. John Washington (1718 Gloucester County, VA—1718 Gloucester County, VA)
3. Lawrence Washington (1720 Gloucester County, VA—1720 Gloucester County, VA)
4. Warner Washington (1722 Gloucester County, VA—1790 Frederick County, VA)
5. Catherine Washington (1724 Gloucester County, VA—1750 Stafford County, VA)
6. Henry Washington (1727 Gloucester County, VA—1765 Middlesex County, VA)
7. Matthew Washington (1732 Gloucester County, VA—1732 Gloucester County, VA)
8. Hannah Washington (1735 Gloucester County, VA—1763 Prince William County, VA)

Thomas Butler (c. 1624 England—1678 Westmoreland County, VA)
Jane Baldridge (c. 1644 Westmoreland County, VA—1707 Stafford County, VA)

1. Martha Butler (c. 1642 England—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Jane Butler (1650 Westmoreland County, VA—1719 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. John Butler (c. 1652 Westmoreland County, VA—1677 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Caleb Butler (c. 1658 Westmoreland County, VA—1709 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. Thomas Butler (1660 Westmoreland County, VA—1714 Westmoreland County, VA)
6. James Butler (1660 Westmoreland County, VA—1716 Westmoreland County, VA)
7. Joshua Butler (1662 Westmoreland County, VA—1725 Westmoreland County, VA)
8. Richard Butler (1666 Westmoreland County, VA—1735 Westmoreland County, VA)

John Foxall (1633 Warwickshire, EN—1691 Westmoreland County, VA)
Martha Butler (c. 1642), married c. 1658–1698

1. Mary Foxall (1658 England—1713 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Sarah Foxall (1665 Westmoreland County, VA—1739 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. John Foxall (c. 1671 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mary Foxall (1658)
Robert Vaulx (1651 Cumberland County, EN—1685 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1680–1685

1. Robert Vaulx (c. 1680 Westmoreland County, VA—1721 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Elizabeth Vaulx (c. 1682 Westmoreland County, VA—1744 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. James Vaulx (c. 1683 Westmoreland County, VA—1711 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mary Foxall (1658)
Alexander Gorges (c. 1658 unknown—1688 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1686–1688

Mary Foxall (1658)
Edward Duddlestone (unknown), married 1688—c. 1691

No children

Mary Foxall (1658)
Caleb Butler (c. 1658), married 1691–1709

1. Jane Butler (1699 Westmoreland County, VA—1728 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mary Foxall (1658)
Rev John Bagge (c. 1658 Ireland—1726 Essex County, VA)

No children

Augustine Washington (1694)
Jane Butler (1699), married 1715–1728

1. Butler Washington (1716 Westmoreland County, VA—1716 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Lawrence Washington (1718 Westmoreland County, VA—1752 Fairfax County, VA)
3. Augustine Washington (1720 Westmoreland County, VA—1762 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Jane Washington (1722 Westmoreland County, VA—1735 Westmoreland County, VA)

Joseph Ball (1649, London, EN—1711 Lancaster County, VA)
Elizabeth Julia Romney (c. 1659 London, EN—1706, Lancaster County, VA), married 1675–1706

1. Frances Ball (1680 Lancaster County, VA—1699 Lancaster County, VA)
2. Hannah Ball (1683 Lancaster County, VA—1748 Stafford County, VA)
3. Easter Ball (1685 Lancaster County, VA—1751 Lancaster County, VA)
4. Elizabeth Ball (1685 Lancaster County, VA—1706 Lancaster County, VA)
5. Anne Ball (1686 Lancaster County, VA—1715 Lancaster County, VA)
6. Joseph Ball (1689 Lancaster County, VA—1760 Essex, EN)

Joseph Ball (1649)
Mary Bennett Johnson Ball Hewes (1665 West Chester, EN—1721 Northumberland County, VA), married 1708–1711

1. **Mary Ball** (1708 Lancaster County, VA—1789 Fredericksburg, VA)

Augustine Washington (1694)
Mary Ball (1708), married 1731–1743

1. **George Washington** (1732 Westmoreland County, VA—1799 Fairfax County, VA)
2. Elizabeth Washington (1733 Westmoreland County, VA—1797 Spotsylvania County, VA)
3. Samuel Washington (1734 Westmoreland County, VA—1787 Berkeley County, VA)
4. John Augustine Washington (1736 Westmoreland County, VA—1787 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. Charles Washington (1738 unclear—1799 Jefferson County, VA)
6. Mildred Washington (1739 King George County, VA—1740 King George County, VA)

John Augustine Washington (1736)
Hannah Bushrod (c. 1738 Westmoreland County, VA—1787 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1757–1787

1. Jenny Washington (c. 1757 Westmoreland County, VA—1791 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Mildred Washington (1761 Westmoreland County, VA—1789 Prince William County, VA)
3. Bushrod Washington (1762 Westmoreland County, VA—1829 Philadelphia, PA)
4. Corbin Washington (1765 Westmoreland County, VA—1799 Westmoreland County, VA)

William Fairfax (1691 Yorkshire, EN—1757 Fairfax County, VA)
Sarah Walker (1706 Bahama Islands—1731 Salem, MA), married 1723–1731

1. George William Fairfax (1727 Bahama Islands—1787 Bath, EN)
2. Thomas Fairfax (1726 Bahama Islands—1746 at sea)
3. Mary Fairfax (c. 1727 Salem, MA—1775 Frederick County, VA)
4. Anne Fairfax (1728 Salem, MA—1761 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. Sarah Fairfax (1730 Salem, MA—1761 Alexandria, VA)

William Fairfax (1691)
Deborah Clarke (1708 Salem, MA—1747 Fairfax County, VA), married 1734–1747

1. Bryan, 8th Lord Fairfax (1736 Fairfax County, VA—1802 Fairfax County, VA)
2. William Henry Fairfax (1739 Fairfax County, VA—1759 Quebec, CA)
3. Hannah Fairfax (1742 Fairfax County, VA—1804 Frederick County, VA)

