

INTRODUCTION

It's a warm sunny morning in May and several friends have decided to take a hike along the Appalachian Trail in Amherst County, Virginia. Specifically, the group has decided to hike the four mile section of the Trail along Brown Mountain Creek. As they descend the trail, they are walking into a maturing hardwood forest. Oaks, red maples, tulip poplars, and other tall trees dominate the woods. The canopy of their developing leaves plays tricks with the sunlight as it filters through to reach the ground. Orchids and wild geraniums bloom along the trail and cinnamon ferns unfurl their fronds within moist pockets of soil. Ovenbirds, redstarts, crested flycatchers, pileated woodpeckers, and Acadian flycatchers sing and call as they establish their nesting territory. Brown Mountain Creek bubbles, slows into pools, and speeds over riffles as it flows toward the Pedlar River. Everything seems so calm, peaceful, and one gets the feeling these same natural activities have been repeated for hundreds of years.

As the group continues down the trail, the solid woods are broken by a clearing, perhaps two acres in size. Walnut trees dominate the clearing along with spicebush, other shrubs, and lots of poison ivy. A large stone wall, two to three feet high and just as wide extends along the stream separating it from the clearing. If they look closely enough within this clearing, they will discover a partially standing stone chimney and stone foundations that are being overrun by vegetation. Eighty years ago, these woods, that once seemed to have been so old, were not even here. The section of the AT through which the group is walking was a county road at that time, serving the transportation needs of a small, vibrant community. This community consisted of: the Way Post Office, near the confluence of Brown Mountain Creek and the Pedlar River; one large mill, the Richeson later known as Cunningham Mill; several smaller mills; school; church; and the houses of the families who comprised the community.

The Long Mountain Community as defined in this paper comprises land primarily owned by the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests in Amherst County, Virginia. This area has been one of the oldest historically occupied regions documented on the Forest. Beginning with the first land grant in 1761 and followed by additional grants through the early 1800's, this area was settled and built into a thriving community. This community remained until the early 1900's when the city of Lynchburg began buying land within the Pedlar River watershed to build a dam which would serve as part of their municipal water supply. The City of Lynchburg also helped the Forest Service purchase land within the Pedlar River watershed to help protect it. One of the stipulations in the land purchase agreement was that structures would be removed and the family agreed not to settle elsewhere within the Pedlar watershed. The data gathered for this paper were derived from the following sources: observations of archaeological remains; land acquisition files from the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests; abstracts of land acquisition from the Forests; Census records from 1840 through 1910, with the exception of 1890 which was unavailable; and a transcript of an interview conducted by Mr. David Benevitch from the Pedlar Ranger District with Mr. Taft Hughes, a native of the Long Mountain area.

This project began while gathering background material for a proposed timber sale, and evolved into a more elaborate effort to gather information on an area that fascinated the authors with its wide variety of house sites, terraces, walls, rock piles, cemeteries, and obvious rich history. A story unfolded for this community that would fit the scenario for any modern small community replete with illegitimate children, children squandering their parent's wealth, fathers lying on witness stands in court in an attempt to save their lands, children suing their mother over inheritance, and an apparent struggle by both Euro and African Americans to bring stability to

their lives following the turmoil of the Civil War.

The Long Mountain Community will be presented as an example of an early integrated community, although the integration may have been forced on the inhabitants following the Civil War. Prior to the war, most of the land in this area was owned by several wealthy farmers who owned slaves. Following the war and the freeing of the slaves, personal wealth and land ownership changed as the families within this community struggled to build new life styles. The authors will provide a brief description of the physical setting of this community, some of the history surrounding it, and offer some hypotheses that can be tested through archaeological research.

PHYSICAL SETTING

The Long Mountain Community as defined for this project is bounded by: Long Mountain on the East; the extent of Forest Service property on the North; Piney Mountain and the Lynchburg Reservoir on the South; and Brown Mountain on the West. Elevations range from a high of 2383' above sea level on Brown Mountain to a low of 1040' above sea level at the Lynchburg Reservoir. This area is essentially three ridges separated by two major drainages, Swapping Camp and Brown Mountain Creeks. Both of these streams are perennial drains that flow into the Pedlar River, although Swapping Camp Creek now flows into the Lynchburg Reservoir. Both streams have developed terraces and rich alluvial soils that would have offered prosperous farm lands for historic settlers.

