



## Mt. Comfort Plantation

**A HISTORY AND DESCRIPTION OF AN  
AUTHENTIC COLONIAL VIRGINIA HOME**

by

Richard L. Guild

**INCLUDING**

**THE DUVAL, ADAMS' AND JOHNS' FAMILIES  
JEFFERSON LETTERS CONCERNING THE POISONING OF GEORGE WYTHE  
THE MURDER OF BECKY AMOS WRITTEN BY MISS ANNA DEANE JOHNS  
A GLIMPSE INTO COLONIAL APPOMATTOX -  
MORE THAN FIFTY OLD APPOMATTOX FAMILIES MENTIONED**

VA HIS  
975.5  
GUR





The following information is based on research done  
by the past and present owners of Mt. Comfort Plantation

45519

COPYRIGHT 1983

BY

RICHARD L. GUILD

FIRST PRINTING MAY 1, 1983







TABLE OF CONTENTS

Foreword .....	4
Earliest Pioneer Settlement .....	5
Original Land Grant to Samuel DuVal .....	6
<u>THE DUVAL FAMILY</u>	
Daniel DuVal .....	7
Samuel DuVal .....	7 - 11
William DuVal .....	12 - 32
DuVal - Jefferson Letters on Wythe murder	17 - 31
Governor William Pope DuVal .....	33 - 41
General John Pope DuVal .....	41
<u>THE JOHNS' FAMILY</u>	
Transfer of Ownership .....	42
Colonel John Johns .....	43
Captain Thomas W. Johns .....	44 - 50
Children of Captain Johns .....	51
Miss Anna Deane Johns .....	52 - 54
The Murder of Becky Amos .....	54 - 56
A listing of Owners of Mt. Comfort .....	57 - 58
<u>THE ADAMS FAMILY OF "POPLAR SPRING"</u>	
Samuel Adams .....	59 - 60
Isaac Adams .....	61 - 63
DuVal - Adams Cemetery & S.B. Adams .....	63 - 64
Isaac Adams' Prominent Sons .....	65
William DuVal Adams .....	66
Isaac Holcombe Adams .....	67
Captain R.H.T. Adams .....	68 - 69
Sarah Frances Adams .....	70
Ownership of "Poplar Spring" .....	71 - 74
A Description of Life in Old Appomattox .....	75 - 83
Captain W.H. "Buck" Trent .....	84 - 85
Myths and Legends of Mt. Comfort .....	86 - 88
Restoration of Mt. Comfort .....	89
Mt. Comfort Today .....	90 - 95
Acknowledgments .....	96
Tour Information .....	97

## FOREWORD

When we purchased Mt. Comfort on August 31, 1979, my wife and I received a file containing the history of Mt. Comfort as it was then known. This history had been compiled by the last three families that had lived here. As I was soon to discover by careful study of the file, the historical data was quite incomplete and contained some inconsistencies in dates and facts. Since Mt. Comfort was built nearly two hundred years ago, a sizeable amount of history had to be uncovered. Thus began the major project of researching the history of Mt. Comfort and the writing up of this little book. Although we have expanded the historical knowledge of Mt. Comfort, there is still much research to be done. The fact that both the Buckingham and Appomattox Court Houses burned together with their historical documents and papers makes the project much more difficult. Such things as the exact date the house was built and locating recorded evidence proving who was the original owner have yet to be found. Neither have the original boundary lines of the land which was once a part of Mt. Comfort been located. Hopefully these mysteries will be solved in the near future.

This book is written on the basis of the traditional past ownership of Mt. Comfort as has been passed down through the generations. This tradition states that William Duval was the original builder of Mt. Comfort and that it was passed down through the Johns family, to more recent owners. Until tradition is proven incorrect by documented evidence, we will stick with the established tradition of ownership.

It should be noted that interest in the history of this house and in any colonial history of this area has been very high, thus we have gone ahead and published what information we have compiled even though our research is far from complete. Our main purpose in publishing this book was to compile only known and established facts which when put together would prove interesting and informative reading.

It is our hope that the reader of this publication will find it educational and interesting. If you, the reader, know of any historical facts which we have overlooked or that you think would add to this publication, please bring them to our attention and we will include them in a later edition. Also, since we are publishing this book before we have completed our research we would hope that you would excuse any little errors in grammar you may find and would pass along to us your ideas for a future edition.

Richard & Hope Guild

May 1, 1983

## BACKGROUND - EARLIEST PIONEER SETTLEMENT

The land upon which Mt. Comfort now stands was a portion of wilderness back in the early 1700's. Westward movement generally followed the rivers and streams inland from the Tidewater area of Virginia. From the waterways, expansion then followed hunter's and trapper's trails into the interior until expansion was stopped for a time at the mountain regions.

In this area, prior to 1735, large tracts of land were patented only by wealthy land owners. The established Tidewater planters acquired new lands when they discovered that tobacco exhausted the soil's fertility very quickly. After 1735 more smaller tracts of land were patented as new colonists moved westward, and as indentured servants who had served their time moved to the frontier to set up for themselves. By 1744 there was sufficient population in this area to require the formation of a new county, thus on this date Albemarle County was formed. By 1745 the total population of Albemarle County was about 4,250, counting both whites and slaves.<sup>1</sup> By 1750 settlement had reached to the Allegheny Mountains west of the Shenandoah and several pioneer roads had been cut through the wilderness. The Lower Road and Trading Path went north-south down the eastern side of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The Warrior's Path went north-south down the Shenandoah Valley. The Three-Notched Road was cut from Richmond, west through Jarman's Gap in the Blue Ridge into the Shenandoah Valley. The fourth major road was the Trader's Path, which was an East-West road leading from the upper Appomattox River west, passing near the Peaks of Otter, through the Blue Ridge water gap of Roanoke River and joining the Warrior's Path in the Shenandoah Valley. Each of these "main" roads was constructed along old Indian trails. The Trader's Path through present Appomattox County was later completed to Richmond.

Generally the early patent holders were wealthy individuals who purchased land as an investment and did not occupy the lands they owned. Their lands were normally occupied by tenants or servants of theirs.

By about 1750 lands south of the James River, in what is now Appomattox County, began to be patented in smaller tracts. Scattered plantations began to be cleared in this area and, as settlers secured approval in county courts, roads were cut from one plantation to another. The first generation of settlers in this area was both the plantation owners as well as the buckskin clad frontiersmen who lived with their families in log cabins in the virgin forests, and subsisted principally from hunting and trapping and perhaps a small vegetable garden near their cabin.]

By 1761 Buckingham County was formed and travel was generally over cleared roads, although freight was still hauled on the James River. About this time New London and Lynch's Ferry were important trading centers. Tobacco was carried to these centers for shipment down river to Richmond and goods were sent up river for the settlers. Also the settlement of Diuguidville, which was named for the Diuguid family, was another location where tobacco hogsheads could be hauled for shipment down the river. Diuguidville is now called Bent Creek and the Diuguids of Lynchburg are descendants of this pioneer family.

Virginia Land Office records indicate the names of some of the first settlers to occupy Appomattox County were William Diuguid, William and David Johns, William and Thomas Still, and Benjamin Patteson.

By 1800-1825 wild game was beginning to become scarce. The woods buffalo and elk which had been common in this area were gone and even deer and turkeys were hard to find. The hunters and trappers that once lived in log cabins here had moved across the mountains into Kentucky and Tennessee where game was more plentiful. New farmers moved in to take the place of the hunters, and farming became the most prominent occupation.] The farming during this time period was usually done with slaves and the cash crop was still tobacco, although hogs and corn were common. (see notes 1,2, and 3 below)

The first owner of Mt. Comfort I have been able to locate was Samuel DuVal of Richmond. In May of 1780 a large tract of land was surveyed and on February 23, 1792, a tract of that surveyed land was patented by Samuel DuVal as follows:

- Note 1: "History of Albemarle County" by Rev. Edgar Woods  
2: Roads located on map in "The Diary of Robert Rose" by Ralph E. Fall  
3: "The History of Lynchburg Virginia" by Philip Lightfoot Scruggs