Lawrence Washington (1718)
Anne Fairfax Washington Lee (1728), married 1743–1752

1. Fairfax Washington (1747 Fairfax County, VA—1747 Fairfax County, VA)
2. Mildred Washington (1748 Fairfax County, VA—1749 Fairfax County, VA)
3. Sarah Washington (1750 Fairfax County, VA—1752 Fairfax County, VA)

William Aylett (c. 1680 Gloucester County VA—c. 1732 King William County VA)
Anne Taylor (c. 1684 Gloucester County VA—unclear), married 1700—c. 1732)

1. Elizabeth Aylett (1700 King William County, VA—1778 Caroline County, VA)
2. Mary Aylett (c. 1701 King William County, VA—c. 1749 Spotsylvania County, VA)
3. Judith Aylett (c. 1702 Gloucester County, VA—1757 Caroline County, VA)
4. William Aylett (c. 1703 Gloucester County, VA—1744 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. John Aylett (c. 1705 Gloucester County, VA—1744 King William County, VA)
6. Jane Aylett (c. 1705 King William County, VA—1789 Albemarle County, VA)
7. Anne Aylett (c. 1708 King William County, VA—c. 1752 King William County, VA)
8. Philip Aylett (c. 1717 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1744 King William County, VA)
9. Benjamin Aylett (c. 1724 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1744 Westmoreland County, VA)

William Aylett (c. 1703)
Anne Ashton (c. 1708 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1730 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1725–c. 1730

1. Elizabeth Aylett (1726 Westmoreland County, VA—1777 Frederick County, VA)
2. Anne Aylett (c 1726 Westmoreland County, VA—1774 Westmoreland County, VA)

William Aylett (c. 1703)
Elizabeth Eskridge (1716 Westmoreland County, VA—1770 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1736–1744

1. Elizabeth Aylett (1736 Westmoreland County, VA—unclear Stafford County, VA)
2. Anne Aylett (1738 Westmoreland County, VA—1768 Westmoreland County, VA)

Augustine Washington Jr. (1720)
Anne Aylett (1726), married 1743–1762

1. Elizabeth Washington (1749 Westmoreland County, VA—1814 Spotsylvania County, VA)
2. Anne Washington (1752 Westmoreland County, VA—1777 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Jane Augustine Washington (1756 Westmoreland County, VA—1833 Madison County, VA)
4. William Augustine Washington (1757 Westmoreland County, VA—1810 District of Columbia)

William Augustine Washington (1757)
Jenny Washington (1757), married 1777–1791

1. Bushrod Washington (1785 Westmoreland County, VA—1830 unclear)
2. George Corbin Washington (1789 Westmoreland County, VA—1854 District of Columbia)

William Augustine Washington (1757)
Mary Lee (1764 Westmoreland County, VA—1795 District of Columbia), married 1792–1795

William Augustine Washington (1757)
Sarah Tayloe (1765 Richmond County, VA—1834 Richmond, VA), married 1799–1810

1. Sarah Tayloe Washington (1765 Richmond County, VA—1886 Westmoreland County, VA)

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The Henry Brooks Family to Originall Brown and Joseph Abbington

Henry Brooks (c. 1614 England—1663 Westmoreland County, VA)
Jane Rokely (c. 1622 England—c. 1672 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1643–1663

1. Jane Brooke (1644 St Mary's County, MD—1703 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Emanuel Brooke (1649 Kent County, MD—c. 1661 Westmoreland County, VA)

Henry Brooks (c. 1614)
Jane Saxton (1642 St Mary's County, MD—unclear), married 1639–unclear

1. Lydia Brooke (1640 St Mary's County, MD—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Dorothy Brooke (1640 St Mary's County, MD—1668 Westmoreland County, VA)

Richard Brown (1618 England—1670 Westmoreland County, VA)
Eader James (c. 1629 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1659 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1638–1659

1. Phillip Brown (c. 1642 unclear—1670 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Richard Brown (c. 1645 Kent Island, MD—1677 Northumberland County, VA)
3. Originall Brown (1648 St Mary's County, MD—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Derrick Brown (1651 Westmoreland County, VA—1722 St Mary's County, MD)
5. Robert Brown (c. 1655 St Mary's County, MD—1683 St Mary's County, MD)

Jane Brooke (1644)
Originall Brown (1648), married 1670–1698

1. Jane Brown (1672 Westmoreland County, VA—1752 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Judith Brown (c. 1678 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1726 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Mary Brown (1682 Westmoreland County, VA—1735 Stafford County, VA)
4. William Brown (1685 Westmoreland County, VA—1755 Westmoreland County, VA)

Lydia Brook (1640)
William Kimball (unclear—1691 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1671–1691

1. William Kimball (c. 1671 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Elizabeth Kimball (c. 1671 Westmoreland County, VA—1727 Westmoreland County, VA)

Lydia Brook (1640)
Lawrence Abbington (c. 1630 unclear—1670 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1656–1670

1. Lawrence Abbington (c. 1656 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Mary Abbington (c. 1659 Westmoreland County, VA—unclear)
3. Lydia Abbington (1661 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Abigail Abbington (c. 1670 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
5. Jane Abbington (c. 1670 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1698 Westmoreland County, VA)

Lawrence Abbington (c. 1656)
Lydia Blagdon (c. 1657 Westmoreland County, VA—1717 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1676–1686

1. Joseph Abbington (c. 1679 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1718 Baltimore County, MD)
2. Brookes Abbington (c. 1683 Westmoreland County, VA—1717 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Mary Abbington (1686 Westmoreland County, VA—unclear)

Lawrence Abbington (c. 1656)
Dorothy Blagdon (c. 1657 Westmoreland County, VA—1717 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1687–1698