The Long Mountain area lies at the interface of the Piedmont and Blue Ridge Mountain Physiographic Provinces, and has characteristics of both. The terrain consists of: flat ridge tops; steeply sloping ridge sides; narrow, steep sided hollows containing first and/or second order intermittent streams; saddles; colluvial aprons; alluvial fans; and the terraces along the two major streams previously mentioned. The soils, however, are primarily Piedmont like with heavy red clays that are easily erodible. Records indicate that most areas of even marginally productive soils were farmed, which has led to many areas of erosion. Lithic types that outcrop within the area are Precambrian and Cambrian in age and include: granodiorite from the Pedlar Formation; conglomerates and metamorphosed volcanic ash from the Unicoi Formation; and greenstone from the Catoclin Formation. Much of the ground surface is covered with stone ranging in size from cobbles to large boulders.

Current vegetation within this area is a mixed hardwood and pine forest. Many of the formerly cultivated and grazed fields have restocked in pine species that are now changing to hardwoods. Several areas were cut and planted in white pine trees by members of the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930's. The forest understory contains immature and growing representatives of the overstory, along with dogwood, and hornbeams. The shrubby layer consists of mountain laurel, rhododendron, smilax, and huckleberry. The ground cover contains a wide variety of herbaceous plants including, ferns, orchids, grasses, and mosses.

EARLY HISTORICAL SETTLEMENT

The Forest Service acquired the land under consideration for this paper in thirteen tracts from seven owners. Twenty separate grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia to various individuals comprise this land. Obviously, an investigation of each of these grants with all their diverse owners is beyond the scope of this paper. An attempt will be made to unfold the history of this

area through sketches of seven families that were prominent in the history of this community.

The first land grants in this area were made on November 11, 1761 when James Smith was granted 385 acres on both sides of Swaping Camp Creek and John Beazley was granted 400 acres near the head of the South Fork of the Buffalo River on Long Mountain. Both men sold their land to Neil Campbell, Beazley in 1767 and Smith in 1775. Neil Campbell employed a woman named Tabitha Balloe as a nurse and companion. He fathered a daughter, Elizabeth, by her and to whom, upon his death in 1777, left a number of slaves and a considerable amount of land. The remainder of his estate he left to Tabitha Balloe, but only her lifetime. Upon her death, all of this land was to be conveyed to his sister's children in England.

Ms. Balloe married Joseph Ballenger who owned an estate which included a plantation house and mill along Brown Mountain Creek. The Ballengers had three sons and upon the death of Joseph in 1802, the estate was divided among the four heirs. Tabitha eventually acquired the property from her sons.

Elizabeth Campbell married Thomas Barrett and had three sons. Several years after Barrett's death, she married another gentleman named Hugh Campbell. The Barrett, Campbell, and Ballenger families divested much of the land which they had inherited. This land contained the majority of the land within the project area including much of Long Mountain, and lands along both Swapping Camp and Brown Mountain Creeks. This land passed through many hands, but until 1868, the ownership remained white and primarily slave owners.

A major portion of the land along Long Mountain and Swapping Camp Creek came under the ownership of the Higginbotham family. The 1860 Census listed James Higginbotham as having five children with real estate valued at \$1000 and Personal Property valued at \$640. The family was apparently able to keep their money after the Civil War and by 1872, owned nearly 600 acres of land. This land essentially remained within the Higginbotham family until portions of it were purchased by the City of Lynchburg and the remainder purchased by the Forest Service.

Enoch Jeffries was another land owner on Long Mountain and Swapping Camp Creek. In 1850, he owned ten slaves. In 1860, he and his wife had nine children with real estate valued at \$2000 and personal property valued at \$4000. By 1870, he still had nine children living at home and his real estate had dropped in value to \$1000 and his personal property to \$420. Both Enoch and his wife died during the 1880's and are buried in a family cemetery on what was once their property. The Jeffries land was ultimately sold to an Afro-American couple, John and Anna Johnson, who later sold the land to the City of Lynchburg.