Henry Lee Esquire, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, To all to whom these presents shall come, Greetings, Know ye, that in Consideration of the ancient composition of three pounds five Shillings Sterling Paid by Samuel DuVall into the Treasury of this commonwealth there is granted by the said Commonwealth unto the said Samuel DuVall Assignee of William Still who was Assignee of Thomas Still a certain Tract or parcel of land, containing Six hundred and twenty eight acres by survey bearing date the first Day of May one thousand seven hundred and eighty lying and being in the County of Buckingham on the Branches of Bent Creek, and bounded as followeth Court, Beginning at a White Oak and pointers near a Springey place on a branch upon the said Stills line, Running thence off, and on Megginsons line, South five and a half degrees East twenty poles to pointers, thence South fifty two degrees West one hundred and seventy three poles to a corner White Oak, thence of new lines South thirty nine degrees West one hundred and two poles crossing two branches to a small pine, thence South twelve degrees East one hundred and Seventy one poles Crossing William Diuguids road to pointers in Benjamin Pattesons line, thence on his line North Sixty six and half degrees East one hundred and twelve poles to a pine, thence of new lines Due East two hundred and fourteen poles to a Small pine, thence North forty Six degrees East fifty two poles to pointers in William Stills line, thence on him North fifty two degrees West forty poles to a large corner pine, thence North fifteen degrees East two hundred and nine poles to pointers in the said Thomas Stills line thence on him North seventy two and a half degrees West two hundred and twenty five poles to the Beginning With its Appurtenances, to have and to hold the said Tract or Parcel of land with its appurtenances, to the said Samuel DuVall and his Heirs forever In Witness whereof the said Henry Lee Esquire, Governor of the Commonwealth of Virginia, hath here unto set his Hand and caused cesser seal of the said Commonwealth to be Affixed at Richmond on the twenty third day of February in the Year of Our Lord one thousand seven hundred and ninety two and of the Commonwealth the Sixteenth...

Henry Lee (Seal)

See note 4

-Additional land was apparently purchased and added to the above tract since, on January 18th, 1799, a resurvey was done by John Patteson for Henry Bell, TBC which shows "Major Samuel DuVall, 1058 acres on each side of Campbell and Buckingham lines." (From Surveyor's Platt Book, Buckingham County, Va. 1783-1799, p.149) The name on this resurvey is undoubtedly in error. Since Samuel DuVal died in 1784, Mr. Patteson probably meant Major William DuVal, son of Samuel DuVal. The original tract of 628 acres of land was probably purchased just prior to Samuel DuVal's death in 1784. The date of the original patent was therefore completed after his death. Samuel DuVal's son, William, having inherited the original 628 acres, probably purchased more land as an investment, thus increasing his holdings in Buckingham County. The exact date the house and out-buildings were constructed is not known, however Major William DuVal is known to have been living at "his Buckingham County Residence" in 1807. At present the exact location of each of the two tracts of land is unknown since landmarks mentioned in the surveys have long since disappeared, thus it is not known if the original 628 acres were within the resurvey of 1799, or if it was a separate purchase. The question of how much land Mt. Comfort originally encompassed and the exact boundaries is still being researched.

Note 4: Land Grant copied from original in Va. Public Library, Richmond, Va.  
Reel 91, Grants 25, 1791-(17)92; p. 579,580

## The DuVal Family of Richmond

Daniel DuVal I fled France during the persecutions of the Huguenots (French Protestants) and took refuge in Great Britain. During the spring of the year 1700, the first of four fleets of ships set sail from Gravesend, England, with many hundreds of French Huguenot refugees on board. Their destination was the English colonies of the new world. Daniel DuVal was in the fourth shipment of refugees, having left England on the ship LeNasseau, Captain Tragian commanding, and arrived in York River, Virginia on March 5, 1701. This fourth shipment of refugees carried a class of "better-off" Huguenots, thus most of them did not have to apply to the Virginia Council for help and were permitted to "distribute themselves among the Colonies". Unlike many of the poorer Huguenots, Daniel DuVal had resources and did not establish himself at the French "Manakin Town" settlement, where most of the French refugees made their home.

The earliest record in Virginia of Daniel DuVal, after landing in March, 1701, is one appearing in the records of York County, at which time he seems to have become fully established in his work as architect and joiner, apparently living in Ware Parish, Gloucester County, Virginia. The record is as follows:

"24 June 1704, George Pegram, son of George Pegram, of Bruton Parish, in York County, deceased, hath, with consent of his Uncle Robert Hunt bound himself apprentice to Daniel DuVal, of Ware Parish, in Gloucester County, to learn the trade of Architect and joiner."

The next record of the DuVal name in Virginia is in the Abingdon Parish Register, Gloucester County, Virginia, as follows: "Daniel DuVal & Mary Thompson were married Xbr ye 29th, 1732." From a study of the evidence available this Daniel DuVal was a son of the Huguenot emigrant, and as he was either a second or third child of his parents, Daniel Sr. must have married shortly after his arrival in the Colony. Since early records of the Ware Parish have been lost, the name of Daniel Sr.'s wife is not known; however, other records do contain his children; thus we have a record of his family as follows:

Children of Daniel DuVal I, Huguenot, and his wife:

1. William DuVal, Gloucester County, Petsworth Parish, d. 1784
2. Daniel DuVal II, Caroline County, d. 1777
3. Benjamin DuVal I, first Caroline County, then Henrico County, d. 1770
4. Samuel DuVal b. 1714, first in King William County, then Henrico at Mt. Comfort, in Richmond, Virginia. d. 1783-4
5. Mary DuVal b. in Gloucester County, m. Mr. Amos of Surrey County. Had a daughter named Elizabeth Amos.

The descendants of the above family are many and have been traced in the book The DuVal Family of Virginia by Bessie Berry Grabowski. Their accomplishments are extraordinary and they may be found in the records of quite a lot of Colonial history. The DuVal family was well to do, owned huge amounts of land in Colonial Virginia, and helped shape the destiny of the Colonies. For the purpose of this document we will cover only Samuel DuVal, son of Daniel DuVal I, and his descendants that had anything to do with Mt. Comfort Plantation in Appomattox, Virginia, since Samuel DuVal was granted the original tract of land upon which Mt. Comfort is now built.

### Samuel DuVal of Mt. Comfort

The youngest, but possibly the most prominent of the four sons of Daniel DuVal I, the Huguenot refugee of 1701, was Samuel DuVal, usually described as of Mt. Comfort. Mt. Comfort was the name he gave his estate in Richmond and it was the first brick home ever to be built in that city. To avoid confusion at this point the Mt. Comfort of Appomattox, was named by Samuel DuVal's son in honor of his parent's home, possibly after the original Mt. Comfort was destroyed.

Samuel DuVal was born in Gloucester County, Virginia, probably in Ware Parish where his father lived, in 1714. Nothing is known of Samuel DuVal's early life; however, in 1746, the vestry of the adjoining parish of Petsworth decided to build a new glebe house and in the records of a meeting of the vestry held August 1, 1746, the following entry

appears:

"Ordered that the church warden enter into bond with Mr. Samuel DuVal to build a Glebe House pursuant to the last order of the vestry."

On Sept. 23, 1748, the vestry ordered that the "Balance Left in Mr. Thos. Stubbs' hands be paid Mr. Samuel DuVal as also the two shillings a head levied in the year 1747." Thus it seems that at this early period, Samuel DuVal, like his father, was an architect and builder.

By a deed dated March 3, 1745, and recorded in "Deed Book 1744-48", Henrico County, Virginia, the consideration being described as "120 pounds in current money of Virginia":

*Samuel Tscheffely conveyed to "Samuel DuVal of the County of King William" a tract of land containing 300 acres, lying on "a branch of Shoccoe Creek," etc.*

The description of this land mentions Captain James Cocke's land, land of Frances Chumbley and Obediah Smith, John Stone's branch, Gilly Murraine's Land, Widow Cannon's pasture, Cannon's branch, and Col. Wm. Byrd's line. By a deed dated January 4, 1755, and recorded in "Deeds, Wills, Etc.", of Henrico County 1750-1767, Capt. James Cocke conveyed to "Samuel DuVal, Gentleman, of the Parish and County of Henrico" a tract of 110 acres adjoining the land just described, these two tracts of more than 400 acres becoming his home "Mt. Comfort", just north of the (then) town of Richmond. At present nearly all of this plantation is within the corporate limits of Richmond, the suburb of Chestnut Hill, now a part of Highland Park, being on a part of the original "Mt. Comfort" tract.

In 1752 Samuel DuVal obtained a grant of 1,250 acres in Lunenburg County, Va. (Records Virginia Land Office, Book 32, page 3) and it is doubtless this land that is mentioned in the following extract from the "Virginia Gazette" for March 24, 1755:

*Runaway negro from Saml. DuVal's plantation, Flat Rock Creek, Lunenburg Co., negro named Porringer, speaks pretty good English. Has been in county 3 years.*

In 1758 he purchased from Thomas Owen 495 acres in Henrico County, and in 1778 he obtained from William Amonet 100 acres of Falling Creek, Chesterfield County, with all coal pits, minerals, mines, and so on, the price being 3,000 pounds. In 1779 50 acres of the latter tract was conveyed to his sons, William and Samuel, and the other moiety is referred to in his will.