1. James Abbington (c. 1698 Westmoreland County, VA—c. 1717. Westmoreland County, VA)

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The Lisson Family

Virginia Lisson (M) (unclear—unclear)
Wife unknown (unclear—unclear)

1. Daniel Lisson (c. 1638 Westmoreland County, VA—1679 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Robert Lisson (c. 1645 unclear—1695 Bristol, EN)

Daniel Lisson (c. 1638)
Jane Bridges (c. 1642), married unclear–1679

1. Frances Butler Lisson (1679 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. William Lisson (unclear—unclear)
3. Daniel Lisson (unclear—unclear)

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The Chotank Washington Family

Lawrence Washington (1635)
Joyce Jones Hoskins Fleming (c. 1645), married c. 1667–1677

1. John Washington (1671)
2. Anne Washington (1673)

John Washington (c. 1671)
Mary Townsend (1669 Northampton, EN—1729 Stafford County, VA), married 1692—c. 1721

1. John Washington (1695 Stafford County, VA—1742 Stafford County, VA)
2. Robert Washington (1700 Stafford County, VA—1765 Westmoreland County, VA)
3. Mary Townsend Washington (c. 1704 Westmoreland County, VA—1754 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Townshend Washington (1705 Stafford County, VA—1743 King George County, VA)

John Washington (1695)
Mary Massey (1702 Stafford County, VA—1746 Stafford County, VA), married 1721–1742

1. Mildred Washington (1721 Stafford County, VA—1785 Westmoreland County, VA)
2. Anne Washington (1723 Stafford County, VA—1742 Stafford County, VA)
3. Mary Washington (1726 Stafford County, VA—1742 England)
4. Lawrence Washington (1728 Stafford County, VA—c. 1809 King George County)
5. Frances Washington (1731 Stafford County, VA—1754 King George County)
6. John Washington (1734 Stafford County, VA—1736 Stafford County, VA)
7. Elizabeth Washington (1737 Stafford County, VA—1786 King George County, VA)
8. Catherine Washington (1740 Stafford County, VA—1792 King George County, VA)
9. Sarah Washington (1742 Stafford County, VA—unclear)

Mildred Washington (1721)
Langhorne Dade (c. 1719 Stafford County, VA—1753 Stafford County, VA), married 1743–1749

1. Townsend Dade (1743 King George County, VA—1807 King George County, VA)
2. Cadwallader Jones Dade (1746 King George County, VA—1769 King George County, VA)
3. Jane Dade (1748 King George County, VA—1749 King George County, VA)

Mildred Washington (1721)
Bayley Seaton (1717 Westmoreland County, VA—1751 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1749–1751

No children

Mildred Washington (1721)
Dr Walter Williamson (c. 1718 Scotland—1792 King George County, VA), married 1755—c. 1758

1. Margaret Williamson (1755 King George County, VA—1837 Westmoreland County, VA)

Mildred Washington (1721)
John Bushrod (1709 Westmoreland County, VA—1760 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1758–1760

No children

Frances Washington (1731)
Charles Stuart (1733 King George County, VA—1771 King George County, VA), married 1752—c. 1754

No children

Elizabeth Washington (1737)
Thomas Berry (1729 King George County, VA—1814 King George County, VA), married 1758—c. 1786

1. Thomas Berry (1757 King George County, VA—unclear)
2. Elizabeth Berry 1759 King George County, VA—unclear)
3. Washington Berry (1762 King George County, VA—1813 Campbell County, KY)
4. John Washington Berry (1762 King George County, VA—1852 Oldham County, KY)
5. Mildred Berry (1764 King George County, VA—1785 Berkeley County, VA)
6. Lawrence Berry (1766 King George County, VA—1822 King George County, VA)
7. Taylor Berry (1767 King George County, VA—unclear)

Catherine Washington (1740)
John Washington (1760 Stafford County, VA—1782 King George County, VA)
son of Henry Washington (1695), married 1759–1782

1. Henry Washington (1760 King George County, VA—1788 Albemarle County, VA)
2. Nathaniel Washington (1762 Stafford County, VA—c. 1825 Prince George County, VA)
3. Anne Washington (c. 1764 Stafford County, VA—1853 Westmoreland County, VA)
4. Mary Washington (1764 King George County, VA—c. 1803 King George County, VA)
5. John Washington (c. 1767 King George County, VA—1893 King George County, VA)
6. Bayley Washington (c. 1768 King George County, VA—c. 1800 unclear)
7. Lawrence Washington (1770 King George County, VA—1828 unclear)
8. Butler Washington (1774 King George County, VA—1817 King George County, VA)
9. Mildred Washington (1776 King George County, VA—1823 unclear)
10. William H. Washington (1779 King George County, VA—1853 unclear)
11. Catherine Washington (c. 1781 King George County, VA—c. 1850 unclear)

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American Married Couples in George Washington's Direct Lineage

Rev Lawrence Washington (1602 Northampton, EN—1653, Middlesex, EN)
Amphillis Twigdon Washington (1601 Northampton, EN—1655, Hertfordshire, EN), married c. 1631–1653

Nathaniel Pope (1603, Bristol, England—1660, Westmoreland County, VA)
Lucy Fox Pope (1611, Gloucester, EN—1660 Westmoreland County, VA), married c. 1636–1660

John Washington (1631, Essex, EN—1677, Westmoreland County, VA)
Anne Pope (1635, St Mary's County, MD—1669 Westmoreland County, VA), married 1658–1669

Nicolas Martiau (1592 France—1657 York County, VA)
Wife name unknown (c. 1627), married c. 1620—c. 1627

Augustine Warner (1611 Norwich, EN—1674 Gloucester County, VA)
Mary Townley (1614 Derbyshire, EN—1662 Gloucester County, VA), married c. 1638–1662

Elizabeth Martiau (c. 1625 York County, VA—c. 1682 Cape Fear, SC)
George Read (1608 England—1671 York County, VA), married 1641–1657