George and Elizabeth Hylton also resided on the waters of Swapping Camp Creek. They purchased their farm in 1857, paying \$1400 for 187 acres. In the 1860 Census, they were listed with two children. His real estate was valued at \$2700 and personal property at \$3830. In 1870, the real estate value had dropped to \$1400 and personal property to \$465. The Hyltons both died during the 1880's and were buried on their property. The Hyltons sold their land to their son who kept possession of most of the land until it was sold to the City of Lynchburg and ultimately to the Forest Service. He did divest several tracts of land on Piney Mountain in 1906 to Afro-American families who then sold the land to the City of Lynchburg.

Jesse Richeson was a land owner and business man of considerable wealth. He began acquiring land along Brown Mountain and Swapping Camp Creeks during the first quarter of the Nineteenth Century. He acquired the land through purchase and grants from the Commonwealth of Virginia. His land holdings were vast and stretched beyond the scope of this paper. Apparently he was known as a hard business man who was used to having his way. One of his son's, Varland, was either given or sold two tracts of land along Brown Mountain Creek, totaling 518

acres. Varland used this land as collateral on debts he owed to several business men in Lynchburg. He skipped the country without paying the debts. When the business men tried to collect via a chancery suit to force the sale of land, Jesse claimed he had sold the land to his son and that he had never been paid for it. The business men's lawyers discovered Jesse had actually given his son the land and then post dated the bill of sale to make it appear his son had cheated him on a land deal. The judge found in favor of the business men and the land was sold in 1839 to a man named Zacharia Drummond. Drummond gave this land, along with some additional holdings, to his son in 1849.

In 1850, Jess Richeson owned thirty-nine slaves and one of his sons, James, owned five. Jesse Richeson died in 1855 and his estate was settled primarily among six heirs. In the 1860 Census, these heirs included James whose real estate was valued at \$3000 and personal property at \$14,849; and Samuel whose real estate was valued at \$8000 and personal property at \$12,000. By 1870, James's real estate value had dropped to \$1675 and personal property to \$550. In 1869, Samuel had sold his portion of land for \$7500. This included a mill near the mouth of Brown Mountain Creek. This mill had been owned by the Richeson family since at least the 1830's, if not before. The people to whom he sold the land defaulted on the loan and the mill eventually came under the ownership of John Cunningham. James Richeson's daughter, Nannie, married George E. Cunningham who was the son of John Cunningham, which kept the Richeson family involved with the mill.

Zacharia Drummond's son sold his land to Thomas Staton in 1853. The value of real estate owned by Thomas Staton in 1860 was \$2040, while his personal property was valued at \$490. Thomas Staton died in 1862 and left a widow and large family. His widow and several of the children continued to reside on the land and made their living farming. The remaining children grew tired of this situation and filed a chancery suit against their mother and siblings asking for the estate to be settled in an equitable manner. The judge found in favor of these children and a commission was established to divide the estate among nine heirs. This was accomplished through the division of the estate into nine lots, with each of the heirs gaining possession of one lot. The 1870 Census contains three of the heirs of Thomas Staton as land owners, apparently living along Brown Mountain Creek. Parthenia Staton was his wife and had real estate valued at \$200 with no personal property value. John J. Lawhorne was a son-in-law who had real estate valued at \$180 and personal property at \$250. Another son-in-law, Edward P. Davis had real estate valued at \$300 and personal property at \$100.

POST CIVIL WAR SETTLEMENT PATTERNS

Following the Civil War, settlement patterns of the people inhabiting this area were changed. The freed slaves who wished to remain living in this area had to find housing and employment. Many became share croppers who tilled land for the owners and paid for housing with a share of their crops. Some of the Afro-Americans became land owners and provided share cropping opportunities to their brethren. Much of this land had been planted in burley tobacco for years. This country is marginal at best for tobacco farming, and tobacco is extremely hard on land. New crops were needed and these included corn, wheat, and other grains. As one walks through the terrain, the number of rock terraces are amazing, probably the result of slave labor. Terraces were constructed both on ridge sides and in small hollows. The tillable land that was gained from this extensive labor was minimal, but apparently any opportunity was taken to add land to the crop base. Large rock piles were constructed in an effort to further enhance tilling capacity. Some of

these rock piles are placed on existing boulders, others are well constructed with square corners, while others are just thrown together.