Samuel DuVal was one of the Gentlemen Justices for the Henrico Court for many years, and his name appears on the early Order Books as a party plaintiff or defendant in many cases. On November 3, 1755, while a member of the Court, he took the prescribed oath and was commissioned coroner of the county (O.B. 1755-1762, p.6). On May 4, 1761, he took the oath of a Justice of the Peace in Chancery (O.B. 1755-1762, p.498).

It was probably about the time of the purchase of the "Mt. Comfort" tract (1745) that Samuel DuVal and Lucy Claiborne were married. She was a daughter of William Claiborne IV of "Romancoke", King William County, and by this marriage Samuel DuVal became allied with a family of great prominence in the political life of the State. His interest in affairs of government and his participation in the public activities of the day may have been due, in part, to the political background and associations brought to the union by Lucy Claiborne.

The exact date that Samuel and Lucy DuVal moved to Henrico County and built the "Mt. Comfort" estate is not known, but it must have been shortly after 1745. In Feb. of 1752, the General Assembly enacted:

*That from and after the passage of this act, the Honorable Peter Randolph, esq., William Byrd, esq., William Randolph, Bowler Cocke, the younger, Richard Randolph, Thomas Atchison, Samuel Gleadone, Samuel DuVal, and John Pleasants, gentlemen, be constituted and appointed trustees for the said town (Richmond), with power to lay off streets, establish building regulations and settle boundary disputes ("Hening's Statutes at Large", Vol. VI, page 281). He held this position for many years, for in 1773, when the powers of the trustees were enlarged to include the establishment of a public quay, landings, wharves and cranes, he was one of the number (Hening, Vol. VIII, page 655).*

In May, 1779, the General Assembly decided to remove the seat of government from Williamsburg to Richmond, and in preparation for this move, provided for the appointment of five directors of public buildings to prepare temporary offices for General Assembly and Courts of Justice (Hening, Vol. IX, page 85). In May, 1780, the seat of government

having been transferred to Richmond, an act was passed by the General Assembly providing for enlarging the city of Richmond, locating public squares and a market, widening streets, improving navigation in Shockoe Creek, and so on, and naming Thomas Jefferson, Archibald Cary, Robert Carter Nicholas, Richard Adams, Edmund Randolph, Turner Southall, Robert Goode, James Buchanan, and Samuel DuVal, directors with full authority to carry out the provisions of the act. (Hening Vol. IX, page 317)

Also in May of the year 1780, a tract of land in Buckingham County was surveyed for Samuel DuVal, which was later granted to him, and upon which his son would build the second "Mt. Comfort". (See original land grant previous pages).

Samuel DuVal was an Episcopalian and in his Biography he is termed a merchant in Richmond, a Gentleman farmer, and a man of Affairs. He was a member of the House of Burgesses from Henrico County from 1773 to 1776; was a member of the first Virginia Convention which assembled in Williamsburg, August 1, 1774, and also of the second Convention which met in Richmond March 20, 1775; and in the same year served on the Committees of Safety and Correspondence for both Richmond and Henrico County.

After "Curl's" Church was moved to Richmond and became St. John's Church on what is now known as Church Hill, he was an active communicant, and in 1752 he was elected to the vestry where he served for many years. The County Vestry consisted of twelve of the most prominent as well as substantial men of the Parish, and divided with the Court the responsibility of public welfare of their respective counties. All marriages, births, deaths, and other important matters of note were recorded in the Parish Books. The tithes were exacted for the support of the Church and care of the poor. It is most likely that Samuel DuVal now lies under one of the many unidentified tombstones in St. John's Churchyard - stones which have lost their inscriptions through the weathering of the years.

The "Mt. Comfort" of Richmond was a typical Virginia plantation home, built substantially of brick and looking down from its elevation on the busy little town lying along Shockoe Creek, and the center of much social and political activity. Washington and Jefferson were among its guests. Its site with its spacious gardens is now the scene of paved streets and substantial homes.

Like many Virginia Gentlemen of his day, Samuel DuVal was a lover of fine horses, and in a list of the thirty nine most noted English horses brought to Virginia before the Revolution, Samuel DuVal owned one of them. The horse was "Silver Eye", "imported by Samuel DuVal of Henrico in 1750". (Va. Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 34, page 368)

On the Henrico County tax books for 1783 Samuel DuVal is listed with twenty-seven slaves, and Mrs. Lucy DuVal with four.

Samuel DuVal died at "Mt. Comfort" in 1784, his will being proved in Henrico County, and his son Claiborne DuVal qualified as executor. Another son, William DuVal, was security, giving bond in the sum of 5,000 pounds. This will is as follows:

WILL OF SAMUEL DUVAL OF MT. COMFORT IN RICHMOND  
Henrico County Court, Will Booke 1, p. 122

*In the name of God, Amen. I, Samuel DuVal, Gentleman, of the County of Henrico, being of sound mind, but calling to my memory the uncertainty and mortality of man, think it proper to dispose of the estate wherewith Providence hath been pleased to bless me, in a manner and form following, viz:*

*First: It is my wish and desire, that the Marriage Contract or settlement entered into between me and Philip Tabb, Gentleman, in trust for my beloved wife, Lucy DuVal, shall be strictly and literally adhered to and fulfilled by my executors herein named.*

*I devise my lands in Henrico County on which are coal pits, known by the name of Deep Run Coal Pits, to my sons William, Samuel, Daniel, Philip, and Claiborne DuVal, to be held by them, as tenants in Common, to them and their joint heirs, executors, administrators, and assigns forever.*

*It is my will and desire that the one moiety which I am possessed of in and to the Coal Pits in Chesterfield County shall be sold, and do hereby devise them to my Executors to be sold, and the money arising from the sale to be equally divided between my sons Daniel, Philip and Claiborne.*

*I devise unto my son Daniel DuVal, my Tuchahoe Tract of Land, containing about four*

hundred acres more or less, to him, and his heirs forever, and it is my request that the Deed or conveyance which should of right been made me by the Executors of my Brother Benjamin, dec'd, be by them and the heirs of the said Benjamin, made to my son, Daniel.

I do hereby devise to my son, Claiborne DuVal the tract of land purchased by me of Thomas Owen, situate in Henrico County, containing five hundred acres, more or less, to him and his heirs forever.

I give and bequeath to my daughter, Polly & her Heirs & assigns forever a negro girl named Black Bett, with her increase.

I also give to my daughter Philadelphia a negro girl named Sylvia with her increase, to her and her heirs forever.

It is moreover to my will and desire that my executors give to the said Polly and Philadelphia a good feather bed and furniture each.

I do further bequeath to my daughters eight Negro men, two women, two boys and four girls, being the best of my negroes, to be equally divided between them, respect being had to age & sex, to them and their heirs forever, and I do moreover give to each of my daughters Polly and Philadelphia five hundred pounds to be paid to them within twelve months after my decease and that the sum of one thousand pounds which my son William, by bond is bound to pay to my estate within that time is hereby appropriated to the paying off of the said legacies. Provided never the less that should either of my daughters (before named) die under the age of twenty-one years or before marriage, then it is my will that the estate hereby bequeathed to her shall be equally divided among the whole surviving children (my daughter Lucy Pope, included).

I devise unto my son Samuel a lot of my land in the town of Beverley, to him and his heirs forever, also my gold neck buckle.

And it is further my wish and desire that the legacies or estate bequeathed to my daughters shall in no sort be subjected to the payment of my debts and whatever sums of money shall be due me at my decease, or may thereafter become due, shall be applied to the payment of my debts, except the thousand pounds disposed of as above which will become due from my son William.

I give and devise all the rest of my estate, real or personal, not herein already disposed of to be equally divided among all my sons their heirs and assigns forever. It is my will and desire that the Negroes already lent to my sons by me, be valued, & considered, as part of my estate, reserving to them or either of them the privilege of keeping the said slaves at the appraised value, so as to make the share of each as equal as circumstances may admit of.

Lastly, I do hereby constitute my sons William, Samuel, Daniel, Philip, & Claiborne DuVal joint Executors of this my last Will and Testament: and I do hereby utterly revoke all former wills by me made, and desiring that my estate be not appraised, save as above.