Augustine Warner (1642 Gloucester, VA—1681 Gloucester, VA)
Mildred Read (1643 York County, VA—1695 Gloucester County, VA), married c. 1665–1681

Lawrence Washington (1659 Westmoreland County, VA—1698 Westmoreland County, VA)
Mildred Read (1643 York County, VA—1695 Gloucester County, VA), married c. 1665–1681

Joseph Ball (1649, London, EN—1711 Lancaster County, VA)
Mary Bennett Johnson Ball Hewes (1665 West Chester, EN—1721 Northumberland County, VA), married 1708–1711

Augustine Washington (1694 Westmoreland County, VA—1743 King George County, VA)
Mary Ball (1708 Lancaster County, VA—1789 Fredericksburg, VA), married 1731–1743

George Washington (1732 Westmoreland County, VA—1799 Fairfax County, VA)

APPENDIX B

Will of John Washington, 1677

Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *The Wills of George Washington and His Immediate Ancestors* (Brooklyn, NY: Historical Printing Club), 9–18.

In the name [of] god amen. I John Washington
of Washington parish in the Countie of Westmoreland
in Virginie gent, being of good & perfect
memory, thankes be unto Almighty god (for it) &
Calling to remembrance the uncertaine estate of
this trans[itory] life, & that all flesh must yield
unto death, when it shall plea [se] god for to Call,
doe make Constitute ordaine & declare this my
last will & testament in maner & forme following,
reuoaking & anulling by thes presents all & every
testament & testa [ments), will & wills heirtofore by
me made & Declared (either by word] or by
writeing & [these ?] be taken only for my last will &
testament & noe other, & first being hartily sorry from
the bottome of my hart for my siñs past, most
humbly desireing forgiveness of the same from the
Almighty god (my sauiour) & redeimer, in whoine
& by the meritts of Jesus Christ, I trust & believe
assuredly to be saued, & to have full remission &
forgiveness of all my sins & that my soule wth my body
at the generall day of ressurrection shall arise
againe wih joy & through the merrits of Christ
death & passion posses & inherit the Kingdom of
heaven , prepared for his ellect & Chossen & my
body to be buried in the plantation wheire I now
live, by the side of my wife is already buried &
two Children of mine & now for the setling of
my temporall estate & such goods Chatles & debts
as it hath pleased god far above my Deserts, to be
stow uppon me I doe give & dispose the same in
maner & forme following first I will that all those debts
& duties that I owe in right or Conscience to any mañer

of person or persons what soever shall be well &
truly Contented & payd or ordained to be payd by my
executors Inprimis I give & bequeath unto my eldest sonne
[ ] ington y seat of land wheiron Henery flagg] watts &
Robert Hedges, being by patten & being by my father pope
made over to me & my heirs lawfully begotten of my body
Item I give unto my soñ Lawrence Washington my watter
Mill with all appertinances & Land be longing to it a[t]
the head of Rosiers Creik to him & his heirs forever, reserving
to my wife her thirds durring her Life. Item I give unto my
soñ Lawrence Washington the seate of Land which I bought
of M: Lewis Maruim, being about two hundred & fifty acres,
at the mouth of rosiers Creek on ye north west side,
with all the houseing theirunto belonging to him & his heirs
forever reserving to my wife her thirds durring her Life
Item I give unto my soñ Lawrence Washington
the seat of Land at upper Machotock which I bought
of M! Anthony Bridge & M! John Rosier being
about nine hundred acres to him & his heirs forever,
reserving to my wife her thirds durring her
life. Item I give unto my soñ Lawrence Washington
my halfe & share of five thousand acres of land in
Stafford County which is betwixt Coll Nicolas spencer
& myselfe which we are engaged that there shall be
no benifit taken by survivour ship, to him & his heirs forever
and conveyed to Col. Nicholas Spencer and Lieut. Col.
John Washington, five thousand acres of land scituate
Lying and being within the said terrytory in the County of
Stafford in the ffreshes of Pottomooke River and neere
oppositt to Piscatoway . Indian Towne in Mariland and
neere the Land of Capt. Giles on the North side, and
neere the Land surveyed for Mr. Wm. Grein Mr. Wm.
Dudley and others on the south side ; being a necke of
Land bounded betwixt two Creeks and the Item I
doe give unto my son Johne Washington
y plantation whereon I now live which I bought of
David Anderson the plantation next to Mr John
[Foxall ?] that I bought (which was Ric. Hills) to him &
his heirs forever & the seate of Land of about four

hundred acres woh Lyeth uppon the Head of
Rappahanecke Creike & adjoyning uppon David nor
ways orphants Land the Land being formerly John
Whittsons & to me, to him & his heirs forever,
reserueing to my wife her thirds of the afoure sayd
Land during her Life. Maine River [The Potomac], on the
East p'te by the said Main River of Pottomooke, on the North
p'te by a Creeke Called by the English Little Hunting Creeke and
the maine Branch thereof on the south p'te by a Creeke
named and Called by the Indians Epsewasson Creeke and
the maine Branch thereof which Creeke divides this Land
of Gren and Dudley and others on the west p'te by a
right Lyne drawn from the Branches of the aforesaid
Epsewasson and Little Hunting Creeke.
Item I give unto my son John Washington that seate of
Land where Robert foster now liveth on being about three
hundred acres to him & his heirs forever, Likewise
I give unto my sayd son John Washington the seat of
Land wh Robert Richards liveth on wh I had of my bro.
Lawrence Washington being about three hundred &
fifty acres to him & his heirs forever reserving to my
wife her thirds of the two sayd tracts of Land during her Life
Item I give & bequeath unto my daughter Añ Washington
ye seate of Land ye tract of Land ye Tho : Jordan now
liveth on being about twelve hundred acres I to her & her heirs
forever, like wise I give & bequeath unto my sayd Daughter
that tract of Land whereon John fries || now
liveth being about fourteen hundred acres after
M.fr ke hath his quantitie out of it to her & her
heirs forever reserving to my wife her thirds of
the two above seates durring her Life. Item I give unto
my sayd Daughter, wh was her mother's desire & my
promise the Cash in ye new parlour & the Diamond ring &
her mother's rings & the white quilt & the white Curtains & vallians
And as for the rest of my personall estate after my debts
& dues are sattisfied justly which I desire should be sattisfied
out of my [ ] Cropps, which I doe not question but will
be far more than I doe owe (thankes be unto god for it)
theirfore it is my desire that my estate should not Come to any ap