Many of the freed slaves kept the surnames of their former masters. When one reads through the 1870 Census, which was the first in which Afro-Americans were listed, the surnames are shared with the former slave owners. Perhaps one of the most interesting, and influential Afro-Americans in this area was Moses Richeson. In his oral interview, Taft Hughes, mentioned that he had been birthed by a former slave and fathered by a slave owner, a Richeson. He was listed in the Census as a Mulatto, which probably verifies this fact. The 1850 Census showed that one of Jesse Richesons slaves was a 25 year old male Mulatto, and this fits the age of Moses within two years. Mr. Hughes stated that Moses was supposed to have worked in his father's mill and was allowed to save money through this enterprise. Since Jesse owned a mill, this also would indicate that Jesse was his father.

Moses began to purchase portions of the Thomas Staton estate in 1868 when he paid \$300 for 220 acres of land that included a portion of lot number 3 from that estate. He continued his purchasing in 1872 when he paid \$375 for 52 acres that had been lot number 2. In 1878 he added 67 acres with the purchase of lot number 5 for \$275. His holdings were completed in the early 1880's when he received a deed for the 143.5 acre dower lot that had belonged to Parthenia Staton, widow of Thomas. He had paid small sums to the various Staton heirs for their portion of this dower lot. Between the end of the Civil War and 1883, Moses Richeson had acquired approximately 420 acres of land, most of which had once belonged to his father but had been lost by his half brother. By this time, Moses Richeson was one of the largest land owners in the community. The 1870 Census valued his real estate at \$150 and his personal property at \$130. Moses and his wife had three children, James, Josephus, and Clara. Daniel Winston, a young Mulatto farm hand, apparently lived with the Richesons in 1870.

In 1875, Daniel Winston had saved enough money to pay \$225 for 90 acres of land which had been lot number 1 of the Thomas Staton estate. He continued to live there until he sold the land to the Forest Service.

Josephus Richeson completed his family's purchase of the Thomas Staton estate in 1902 when he bought the 62 acre lot number 6 for \$250. In total, the family of Moses Richeson owned approximately 480 acres of land along Brown Mountain Creek prior to 1910.

When one researches the Census records, mistakes can be discovered. During the 1870 Census, the John Hilton family is listed twice. The first listing has them living in the house of a James Richardson who is listed immediately following George Hilton. Later, the family is listed again and indicated they have a personal property value of \$125. John Hilton was the grandfather of Taft Hughes. John Hilton had been a slave owned by George Hylton.

Taft Hughes other grandfather was William or Billy Hughes, a freed slave, who had been owned by one of Jess Richeson's sons.

As Taft explained, "my granddad came from Rockbridge County. He said he was a Douglas over there. I don't know why he changed his name. My granddad told me that one of these Richeson's married a Douglas girl in Rockbridge. My granddad was a young man and he drove the carriage, and worked around the house mostly. My granddad was a slave. When the Richeson boy was to take his wife over here to Amherst to live, this girl's daddy asked the girl what did she want for a wedding present. She said she wanted Billy, that was my granddad. He said that when he was coming on across the Blue Ridge, he said well, I ain't going to be

a Douglas when I get over there, I'm going to change my name to Hughes. So that's the reason we come by the name of Hughes, but actually we are Douglas'. The 1870 Census listed William Hughes, spelled Hewes. His son Eli, eventually married Lucy Hilton, daughter of John Hilton. They lived along Brown Mountain Creek and share cropped land owned by Josephus Richeson.

The change in life styles, socio-economic position, and living conditions following the Civil War and Reconstruction brought about changes in the settlement patterns throughout the Long Mountain Community. Taft Hughes told this story.

I remember my mother and father telling me another story about Jim Richeson. He was a slaveholder. My mother and father had two children at the time. She said after she had lunch, she fixed a lunch up and sent it up by my dad to Jim Richeson. He lived down near the Pedlar. He said that he was sitting on the steps grating corn. They would take a piece of tin or stovepipe and punch holes in it, then turn it over and nail it on a board. Then they would take the dried corn on the cob and grate it off so they could take it to the mill. My dad said that when he got there with the lunch, he was sitting there grating him some corn. My dad said that here was some lunch that Lucy sent you. He said that he dropped his head and commenced crying, tears run down in his corn, he just laid his grater aside...I reckon it was his conscience. He had been their marsa. They was his slaves, and here they was doing that for him (Benevitch, 1992).