I do declare, publish and confirm this to be my last Will & Testament.

In testimony of which I do hereunto set my hand and affix my seal, the 24 day of January, 1783.

Samuel DuVal (Seal)

Signed, sealed and published in presence of

Robert Lawson

Zach. Rowland

Ph. Southall

Jno. Gunn

J. Pope, Jr.

N Pope, Jr.

#### CODICIL TO WILL OF SAMUEL DUVAL

I, Samuel DuVal, do by this codicil alter and revoke this my will so far as it relates to my son Saml. DuVal and all the estate which by this will was devised and bequeathed to him, I do devise and bequeath to my sons William and Claiborne DuVal in trust for the use and purposes hereafter declared to-wit: to permit and suffer the said Samuel DuVal to enjoy the said estate during his life for the support of him and his children, but not to

be liable for the payment of his debts, and after the death of the said Samuel DuVal, in trust to and for the benefit of all the children which my said son Samuel now has or may hereafter have to them and their heirs as tenants incommon.

I also give to my said daughter Polly DuVal a Negro girl named Milly, daughter of Bet to her and her heirs. In witness and confirmation hereof, I have hereunto set my hand and affixed my seal this 23rd day of August, 1783.

Samuel DuVal (Seal)

J. Pope, Jr.  
N. Pope, Jr.  
Zach. Rowland.

Proved March 1st., 1784, oaths of Zachariah Rowland, Philip Southall, & John Gunn, as to will, & oaths of John Pope, Jr. and Nat. Pope, Jr., witnesses to Codicil.

Claiborne DuVal qualified as Executor, with William DuVal as security - bond lbs. 5000. Liberty reserved to other Executors named to join in said probate when they think fit.

On June 7th, 1825, William DuVal qualified as Executor with John A Trent, Security - \$500.00 ("Claiborne DuVal, the only qualified Executor to the will being dead.")

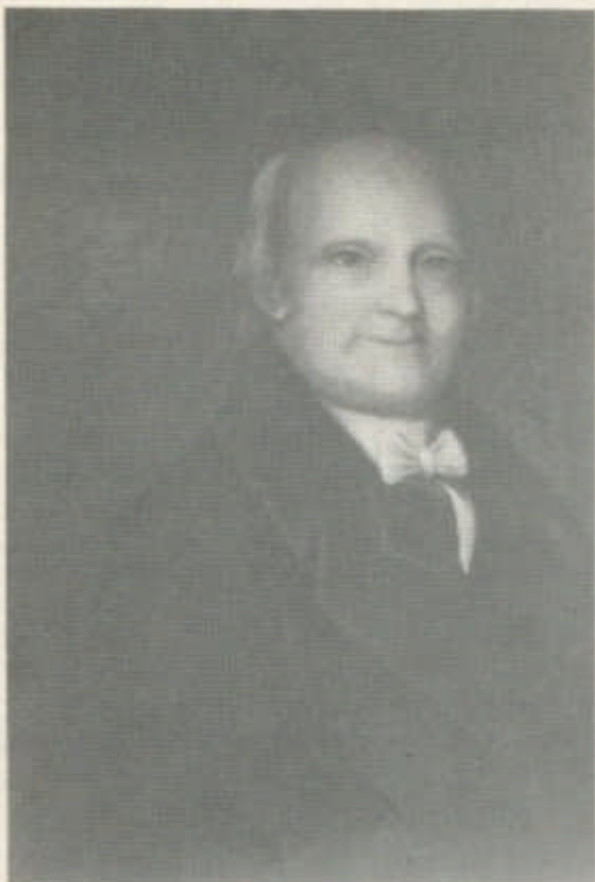
Recorded in "Will Book I", page 122, Henrico County Court.

Samuel DuVal of Mt. Comfort, Henrico County, Virginia, son of Daniel DuVal, the Huguenot Refugee of 1701, married about 1745, Lucy Claiborne, the daughter of William Claiborne IV of "Romancoke", King William County, Va.

Children of this union were:

1. William DuVal, b. 1748 d. 1842; Major Rev., m 1st: Ann Pope, of Louisa Co., married 2nd: Susan B. Christian, Amherst County, Va. (See next page)
2. Samuel Shepherd DuVal, m. Anne Everard Bolling. He was an officer in the Rev. after which he traveled to Kentucky.
3. Daniel DuVal, Maj. Rev., m. Mary Brooke. married 2nd: Catherine Caro, Mobile, Ala.
4. Philip DuVal, m. Elizabeth Christian, sister of the above Susan Brown Christian. He had an estate in Buckingham County where his brother, Major William DuVal also lived. Later traveled to Kentucky, finally moving to Florida where his nephew had been appointed Governor.
5. Claiborne DuVal, Died before 1825. He went to Kentucky to live. Records not avail.
6. Mary (called "Polly") DuVal, m Colonel Nathaniel Pope IV
7. Philadelphia DuVal, m. Major Andrew Dunscomb.
8. Lucy DuVal, m. John Pope. Lucy and her husband moved to Georgia.

These three Pope marriages, were brothers and sisters, the children of Samuel DuVal and of Nathaniel Pope III of Pope's Creek, Westmoreland County.



MAJOR WILLIAM DUVAL

from an original protrait--courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. E. B. Horner, Lynchburg, Virginia.



SUSAN BROWN CHRISTIAN

William DuVal's second wife, from an original portrait--courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Charles H. Leys, Lynchburg, Virginia

The above two portraits of William DuVal and his wife were painted while Major DuVal was living at Mt. Comfort and in his old age.

Since Major DuVal died in 1842 at a very old age the paintings were probably made about 1810-1830 time period.



MAJOR WILLIAM DUVAL

from a miniature portrait owned by Mrs. Leyborne of Lexington, Kentucky. Photo made from the out-of-print book "DuVal's of Kentucky from Virginia" by Buchanan.

MAJOR WILLIAM DUVAL

b. 1748, d. 1842

Richmond, Virginia

William Duval, known in Richmond, Virginia, as Major William DuVal of Revolutionary fame, also as a prominent lawyer of Virginia, was born at his parent's home, Mt. Comfort, on Sept. 4, 1748. He was raised in Richmond and when a very young man, he was sent to study law in Philadelphia, and at William & Mary College under Thomas Jefferson's law teacher, Mr. George Wythe.

While still a very young man, William DuVal traveled to the Shenandoah valley, where he met and married Ann Pope. Regarding his own courtship and marriage to Miss Pope, William DuVal's great-granddaughter, Elizabeth Paschal, writes in her volume, *My Beloved South* in which she says:

*My great-grandfather, Major William DuVal, of Richmond, Virginia, was an officer in the Revolution and gave goodly sums toward the cause. He married, at the age of 20, a Miss Pope of Virginia, an heiress, of whom he made a very sudden and theatrical conquest, not later than five minutes after discovering her.*

*She, a fair haired, dimpled beauty, wearing a silken hood, green marino gown, little calf-skin shoes with silver buckles, a black apron and openwork mittens, was walking one golden afternoon in October through a primeval forest near the Shenandoah. In the angle of her rounded arm lay a big ball of worsted, and the sun slanting down on her glancing needles, made diamond brilliance with their quick activity.*

*Great-grandfather, returning from the chase, young, handsome, good looking, suddenly beheld this vision. He wore the Buckskins of the Virginia hunter and carried his day's trophy of wild turkey, ducks, and rabbits, over his shoulder. His rifle held just one bullet.*

*Quickly advancing to the astonished young lady, he took off his bear-skin cap and making a bow so low that the turkey touched the ground, he said: "Madam, permit Me!" Then lifting the worsted ball from its envied resting place, he tossed it high in the air, and lifting the rifle to his shoulder, shot it through the heart, and, as it came down, caught it and placed it, smoking with powder, and with love, in the pocket of her apron.*

*The dimples all appeared, and she said:*

*"Sir, you can shoot, and, hit the mark."*

*He bowed again, and answered: "So can Cupid, and, I hope, glancing at her fluttering heart-in the right direction."*

*The young lady, a family connection, whom he had not met before, was visiting an aunt on a nearby plantation. He walked home with her in the mellow sunshine of an Indian summer afternoon, through the wonderful scarlet and gold of a Virginia early autumn, leaving on the door-step of the plantation house, his day's trophy of the hunt, as a first love offering.*

*The next day he appeared, brave in satin small clothes and lace ruffles, his fair hair tied in a queue with silken ribbon, and offered himself, with proper dignity, as suitor for her hand. A few months later they were married, on June 8, 1772.*

*"I have an idea," continues Elizabeth Paschal, "that my great-grandmother was the more attractive of the two (the Popes are an intellectual family) and when she died his grief was intense; though they had had many happy years together."*

In 1770, William DuVal's uncle (His father's brother), Benjamin DuVal of (lower) Tuckahoe, Henrico County, died, leaving a young son, five year old Benjamin DuVal II. On Sept. 4, 1774, (misc. County Records, Henrico County) William DuVal was made guardian for his young cousin, and gave bond as follows:

*Bond of William DuVal atty, Samuel DuVal, Gent. Richard Adams, and Nathaniel Wilkerson, in penalty of Lbs. 2,000, dated Sept. 4, 1774, conditioned on above bound William DuVal paying to said Ben DuVal, orphan of Ben DuVal dec'd, all Estate, etc., due said orphan, as soon as he shall become of age.*

*Signed WILLIAM DUVAL, Atty.  
and SAMUEL DUVAL*

When this orphan became twenty, in 1785, he married Elizabeth Warrock, and not being of age, William DuVal, as guardian, gives consent. The consent was also signed by Samuel DuVal, his uncle, and Andrew Dunscomb, who also had married his cousin, Philadelphia DuVal.