praisement, but I order & bequeath a [s] followeth
that is to say that their shall be a just Inventory &
List taken of my personall estate y ! I am possessed
of & for to be divided in quantitie & quallitie,
by three men of Judgement which I request the Court
to nominate, into foure [parts] to be equall &
proportionable divided in quantitie & qualitie the
[one] fourth part I give to my Loueing wife in
kind in lew of her dower or [claime], & one fourth
part to my soñ Lawrence Washington in kind, and
one fourth part to my son John Washington in
kind, & one fourth part to my daughter Añ Washington
in kind to them & either of them severally
and their heirs forever & it is my will that if either
my aboue sayd children should happen to dy, before they
obtaine the age of one & twenty yeares or
day of mariadge, then the Land of the child that Dieth
to be my three to be the eldest soñ then Living, & if both my
soñs should dy then the Land to be my daughter
Añ, & as for the personall estate if any of
Children should happen to dy, before they Come of age or
day of mariadge, then it is my will that the two surviving
children should equally divide the personall estate of ye child
that is dead betwixt them and theirs forever.
Item I give and bequeath after all my legacies
payd out with mony I shall have in England to my
soñ Lawrence Washington. Item my desire is that their may be a
funerall sermon preached at ye church & that their be no
other funerall kept that will exceed four thousand pounds of tobacco.
Item I give unto the Lower Church of washing ton parish
[ ] ten Comandments and the Kings armes which is my desire
should be sent for out of w! mony I have in England.
Item it is my desire that w! estate I shall dy possessed
should be kept intire without dividing
untill all debts & dues be payd & sattisfied.
Item I give unto my bro : Lawrence Washington four thousand
pounds of tobbo & Caske. Item I give unto my nephew John Washington
my godson eldest soñ to my bro : Lawrence Washington
one young mare of two years old .

Item it is my desire that when my estate is divided
in quantitie & qualitie into foure equall parts
& my wife hath taken her fourth part, y then
every Childs part should be put uppon their towne
or plantations theire for to be managed to the best
advantage for the bringing up & [educating each child)
according to the proffit of each Children's share.
Item it is my desire that my wife should have the
bringing up of my daughter Añ Washington untill
my soñ Lawrence comes to age or her day of mariadge &
my wife for to have the manadgement of her part to my
daughter's best advantage; Item I doe give to my bro
Thomas Pope teñ pounds out of y ? mony I have in England.
Item I doe give unto my sister Marthaw Washington
teñ pounds out of the mony I have in England & who
soever else she shall be oweing to me for
transporteing herselfe into this Country- & a year's
accomodation after her Comeing in & four thousand
pounds of tobboo & Caske. Item it is my desire y ! my bro :
M : Thomas Pope have the bringing up of my son John Washington
& for to have the manadgement of his estate to my soñs
best aduantadge untill [he] be of age of one
& twenty yeares or day of mariadge finally I doe ordaine &
appoint my bro : M : Law rence Washington & my soñ
Lawrence Washington & my Loueing wife Mrs. Añ Washington my
whole & soale executors of this my Last will &
testament as witness my hand & seale this 21st of
September 1675.
JOHN WASHINGTON.
Signed & sealed in the
presence of us
JOHN LORD .
JOHN APPLETON .
1677

APPENDIX C

Will of John Washington, 1697

William and Mary Quarterly 13, no. 3 (1905): 145–48.

In the Name of God Amen, this 22d day of January, in the year of our Lord 1697–8 & in the ninth year of the reign of our sovereign Lord King William, I, John Washington, of Washington psh, in the County of Westinld., and being sick and weak of body, but of perfect mind and memory, thanks be given to God therefor, calling into mind the mortality of my body, and knowing it is appoynted for all (mutilated) ce to dye, doe make & ordain (mutilated) my last will and testament in manner and form following, that is (mutilated) First and principally, I give my soul unto ye hands of God who gave it me, & for my body I commend it to the earth to be buried in a Christian and decent manner in ye burying place on ye plan (mutilated) where I now live, by my father, mother and brothers, never doubting but at the general resurrection I shall receive ye same again by the mighty power of God, and as touching su (mutilated) it bath pleased God to bless me with (mutilated) this life, I give, devise, bequeath and dispose ye same in man (mutilated) form following. First, I give and bequeath unto my well beloved (mutilated) Ann Washington the plantacon I now dwell on at Appomattox during her natural life. Item, I give and bequeath to my eldest son Law. Washington that tract of land which I bought of Mr. Francis Dade, commonly called Barnets Quater, it lyes on upper Machotickes, in Stafford County, I give it to my sd. son and his heirs forever. Item, I give to my son, John Washington, that tract of land which I now live on after the decease of my sd. wife to him and his heirs forever, but if it please God that my sd. son John should die before my said wife, then I give the said tract to my son Lawrence Washington, to him and his heirs forever, and if both my sons John and Lawr should die before my sd. wife, or without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten, then I give it to my son Nathaniel, to him and his heirs forever, and if my three sons Lawr,. John and Nathl. should die before my said wife, or without issue lawfully begotten of their bodies, then I give the sd. tract to my son Henry Washington, to him and his (heirs) forever, and if it please God that all my four sons should die before my sd. wife, or without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten, then I give to the next heir at law, to him and his heirs forever. Item, I give to my son John Washington that tract of land lying on Popes Creek which John Llewelling now lives on, to him and his heirs forever. Item, I give to my son, Nathl. Washington, that tract of land which lies at ye head of Appomattox Creek, which Anthony Rawlins, Joseph Smith and John Betts now lives on, to him and his heirs forever. Item, I give to my son, Henry Wash-