Family estates, once owned by Euro-Americans, were broken up and often came into the ownership of Afro-Americans. We find a combination of white and black farmers who owned land along with both white and black share croppers who rented houses and land to farm from the owners for a share of the crop. Taft Hughes explained share cropping in this manner. "My dad paid a fourth of his crop. If you owned your team (of horses), you only paid a fourth, but if you didn't own your team and the landlord had to furnish the team, you had to give half of what you made"(Bennevitch, 1992). Census and acquisition files indicate that Afro Americans owned all of the land along Brown Mountain Creek except for the middle lot owned by John J. Lawhorne and the upper end owned by the Davis family. Within this ownership, both the blacks and whites farmed and rented portions of their holdings to share croppers. This community was integrated and had been so since 1868 when Moses Richeson acquired his first lot. Apparently the only industry in the area, mills, remained in white ownership.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL REMAINS

There are no extant structures within this region today. We find partially standing chimneys, some remnants of foundations around the chimneys, cemeteries, most with unmarked graves, elaborate stone walls, rock piles, and terraces. Traces of domestic life including broken mason jars, bottles, fragments of ceramics, stove parts, and pans can be found littered on the ground around the house sites. No testing nor excavations have been conducted at any of these structures at this time. There are still unsurveyed portions of the land that probably contain additional structures that will have to be inventoried.

An interesting result of the survey lies in our failure to locate structures in proximity to most of the slave owners' houses that would have housed the slaves. A careful search was conducted around both the Enoch Jeffries and George Hylton houses to look for the slave quarters, but none were found. This still may be a result of sampling error and a more thorough survey may result in

these structures being found. Three small cabin sites were located on lands formerly owned by the Higginbotham family that may have housed slaves.

The oral history interview between Mr. Bennevitch and Mr. Hughes concentrated in the area along Brown Mountain Creek. Ten house sites, a cemetery, and a rock in spring are located along this stream in close proximity to the Appalachian Trail. The Forest Service has considered the possibility of interpreting this historical area along the AT and the interview was one step in fulfilling this possibility. The authors used the information from this interview to put family names to each structure, at least for the last known occupant of each structure as remembered by Mr. Hughes. When combined with the known Census data, this attempt seems to have been successful.

The authors found it easier to place names with structures in this confined area than within the project area as a whole. Currently, we have discovered seventeen domestic sites and five cemeteries. Records indicate that many additional house sites remain undiscovered. A list of all land owners has been compiled along with any mention of structures or families residing on the various tracts.

The following are among the tasks that remain to be accomplished within the Long Mountain Community: complete survey of the area to locate additional dwelling sites, cemeteries, out buildings, orchards, mills, and quarries; attempt to trace each of the twenty land grants and sale of lands with plats of the tracts to document house sites with residents through time; conduct excavations at a number of the house sites including homes of landowners, share croppers, and slave quarters (if found). These excavations should include both Euro and Afro Americans.

The authors offer the following hypotheses that should be tested with the excavations: 1) prior to the Civil War, the material culture of the land owners should indicate items of status and some wealth; 2) following the Civil War, the material culture of the Euro American land owners should show a lessening in value; 3) the material culture of the Afro American land owners should be essentially equal to that of most Euro American land owners; 4) the material culture of the share croppers, both white and black, should approach equality; 5) the material culture of the share croppers and land owners may also approach equality.

We conclude with another quote from Taft Hughes remembering the sale of tobacco:

He would hire someone to take it, but he would go along with it, it would take a week. Roads were bad and muddy. He had to pay a fourth of the tobacco. He would owe the Knights in Buena Vista some money, and probably he would owe some merchants around some more. He was going to pay you if he only had one dime. He always told me don't never go in debt. He hated to owe anybody. Tobacco was the big cash crop. The corn we turned back into food for the family. We had a cow for milk. They didn't want the share cropper to have too much, because the landlord wanted to stay ahead you know. (Benevitch, 1992)