William DuVal was an active young patriot and enlisted in the spring of 1775 and served 8 or 9 days under Colonel Patrick Henry in the Virginia Troops. Colonel Henry commanded various independent volunteer companies, which marched with him to take possession of the gun powder in the magazine at Williamsburg. Colonel Henry received information that Governor Dunmore had conveyed the powder on board the Fowey a sloop of war, on board which the governor had retired. Colonel Henry and his troops halted there and sent an officer and some men to Francis Corbin, the King's Receiver General. Colonel Henry obtained payment for the gunpowder, which was the property of Virginia, in the amount of 300 pounds, which he paid into the Treasury of Virginia. Then Colonel Henry returned with his troops to Henrico.

Early in June 1775, William DuVal served as Lieutenant in Captain Thomas Prosser's Virginia Company. They were ordered to March to Williamsburg with other troops to defend Williamsburg and the lower county from the ravages of the British. The company continued in this service for about two months.

In July of 1775 an ordinance was passed to raise sixteen battalions of minute men. Henrico, Hanover, Louisa and Goochland were to raise one battalion; one-third to enlist for three years, one third to enlist for two years, and the remaining third to enlist for one year. Delegates from the committees of the four counties met at the Rocky Mills in Hanover County, and among other officers, appointed William DuVal to the rank of Captain. In the fall of 1775, by order of the Committee of Safety, William DuVal and his company marched to Hampton, Virginia, to defend the eastern part of the state. William DuVal continued in service there for about five months until the spring of 1776 when they were sent home.

In January of 1781 William DuVal volunteered as a common soldier and with other volunteers from the upper part of Hanover, marched to Richmond to assist in driving Arnold and his troops from that city. They reached Richmond on January 6th and found Arnold had retreated to Charles City. DuVal and his troops camped at Malvern Hills in the lower part of Henrico County. DuVal was in service about two weeks following the retreat of Arnold to Portsmouth. They marched with so much speed they had neither tents nor blankets and suffered greatly in the cold January weather. Baron Steuben commanded this expedition against Arnold.

After the war William DuVal was given the title of Major, by which he was known for the rest of his life. William DuVal is also recorded as having given large sums of money and supplies to further the cause of the revolution. (Above information from Rev. War Pension claim #S-8362 found at the state library in Richmond.)

In the early days, as they could afford it, young men bought lands in the new counties and William DuVal was a very prosperous man. He built homes in Louisa & Buckingham Counties as well as in Richmond. He is also called plantation owner, and must have lived for some time in Louisa County, representing it in the House of Delegates in 1782. At this time he held 940 acres in Louisa County, and in a power of attorney to "Samuel Gist", merchant in London, he is described as "William DuVal Merchant, of the County of Louisa."

On Dec., 1789, the first United States Court held in Virginia, was held in the Capitol Building in Richmond, the Honorable Cyrus Griffith presiding. William Marshall was appointed clerk, protom and James Innis, German baker, William DuVal and John Marshall, Esquires, were admitted as council in said court.

Under a Legislative Act Governor Page appointed the following commissioners to divide the city into wards: William DuVal, Robert Mitchell, Meriwether Jones, Lewis Harvie, and John H. Fouchee. One of the principal streets in Richmond still bears the name Fouchee, which divides the city, east from west, and there is, in the northeast section of Richmond, a DuVal Street also, and it is said that the property of the home of Major William DuVal, at Sixth and Grace Streets, ran back to, or included, this street. There is also an entire section of Richmond known as "DuVal's Addition."

Still further to the northeast, over the ravine, then occupied by the "small river" of Shockoe Creek, up which at one time boats plied to Byrd's Warehouse, up on the heights beyond where now stands Chestnut Hill and Highland Park, two of Richmond's prosperous suburbs, was the large and elegant estate of "Mt. Comfort", the home of Samuel DuVal. Mt. Comfort was said to have been the first brick house in Richmond, and created much attention. It was in this brick house that Major William DuVal was born.

Major DuVal's home was later at the corner of Sixth and Grace Streets, where Miller & Rhodes department store now stands, and was probably where he located soon after his marriage to Ann Pope. This home was where Governor William Pope DuVal and General John Pope DuVal were born.

Samuel Mordecai, in his "Richmond in Days Gone By" describes it: "*The home of Major William DuVal, a double-winged, triple-porticoed frame house,*" and he adds, of Major DuVal himself: "*He was one of the last of our cocked hats, satin shorts and bag wigs.*" He then explains what is meant by a bag wig for the benefit of later generations: saying that it was the hair caught back into a knob or queue, and slipped into a long narrow silk bag, something like a lady's reticule, and tied close to the head with a large ribbon bow, the club of hair hanging between the shoulders.

The DuVals, as a rule, were hospitable people, and the home of Major William DuVal was always open, and to many notable friends - Jefferson and Washington, who speaks of him as "my very good friend, Major DuVal" and Chancellor George Wythe, who lived just diagonally across the street. It was none other than William DuVal, friend and lawyer, who, when Mr. Wythe was poisoned in 1806 by a young nephew who expected to gain by his will, was sent for to draw up a new will. Mr. Wythe lived long enough to dictate a new will which entirely disowned the ungrateful and wicked young man - this being the only punishment he received by law. William DuVal and Thomas Jefferson, both being taught law by Mr. George Wythe corresponded to each other about this incident. The letters and an excerpt from "Thomas Jefferson, An Intimate History" concerning the poisoning of Wythe are as follows:

Beginning at the bottom of page 389 and continuing to the bottom of page 391.

As follows:

No death during Jefferson's presidency brought him the peculiar kind of agony that came with the murder of his old law teacher George Wythe. On June 4, 1806, he received a letter from William Duval in Richmond saying that Wythe was dying of poisoning, that his free mulatto boy named Michael Brown was already dead, and that arsenic had been found in the bedroom of Wythe's grandnephew, George Sweney. Duval, who had first been told that Wythe was ill of cholera, wrote in horror, "We had no idea that Sweney had poisoned the whole family." The "whole family" consisted of Wythe, a widower since the death of his second wife in 1787, a mulatto housekeeper named Lydia Broadnax, and her son Michael Brown. All had been poisoned when they ate strawberries and drank coffee which has been liberally dosed with arsenic.

Wythe, who had no children of his own by his two wives, but had befriended his grandnephew "like a son," had written a will on April 20, 1803, in which he left his house and a good deal of his property to Lydia Broadnax and another former slave named Benjamin. He had left half his bank stock to the young mulatto Michael, with instructions that Thomas Jefferson be the executor in charge of his "maintenance, education & other benefit." The remainder of his bank stock he willed to Sweney, with the provision that he would get it all should Michael Brown die before him. The boy died of the poison; his mother survived. Wythe lived long enough to assert that he had been murdered, and to cut Sweney out of his will altogether. By the time Jefferson was told all these details, Sweney was in jail not only charged with murder but also with having forged several checks in Wythe's name.

Duval described Lydia Broadnax to Jefferson as follows: "Never had a man a more faithful servant, her attention to Mr. Wythe was incessant and always studied to please him." "Michael Brown," he said, "was humble and good--he had caught the suavity of his Master's manners." When the dying Wythe heard of Michael's death, Duval said, "he made a long Breath--and pathetically said--Poor Boy." Duval sent Jefferson a copy of Wythe's will, which as it turned out included not only a request that he serve as executor for Michael Brown's education, but also a bequest to Jefferson of his two silver cups, his gold-headed cane, and his entire superb library.