ington, that tract of land which was between me and Robert Richards, John Whiteraft lives now on part of it, which is in Stafford County, on the dam site, where the head of Machotic makes, I give it to my sd. son and his heirs forever. Item, It is my will that if my son Law. should die without issue of his body lawfully begotten, or before he arrives to the age of twenty-one years, that then my son John Washington have the tract of land which I bought of Mr. Francis Dade, called Barnetts Quater, to him and his heirs forever. Item, It is my will that if my son John Washington should die before he come to the age of twenty-one years, or without issue of his body lawfully begotten, that then I give to my son Law. the tract of land that I now live on after my wife's decease, to him, to his heirs forever, and I give that tract of land on Pope's Creek that John Llewelling lives on to my son Nathaniel Washington, to him and his heirs forever. Item, It is my will that if my son Nathl. Washington should die without issue of his body lawfully be--otten, or before he arrives to the age of twenty-one years, that then I give to my son Jno. Washington that tract of land at the head of Appomattox Creek which Anthony Rawlins and Jos: Smith and John Betts lives on, to him and his heirs forever. Item, It is my will that if any three of my aforesaid sons should die without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten, or before they arrive to the age of twenty-one years, that then all the aforementioned land I give to that son who is living, and if it please God that they should all die without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten, or before they arrive to the age of twenty-one years, or if I have no more issue, that then I give to my wife those two tracts of land that lyes in Stafford County, to her and her heirs forever, the three other tracts to be divided between what children it may please God to send my brother; if he have but one I give it to him or her; if more, the eldest son to have his choice of the tracts, the next eldest his next choice if two sons, if it be a daughter that she have her choice after her brother, them and their heirs forever. Item, It is my will that all my psonl estate in generall be equally divided into five parts, and that my wife have her first choice, and my son Lawrence the next, my son John the next, my son Nathl. the next, and my son Henry the other. Item, It is my will that if (it) please God any of my sons should die without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten, or before they arrive to the age of twenty-one years, that then his part of the psonall estate be divided between my wife and the other three sons living, and if it please God that three of my sons should die without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten before they arrive at the age of twenty-one years, that then the psonall estate be equally divided between my wife and that son that is living, and if (it) please God that if all my sd. sons should die without issue of their bodies lawfully begotten before they arrive at the age of twenty-one years, that then my prsonall estate be divided equally between my wife Ann Washington and my brother's children. Item, it is my will that my brother (some words appear to be left out) and tuition

of my son Lawr Washington, and that my sd. brother have the keeping of my sd. son's estate, &c., of this my last (will) and testamt, and I make and ordain my well beloved brother, Capt. Lawrence Washington, and my beloved wife, Ann Washington, my full and whole exer and executrix, and I do hereby utterly disallow, revoke and annul all and every other former testamt, wills, legacies, bequests and Exs. by me in anywise before this time named, willed and bequested, ratifying and confirming this and none other to be my last will testamt.

Item it is also my will that Mrs. Elizabeth Hardid (mutilated) have my watch that was given to me by Captain Wim. Hardidg's will. Item, it is my will that my beloved God son J ohn Dudlstone have a gold signet which was given me by his lather on his death bed. Item, it is my will that mv beloved brother, Captain Lawe WVashington have my wearing rings.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal this day and year as aforesaid. JOHN WASHINGTON. (Seal.)

Signed, sealed, published,
pronounced and declared
by the sd. John Washington
as his last will and testament
in the presence of
John Scott, A. Webster, Thos. Howes, Peter Hyatt.

At a Court for Westmd County the 23rd day of ffebry, 1697
The above will was duly proved and probat thereof granted the Execrs. therein named and ordered to be recorded.
Recordat: 5 May, 1697.
pr. J. A. Westcomb Cle Com.
Pr Cur Recordat 5 May, 1697.

APPENDIX D

Will of Lawrence Washington, 1698

Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., *The Wills of George Washington and His Immediate Ancestors* (Brooklyn, NY: Historical Printing Club), 33–38.

In the Name of God amen I Lawrence Washington of Washington Parish in the County of Westmoreland in Virginia, Gentleman , being of Good and perfect memory, thanks be unto Almighty God for it & calling to mind the uncertain Estate of this Transitory life & that all Flesh must yield unto death when it shall please God to call me doe make constitute, ordain & Declare this my last will , and Testament in manner and form following, revoking and annulling by these presents all and every Testament and Testaments, will or wills heretofore by me made and declared either by word or writing & this to be taken only for my last will and Testament and none other, and first being heartily sorry from the bottom of my heart for my sins, most humbly desireing forgiveness of the same from the Almighty God my saviour & Redeeiner, in whome by the merits of Jesus Christ, I Trust and believe assuredly to be saved and to have full remission && forgiveness of all my sins and that my soal with my body at the General day of Resurrection shall rise again with Joy, and through the Merits of Christs Death and passion, possess & Inherit the Kingdom of Heaven prepared for his Elect & chosen and my body to be buried if please God I depart in this County of Westmoreland, by the side of my Father and Mother & neare my Brothers & Sisters & my children , and now for the setling of my Temporal Estate and such goods, Chattles and debts as it hath pleased God far above my desarts to bestow upon me I doe ordain give and bequeath the same in manner and form follow ing: Imprimis I [will] that all those Debts and dues that I owe in right or Conscience to any manner of Person or Persons whatsoever shall be well contented & paid or ordained or demanded to be paid by my Executors or Extx : hereafter named. Item I give and bequeath to my well beloved friends Mr. William Thompson clk & Mr. Samuel Thomp son each of them a mourning Ring of Thirty shill ings value each ring : Item I give and bequeath to my Godson Lawrence Butler one young mare & two cows : Item I give and bequeath to my sister Anne Writts children one man servant a piece of four or five years to serve or Three Thousand pounds of Tobacco to purchase the same, to be de livered or paid to them when they arrive to the age of Twenty years old : Item I give and bequeath to my sister Lewista morning Wring of forty shillings price : .Item I give to my Cuz: John Washington Sen : of Stafford County all my wearing apparel Item I give unto my Cozen John Washington's Eldest son Lawrence Washington my Godson one man servant of four or five years to serve or Three Thousand pounds of Tobacco to purchase the same: to be paid him when he comes to the age Twenty one yeare old : Item I give to my godsons Lawrence Butler & Lewis Nicholas that Tract of Land joining upon Meridah Edwards and Daniel White, being Two hundred and seventy five acres of Land to be equally divided between them and their heirs forever: Item I give to the upper and Lower Churches of Washington parish each of them a Pulpett cloth & cushion: Item it is my will to have a Funeral sermon at the church, and to have none other Funeral to exceed Three Thou sand pounds of Tobacco. Item it is my will after my Debts & Legacies are paid, that my personal Estate be equally divided into four parts : my loving Wife Mildred Washington to have one part, my son John Washington to have another part , my son Augustin Washington to have another Part, and my Daughter Mildred Washington to have the other part : to be delivered to them in specie when they shall come to the age of Twenty one years old. Item I give to my son [John] Washington

this seat of Land where I now live, and that whole tract of Land Lying from the mouth of Machodack extending to a place called the round hills, with the addition I have thereunto made of William Webb and William Rush to him and heirs forever. Item I give and bequeath unto my Son Augustine Washington all the dividend of Land that I bought of Mr. Robert Liston's Children in England Lying in Mattox, between my Brother & Mr. Balridges Land, where Mr. Daniel Liston formerly lived , by Estimation 400 acres to him and his heirs forever, Item I give and bequeath unto my said Son Augustine Washington, all that Tract of Land where Mr. Lewis Markham now lives after the said Markhams & his now wife's decease, by estimation 700 acres more or less to him and his heirs forever: Item I give and bequeath my daughter Mildred Washington all my Land in Stafford County, Lying upon hunting Creek where Mrs. Elizabeth Minton & Mrs. Williams now lives by Estimation 2500 acres to her and her heirs forever. Item I give my water mill to my son John Washington to him and his heirs forever: Item it is my will and desire if either of my children should die before they come to age or day of marriage, his or her personal estate be equally divided between the two survivors and their Mother: Item it is my will and desire if all my Children should die before they come of age or day of Marriage, that my Brother's children shall enjoy all their Estate real, Except that Land that I bought of Mr. Robert Liston's children, which I give to my loving wife and her heirs forever, and the rest as aforesaid to them and their heirs forever : Item I give my per son all Estate in case of all my childrens death as above said, to be equally divided between my Wife and Brother's children, my wife to have the one half: Item I give that Land which I bought of my Brother Francis Wright, being 200 acres lying near Storkes Quarter, to my son John Washington and his heirs forever : Item It is my desire that my [estate) should not be appraised but kept intire and delivered them as above given according to time & my Children to continue under the care & Tuition of their Mother, till they come of age or day of marriage, and she to have the profits of their Estates towards the bringing of them up and Keep ing them at School : Item I doe ordain and appoint my Cozen John Washington of Stafford and my friend Mr. Samuel Thompson my Executors, and my 38 my loving wife Mildred Washington my Executrix of this my last Will & Testament. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale this IIth day of March Anno Doni 16978. LAWRENCE WASHINGTON. [Seal .] Signed Seald declared & pronounced in presence of us, ROBT REDMAN , GEORGE WEEDON , THOMAS HOWES, JOHN ROSIER. WESTMORELAND.

APPENDIX E

Will of Augustine Washington, 1743

King George County, Virginia Will Book A-1, 1721–1752, 156–61.

In the Name of God Amen. I Augustine Washington of the County of King George, Gent., being sick and weak but of perfect and disposing sence and memory do make my last Will & Testament in manner following hereby revoking all former will or wills whatsoever by me heretofore made.

Imprimis: I give unto my son Lawrence Washington and his heirs forever all that plantation and tract of land at Hunting Creek in the County of Prince William containing by estimation Two Thousand Five Hundred acres with the water mill adjoining thereto or lying near the same and all the slaves, cattle and stocks of all kinds whatsoever and all the houshold furniture whatsoever now in and upon or which have been commonly possessed by my said son together with the said plantation, tract of land and mill.

Item: I give unto my son Augustine Washington and his heirs forever all my lands in the County of Westmoreland except such only as are herein after otherwise disposed of, together with twenty five head of neat cattle, forty hogs and twenty sheep and a Negro man named Frank besides those Negroes formerly given him by his Mother.

Item: I give unto my said son Augustine three young working slaves to be purchased for him out of the first profits of the Iron Works after my decease.

Item: I give unto my son George Washington and his heirs the land I now live on which I purchased of the Executrix of Mr. William Strother, deceased, and one moiety of my land lying on Deep Run and ten Negro slaves.

Item: I give unto my son Samuel Washington and his heirs my land at Chotank in the County of Stafford containing about Six Hundred acres and also the other moiety of my land lying on Deep Run.

Item: I give unto my son John Washington and his heirs my land at the head of Maddox in the County of Westmoreland containing about Seven Hundred acres.

Item: I give unto my son Charles Washington and his heirs the land I purchased of my son Lawrence Washington (whereon Thomas Lewis now lives) adjoining to my said son Lawrence's land above devised. I also give unto my said son Charles and his heirs the land I purchased of Gabriel Adams in the County of Prince William containing about Seven Hundred acres.