The distraught Jefferson wrote back, "Such an instance of depravity had been hitherto known to us only in the fables of the poets. . . .He was my ancient master, my earliest & best friend. . . .I had reserved with fondness for the day of my retirement, the hope of inducing him to pass much of his time with me." Whether Jefferson noted with more than passing interest the date of Wythe's will one cannot know. April 20, 1803, was relatively recent; it represented that period in Jefferson's life when he had weathered the worst of the Callender publicity but had not repudiated his slave mistress or her children either by public pronouncement or by private deed, such as sending them away from Monticello. Jefferson must have surmised, with many others in Virginia once the details of the will were circulated, that Lydia Broadnax was almost certainly Wythe's concubine and Michael Brown his son. That the President believed that Wythe had waited in writing his will till he was certain he could count on Jefferson's support for his son seems likely. Jefferson wrote with regret of the boy's death to Duval,

". . . not only for the affliction it must have cost Mr. Wythe, but also it has deprived me of an object for the attentions which would have gratified me unceasingly with the constant recollection & execution of the wishes of my friend." He asked Duval for a portrait of Wythe, and when told that Lydia Broadnax had a profile engraving he asked for a copy. The housekeeper, as it turned out, kept the copy, and insisted that Jefferson be given the original.

Sweney's trial was the sensation of Richmond. For a white man to leave a house and grounds to his mulatto housekeeper, and bank stock to her yellow son, and to ask none other than the President of the United States to be responsible for the boy's education seemed such an obvious advertisement of the boy's paternity that it left many of the citizens of Richmond aghast. Edmund Randolph and William Wirt rushed to defend Sweney, and since under Virginia law no black could testify against a white man, he was acquitted. He was found guilty of forging checks in his uncle's name, but even this charge was dropped on appeal. The indictment against Sweney for poisoning Michael Brown "was quashed without a trial." Thus the whole legal paraphernalia of Virginia law was perverted to absolve the forger and murderer and to dramatize the legal sanction of the murder of a man who would so advertise his miscegenation. The fact that Wythe was one of Virginia's most distinguished sons, and a signer of the Declaration of Independence, only served to make it more imperative that his gesture be repudiated and buried in the most expeditious fashion possible.

The legal exoneration of George Wythe Sweney was also a public warning to Thomas Jefferson. Nothing could have furnished more dramatic evidence of the hatred of Virginia whites for the man who conveyed by public or legal gesture his acceptance of a yellow child. If Jefferson periodically cherished fantasies that in time there might be some kind of equality for Sally Hemings' children, this again would have jolted him back to reality. It is clear enough that there was only one possible solution for these children if they were to have a free and even decent life; they must be somehow schooled and permitted to pass into white society. That this had already happened to Sally's eldest son has been suggested in a earlier chapter. In 1806 when Wythe was poisoned, Sally Hemings was thirty-three, Jefferson sixty-three. That he was forced ever more certainly into the conflicts and ambiguities of silence concerning his slave family is increasingly obvious. Still, there are faint echoes and footprints in the records.

Note: The following letters are reproduced exactly as written and no effort has been made to edit out errors.

June 4, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Va. to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, D.C.  
ALS 2 p. 4<sup>o</sup> rec'd June 7

Richmond June 4<sup>th</sup> 1806

Worthy Sir,

Geo W. Sweeny who lived with Mr. Wythe was committed to gaol on the 27<sup>th</sup> of May last for forging Six Checks on the Bank of Virginia on the 25<sup>th</sup> of May. Mr. Wythe was taken with a Cholera Morbus on the 26<sup>th</sup> & 27 all the Rest of the Family were seized with the same violent disorder on the 27. We had no idea that Sweeny had poisoned the whole Family--On Sunday Morning June the first last Michael the Mulatto Boy Died--Yellow Arsenac was found in Sweeny's Room and many other strong Circumstances concurred to induce a believe he had poisoned the whole Family--As a Magistrate. I requested four eminent Physicians to open the body of the Boy--They did so, from the Inflammation on the Stomach & Bowels they said that it was the kind of Inflammation produced by Poison. Our Worthy Friend is still alive--he has suffered greatly--on Whitsunday Evening, he told me, he never suffered more in his Life--that in the morning he attended to his Official Duties, the Chancery Court being in Session, that he ate his Breakfast as usual, that about Nine O'Clock in the Morning he was attacked in the most violent Manner & had rose from his Bed, Forty Times, to evacuate the Feces--I had Doct<sup>rs</sup> McClurg (?) Currie & McCan to attend him. They pronounced his Death to be certain in a day or two--They say that his Constitution was remarkably Strong for a person of his age--Thus by the hands of a youth to whom he was kinder than a Father is about to be taken from us, the most virtuous and illustrious of our Citizens--one among the best of Men--whom even Death, can't terrify, or alarm.

I am Yr. Mo. Obst. Servt.  
W<sup>m</sup> DuVal

docketed by Jefferson "Duval Wm. Richmd, June 4.06 recd June 7"

June 8, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Virginia, to Thomas Jefferson, Washington, D.C.  
ALS 1 p 4<sup>o</sup> rec'd June 12

Richmond June 8th 1806

Sir

Our venerable great and pious Friend departed this Life about half an Hour after Nine of the Clock this Morning--Doct<sup>rs</sup> Foushes (?) Currie Greenhow McClurg & McCan opened his Chest & Bowels, there was considerable in Flamation in the Stomach. It is strongly suspected that he & Michael Brown were poisoned with Yellow Arsenic by Geo. W. Sweeny--On Thursday he said I am murdered but mentioned no name--The day before Yesterday he said Let me die righteous--he during his severe complaint displayed uncommon Patience & Fortitude--He called on the Lord Jesus Christ to have mercy on him--

The Governour & Council have desired that his Body shall be conveyed to the Capitol. Tomorrow at four O'Clock in the Afternoon his Funeral Oration will be pronounced by Mr. Wm Montford, who lived with Mr. Wythe formerly, and is a Member of our Council of State. When Mr. Wythe's will shall be proven I shall enclose you a Copy of the Will with the Codicils--I believe he enclosed to you a Copy of it.

I am, with great Respect  
Yr. obt. Servt.  
Wm DuVal

docketed by Jefferson "Duval W<sup>m</sup>. Richmd June 8.06 recd June 12

June 14, 1806 Jefferson, Thomas, Washington to (William Duval) (Richmond, Va.)  
ALS polygraph copy 1 p. 40

Washington June 14.06

Sir:

Your letters of the 4<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup> inst. have been duly received, the last announcing the death of the venerable Mr. Wythe, than whom a purer character has never lived. his advanced years had left us little hope of retaining him much longer, and had his end been brought on by the ordinary decays of time and nature, altho, always a subject of regret, it would not have been aggravated by the horror of his falling by the hand of a parricide. such an instance of depravity has been hitherto known to us only in the fables of the poets. I thank you for the attention you have been so kind as to show in communicating to me the incidents of a case so interesting to my affections. he was my ancient master, my earliest & best friend; and to him I am indebted for first impressions [which have had the most salutary influence on the course of my life. I had reserved with fondness, for the day of my retirement, the hope of inducing him to pass much of his time with me; it would have been a great pleasure to recollect with him first opinions on the new state of things which arose soon after my acquaintance with him; to pass in review the long period which has elapsed since that time, and to see how far those opinions had been affected by experience & reflection, or continued and acted on with self-approbation; but this may yet be the enjoyment of another state of being. You seem to suppose Mr. Wythe has inclosed to me a copy of his will, but this was not the case. I hope he had time to alter it's dispositions as to him who has brought it prematurely into force. Accept my salutations & assurances of esteem & respect

Th Jefferson

Mr Duval

June 19, 1806 Duval, William (Richmond, (Va.) to Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C.)  
ALS 2pp. 4<sup>o</sup> rec'd June 21

Richmond June the 19<sup>th</sup> 1806.