Item: It is my Will and Desire that all the rest of my Negroes not herein particularly devised may be equally divided between my Wife and my three sons Samuel, John and Charles and that Ned, Jack, Bob, Sue and Lucy may be included in my Wife's part, which part of my said wife after her decease I desire may be equally divided between my sons George, Samuel, John & Charles and the part of my said Negroes so devised to my wife I mean and intend to be in full satisfaction and lieu of her Dower in my Negroes, but if she should insist notwithstanding on her Right of Dower in my Negroes, I will and desire that so many as may be wanting to make up her share may be taken out of the Negroes given to my sons George, Samuel, John and Charles.

Item: I give and bequeath unto my said Wife and my four sons George, Samuel, John and Charles all the rest of my personal estate to be equally divided between them which is not particularly bequeathed by this my will. And it is my will and desire that my said four sons estates may be kept in my wife's hands until they respectively attain the age of twenty one years in case my said wife continues so long unmarried, but in case she should happen to marry before that time, I desire it may be in the power of my Executors to oblige her husband from time to time as they shall think proper to give security for the performance of this my last will in paying and delivering my said four sons their estates respectively as they come of age, or on failure to give such security to take my said sons and their estates out of the custody and tuition of my said wife and her husband.

Item: I give and bequeath unto my said Wife the crops made at Bridge Creek, Chotank and Rappahannock Quarters at the time of my decease for the support of herself and her children and I desire my wife may have the liberty of working my land at Bridge Creek Quarter for the term of five years next after my decease during which time she may fix a Quarter on Deep Run.

Item: I give to my son Lawrence Washington and the heirs of his body lawfully begotten that tract of land I purchased of Mr. James Hore (sic) adjoining to the said Lawrence Washington's land on Mattox in the County of Westmoreland which I give him in lieu of the land my said son bought for me in Prince William County of Spencer and Harrison and for want of such heirs I give and devise the same to my son Augustine and his heirs forever.

Item: I give to my said son Lawrence all the right title and interest I have to in or out of the Iron Works in which I am concerned in Virginia and Maryland provided that he do and shall out of the profits raised thereby purchase for my said son Augustine three young working slaves as I have herein before directed, and also paying my daughter Betty when she arrives to the age of eighteen the sum of Four Hundred Pounds, which right, title and interest on the condition aforesaid I give to my said son Lawrence and his heirs forever.

Item: I give unto my said daughter Betty a Negro child named Mary, daughter of Sue, and another named Betty, daughter of Judy.

Item: It is my will and desire that my sons Lawrence and Augustine do pay out of the respective estates devised to them one half or moiety of the debts I justly owe and for that purpose I give and bequeath unto my said two sons one half of the debts due and owing to me.

Item: For as much as my several children in this my will mentioned being by several ventures cannot inherit from one another in order to make a proper provision against their dying without issue, it is my will and desire that in case my son Lawrence should die without heirs of his body lawfully begotten, that then the land and mill given him by this my will lying in the County of Prince William shall go and remain to my son George and his heirs, but in case my son Augustine should choose to have the said lands rather than the lands he holds in Maddox either by this will or any settlement, then I give and devise the said lands in Prince William to my son Augustine and his heirs on his conveying the said lands in Maddox to my son George and his heirs. And in case my said son Augustine shall happen to die without issue of his body lawfully begotten, then I give and bequeath all the said lands by him held in Maddox to my said son George and his heirs. And if both my sons Lawrence and Augustine should happen to die without issue of their several bodies begotten then my will and desire is that my son George and his heirs may have his and their choice either to have the lands of my son Lawrence or the lands

of my son Augustine to hold to him and his heirs and the land of such of my said sons Lawrence or Augustine as shall not be so chosen by my son George or his heirs shall go to and be equally divided among my sons Samuel, John and Charles and their heirs share and share alike. And in case my son George by the death of both or either of my sons Lawrence and Augustine should according to this my intention come to be possessed of either of their lands then my will and desire is that ye land hereby devised to my said son George and his heirs should go over and be equally divided between my sons Samuel and John (the court scribe unquestionably omitted Charles here) and their heirs, share and share alike. And in case all my children by my present Wife should happen to die without issue of their bodies then my will and desire is that all the lands by this my will devised to any of my said children should go to my sons Augustine and Lawrence if living and to their heirs or if one of them should be dead without issue then to the survivor and his heirs. But my true intent and meaning is that each of my children by my present Wife may have their lands in fee simple upon the contingency of their arriving at full age or leaving heirs of their bodies lawfully begotten or on their dying under age and without lawfull issue their several parts to descend from one to another according to their course of descents and the remainder over of their or any of their land in this clause mentioned to my sons Lawrence and Augustine or the survivor of them is only upon the contingency of all my said children by my present Wife dying under age and without issue living my sons Lawrence and Augustine or either of them.

Lastly I constitute and appoint my son Lawrence Washington and my good friends Daniel McCarty and Nathaniel Chapman, Gent. Executors of this my Last Will and Testament. In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the Eleventh day of April 1743.
Augus: Washington [Seale]

Signed Sealed & Published In the Presence of us
Rob Jackson Anthony Strother Jas Thomson

Provided further that if my lands at Chotank devised to my son Samuel should by course of law be taken away then I give to the said Samuel in lieu thereof a tract of land in Westmoreland County where Benjamin Weeks and Thomas Finch now live by estimation Seven Hundred acres.

Item: I bequeath to my son George one lot of land in the Town of Fredericksburg which I purchased of Coll?. John Waller also two other lots in the said Town which I purchased of the Executors of Coll. Henry Willis with all the houses and appurtenances thereunto belonging.

And Whereas some proposals have been made by Mr. Anthony Strother for purchasing a piece of land where Matthew Tiffy lately lived, now if my Executors shall think it for the benefitt of my son George then I hereby empower them to make a conveyance of the said land and premises to the said Strother.

In Witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seale the Eleventh day of April 1743.
****

Augus: Washington *Seale* *******
Signed Sealed & Published In the Presence of us

Rob Jackson Anthony Strother Jas Thomson

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