Sir

As soon as I can obtain an Authenticated Copy of the Will & Codicils of Mr. Geo. Wythe dec<sup>d</sup> shall enclose them. I have twice applied to the Clerk for them-Michael being dead, I shall entrust as much as related to your self-

"I give my Books and small Philosophical  
"Apparatus to Thomas Jefferson President of the  
"United States of America a Legacy considered  
"Abstractile, perhaps not deserving a place  
"In his Musaum, but estimated by my  
"Good Will to him the most valuable to  
"him of anything "which I have power  
"to bestow.

dated January 19 1806

Codicil dated February 24<sup>th</sup> 1806

"I give to my Friend Thomas  
"Jefferson my Silver Cups and Gold Headed Cane.--

Be pleased to appoint an Agent here, to receive the above legacies, a Catalogue of the Books & a will be delivered to him--The House where Mr. Wythe lived will be rented, I expect in a few days. I shall with pleasure aid you in having them sent where ever you may direct. I think they are worth about £500--

Geo. W. Sweeny was examined yesterday before Col. Edward Carrington Mayor of this city, on the charge of having murdered Mr. Wythe & Michael Brown the Freed Boy, two other Magistrates attended the Examination of Witnesses, which one near Five Hours. They were of the Opinion that Michael, was poisoned by Geo. W. Sweeny. On Monday next a Court Examination is to be held in this city. G. W. Sweeny was remanded to gaol--

G. W. Sweeny's Case in some Respects resembles that of Capt. John Donellan for the willful murder of Sir Theodosius Edward Allisley Broughton Bart. At the Assizes at

Warwick on the 30<sup>th</sup> day of March 1781 before the Honble. Mr. Justice Buller who was  
(convicted & Executed for poisoning the Brother of Mrs. Donnellan--I do not recollect to  
have seen it in any of the Reporters. But is published at large in the 68 vol. of the  
British Universal Magazine for Jany., Feby, March, April, May & June of 1781. be-  
ginning at Page 205.

You may suppose that the Conduct of Sweeny has excited the most lively sympathys  
for the deceased and detestation at the supposed Culprit--Pardon me for dwelling so  
long on a Subject, that must be painful to your feeling.

I am  
with great Respect  
Yr. mo. obt. Servt.  
W. DuVal

docketed in Jefferson's hand "Duval, Wm. Richmd. June 19. 06 recd.

June 22, 1806 Jefferson, Thomas Washington to (William) Duval (Richmond, Va.)  
ALS polygraph copy 1 p. 4<sup>o</sup>

Washington June 22.06

Dear Sir

Yours of the 19<sup>th</sup> is received & anticipates the answers to mine of the same date, respecting the will of our deceased friend, and the freed boy Michael Brown. I sincerely regret the loss of the latter not only for the affliction it must have cost Mr. Wythe in his last moments, but also as it has deprived me of an object of attentions which would have gratified me unceasingly with the constant recollection & execution of the wishes of my friend. does there exist a portrait of Mr. Wythe? I fear not, if there be one I presume it must be with some member of the family of Maj. Taliaferro his father in law.

Mr. Jefferson of Richmond will receive from you the bequests of my venerable friend & take off of your hands the trouble & expense of packing etc. I salute you with esteem & respect.

Th Jefferson

Mr. Duval

June 29, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Va. to Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C.)  
ALS 2pp. 4<sup>o</sup> rec'd July 3

Richmond June 29<sup>th</sup> 1806

Dear Sir

Your favors of the 14<sup>th</sup> 19<sup>th</sup> & 22<sup>d</sup> Instant have been regularly received the last letter I got from the Post Office yesterday.

I believe that the great and good Mr. Wythe loved You as sincerely as if you had been his Son, his Attachment was founded on his thorough knowledge of you, personally--some years ago he mentioned that if there was an honest Man in America, T.J. was that person, every thing that he said has been verified. About fourteen years ago my intimacy with that good Man commenced & continued untill his last moments. he taught me to be rich and contented, when my income had been greatly reduced, he taught me there could be no happiness, unless we endeavoured to love, that great being, who made the universal supremely--he was pleased with a Mr. John Courtney a pious Baptist of this City--Mr. Courtney informed me. that some time ago, Mr. Wythe told him, that every Night & Morning he addressed the great Creator--some years ago our venerable Friend told me, he believed he never put his head on his Pillow, but that he said the Lord's Prayer--his great desire, he told me, was to be holy and innocent--he thought that Faith without good Actions, were of no avail. He loved every good Man--He thought that God is no respecter "of persons. But in every Nation he that feareth him" and waketh righteousness, is accepted with him.

I think he loved his God with all his heart, and with all his Soul, and with all his Mind, and with all his strength. Charity, as described by high Authority seemed to be ingrafted in his Soul--Happy would he have been, had he been spared to have conversed with you, on the changes, if any had been made of Opinions & things that Experience & Reflection had confirmed or affected, & to have spent much of his Time with you--Resignation is a duty We owe to him that cannot err--but I still feel, as if I had lost half of myself--

When Mr. Wythe heard of the untimely death of Michael the Freed Boy- He made a long Breath-and pathetically said--Poor Boy--The Boy was humble and good, he had caught the Suavity of his Master's Manners.

The Picture of Mr. Wythe-I hope to obtain from Lydia Brodnax-she had it-never had a man a more faithful Servant-her Attention to Mr. Wythe, was incessant and always studied to please him.

I send you the whole of Mr. Wythe's Will & the Three Codicils which have been proven in the General Court of Virginia.

Mr. Geo. Jefferson is attending to your Books & small Phylosophical Apparatus & c. Mr. Ben DeVal has undertaken to pack up the latter.

I am with the highest Respect  
Yr. mo. obt. Servt.  
W<sup>m</sup> DuVal

NB In my next letter I shall state all the circumstances as proved agt G.W. Sweeney. The Court of Examination was unanimous touching his Guilt.

docketed "DuVal W<sup>m</sup> Richmd June 29.06 recd July 3."

July 12, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Va to (Thomas Jefferson) (Washington, D.C.)  
ALS 1 p. 4<sup>o</sup> rec'd July 16

Richmond July 12<sup>th</sup> 1806

Worthy Sir,

A Catalogue of the Books, the Small Phylosophical apparatus, with the two cups-<sup>s</sup> Goldheaded Cane, also Mr. Wythe's portrait are delivered to the Care of Mr. Geo. Jefferson. The Terrestrial Globe is missing, It is apprehended G.W.S. sold it-He sent last year several Books belonging to Mr. Wythe to Ven due (?). Have you the profile of Mr. Wythe in Miniature? If you have not sold Mr. Wythe's Watch, it was appraised to \$20- It is an Old Silver Watch. Mr. Wythe told me it kept good Time. The Seal & Key I suppose Cost about \$12. The Stone is a white Crystal found in Virginia it has engraved, the Initial Letters of his Name under which, are some Greek Characters, on the other side is his Coat of Arms--I did not know but the Seal might attract your Attention

I am Sir with the highest Esteeme.

Yr. Mo. obt. Servt.  
W<sup>m</sup> DuVal

docketed in TJ's hand "DuVal W<sup>m</sup> Richmd. July 12.06 recd July 16

July 17, 1806 Jefferson, Thomas Washington to William Duval (Richmond, Va.)  
ALS polygraph copy 1 p. 4<sup>o</sup>

Washington July 17.06

Dear Sir

Your favor of the 12<sup>th</sup> was received yesterday. I infer from its tenor that the seal, key & perhaps the Watch itself of Mr. Wythe are to be disposed of, if so, I will take them with desire, either at the appraised prices stated by you, or at greater prices at which they shall be estimated by any persons of skill whom you may chose to consult. Mr. Jefferson, has I expect by this time funds of mine in hand, out of which he will pay for these Articles on sight of this letter. I infer from a former letter that the portrait of Mr. Wythe was the property of Lydia Broadnax or, if not, doubtless it would be desired by some of his relations. I ask only that I borrow it that I may get it copied by Mr Peale & the original shall be safely returned. Accept my salutations and assurances of esteem & respect.

Th. Jefferson

William DuVal esq.

Nov. 21, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Va to Thomas Jefferson (Washington, D.C.)  
ALS 1 p. 4<sup>o</sup>

Richmond November 21<sup>st</sup> 1806

Sir

I have a profile of the venerable George Wythe taken by Mr. W. Bache in 1804 by an instrument he calls by the name of his patent Physiognstrace which profile much resembles that great and good Man, & Mr E. Deane, I have written to, who is a man of some immince as a portrait Limner to take a copy of, --Both of which I will leave with Mr. George Jefferson, that you may take either of them-

The profile you have, will show his appearance at that period of his Life, & the one I have, will exhibit a strong likeness of Ten Years before his untimely Death-

I was at the Sweet Springs when your letter of the 17 July was received here-The portrait of Mr. Wythe which you desire was inventoried and account for at the appraised value.

If you preferred the Original Lyddia would be contented with a profile copy- I know from what Mr. Wythe often said, that you were dearer to him than any Relation he had-that his attachment arose from that impulse that unite great Minds, the sincere Love of Virtue--

May providence long presume you to be a Blessing to our Country and an Example to all Nations

I am with sincere Respect  
Yr. obedient Servt.  
William DuVal

docketed in Jefferson's hand "Duval, W<sup>m</sup> Richm<sup>d</sup> Nov. 21 06 rec<sup>d</sup> Nov.

Dec. 4, 1806 Jefferson, Thomas Washington to William Duval (Richmond, Va.)  
ALS polygraph copy 1 p. 4

Washington Dec. 4.06

Dear Sir

Your favor of Nov. 21. has been duly received and I thank you for the offer of the profile of Mr. Wythe, every trace of whom will be dear to me. If you will be so good as to desire Mr. Jefferson to forward me either the original or the copy, as you please, it will be received with equal thankfulness. It should be rolled on a stick and not folded. the original of the other profile, after taking a copy, I had packed in a box addressed to yourself that it might be returned to Lydia with my thanks for the opportunity of copying it in the same box I put 2 folio volumes of Mr. Wythe's accounts which had come by mistake with his books. the box I directed to be forwarded to you. Accept my friendly salutations & assurances of great respect.

Th. Jefferson

W<sup>m</sup> DuVal, esq.

Dec. 10, 1806 Duval, William, Richmond, Va. to (Thomas Jefferson) (Washington, D.C.)  
ALS 1 p. 4 rec'd Dec. 14

Richmond December 10<sup>th</sup> 1806

Dear Sir,

I received your favor of the 4<sup>th</sup> Instant The original profile of our Friend Mr. George Wythe set in a plain neat Frame is this day delivered to Mr. George Jefferson to be conveyed to Washington for you Sir-

I received the other profile of our good and Virtuous Friend with the two folio fee Books which were packed up thro' mistake for which I return you my thanks-

You have perhaps seen the Resolution of the Assembly, respecting the House who have agreed to wear Mourning for one Month as a Mark of Respect for so great and good a Man.

I think they should have done more for an incitement to Virtue and Patriotism I would have had them to have erected at the public Expense a plain Tomb Stone, to transmit to future ages the High Sense they entertained of his Talents, his Patriotism, and his inflexible Integrity -- he was a rare Character, such as One as is scarcely to be met with in many Centuries.

I am, Sir, with great esteem & Respect,  
Your mo. Obt. Servt.  
William DuVal

Docketed in Jefferson's hand "Duval W<sup>m</sup> Richm<sup>d</sup> Dec. 10.06 rec<sup>d</sup> Dec. 14.

Note:

Copies of the above eleven letters were obtained by Congressman M. Caldwell Butler, a personal friend of Mr. Davis Elliot of Roanoke, Virginia, from the Library of Congress in Feb. of 1975. These copies found their way into the Mt. Comfort history file, I believe at the request of Mr. Hugh Weaver, then owner of Mt. Comfort.

RLG.

Among other intimate friends of William DuVal was the author Washington Irving. Irving became a great admirer of William DuVal's son, Governor William Pope DuVal, and used Governor DuVal's life story, as told by himself to the author, for his story "The Adventures of Ralph Ringwood" of which he was the hero. Governor DuVal was also the hero of "Nimrod Wildfire" by J. K. Palding.

The children of Major William DuVal and his wife Ann Pope were:

1. Samuel DuVal, died in Kentucky. No records available.
2. Gov. William Pope DuVal, First territorial Governor of Florida. m. Nancy Hynes of Kentucky where he went while very young. See separate section.
3. General John Pope DuVal, General Texas Army, m. Ann Fouchee Tebbs of Dumfries, Prince William County, Va. See separate section.
4. Nathaniel Pope DuVal, lost at sea, on his way to attend medical lectures in Philadelphia.
5. Lucy DuVal, who married Mr. William Price, Registrar, Richmond, Va. William Price died at the age of 36 and is buried in the Adams family cemetery at Mt. Comfort in Appomattox County. His headstone reads:  
Sacred to the memory of William Price  
the fourth son of Samuel Price of the county of Henrico  
was born on the 17th day of April, 1772  
and died October 10th, 1808

Following the death of Ann Pope his first wife, Major DuVal married again. His second wife was Susan Brown Christian, the daughter of Henry A Christian of Amherst County, Virginia. It is believed this marriage took place about 1807. Major DuVal would have been 59 years old at the time of his second marriage. Major DuVal and his second wife are known to have moved to his Buckingham residence (Mt. Comfort) to live.

The children of Major William DuVal and Susan Brown Christian were:

1. Sarah Catherine DuVal, m. William Henry Howard.
2. Susan Elizabeth DuVal, who married Mr. Isaac Adams, of Lynchburg, Va. Isaac Adams and Susan (DuVal) Adams lived at "Poplar Spring," a farm adjoining Mt. Comfort in then Buckingham County. Both Susan E. DuVal and her husband Isaac Adams are buried in the family cemetery at Mt. Comfort. She was born in 1810 and died in 1869.
3. Francis DuVal, married Richard Henry Toler

The picture of William DuVal at the beginning of this chapter was made in his later years while he was living at Mt. Comfort in (then) Buckingham County. The picture was made from a miniature which was in the possession of his granddaughter, Mrs. Leyborne, of Lexington. Mrs. T. P. O'Connor, great-granddaughter of Major DuVal, who has written a great deal about him says: That this miniature, taken in his old age, shows him with the pink and white complexion of a child, a round face and charming smile; wide open blue eyes, and a boarder of light hair turned almost white, "a charming and engaging expression." Such is the miniature from which this picture was taken.

Major DuVal died at Mt. Comfort in Appomattox County on January 3, 1842, at the age of 94. He was buried in St. Johns church yard in Richmond.



GOVERNOR WILLIAM POPE DUVAL

Photo of a portrait hanging in Florida's Capitol at Tallahassee.



GOVERNOR WILLIAM POPE DUVAL

This picture shows Governor Duval as he appeared when younger and active in political affairs.

For the purpose of this document we will cover only those children of William DuVal who had contact with Mt. Comfort in Appomattox County and for whom information is known. It is probable that Samuel DuVal and Nathaniel Pope DuVal never saw Mt. Comfort since they both left home and were killed at an early age. The first and most notable son of William DuVal whom we will examine was Gov. William Pope DuVal. He is of particular interest because it is known that he spent some time at his step-sister's home (Susan E. DuVal Adams) during his latter years. It was while he was visiting her that he was working on his notes on the early settlement of Florida, which he later hoped to publish.

#### GOVERNOR WILLIAM POPE DUVAL

b. 1784, d. 1854

William Pope DuVal was perhaps the most adventurous and romantic figure in the DuVal family. He was born in Richmond, the son of Major William DuVal and Ann Pope, at their home at Sixth and Grace Streets in 1784. He served his country as a congressman from Kentucky, and later was appointed the first Territorial Governor of Florida.

The great author, Washington Irving, became a great admirer of Governor DuVal and used DuVal's life story, as told directly to the author, in a story "The Early Adventures of Ralph Ringwood." This story is supposed to be an accurate account of some of Governor DuVal's adventures. The story itself can be found in Irving's collection of short stories entitled "Wolfert's Roost" and may be obtained in very old editions of his complete works. Governor DuVal was also the hero of J. K. Paulding's story "Nimrod Wildfire."

According to Washington Irving, DuVal laughingly told him in later life, "I am a Kentuckian by residence and choice, but a Virginian by birth. The cause of my leaving the 'Old Dominion' was a jackass."

Governor DuVal lived at his parent's home in Richmond until he was about sixteen years of age, when, on account of a boyish prank, he left home and went to Kentucky to live. Wishing to raise a fine breed of mules for Virginia farmers, a neighbor or relative had imported some young jackasses to Richmond, and this meeting with much disfavor they were turned loose on the city commons. This proved a source of great amusement to the youths of that vicinity, among whom was William Pope DuVal. It happened this particular time he had corralled one of the donkeys late in the afternoon, wishing to have him first the next morning to ride on a hunting trip for nuts. For lack of a better place he shut him up over night in the smoke house on his father's home place. As fate would have it he slept late, and "Aunt Barbara," a light mulatto woman, cook and housekeeper since his mother had died, and apparently the tyrant of the place, went out early to get salt meat for breakfast. She was met by lurid eyes, a large open mouth with huge teeth, and a bray which would waken the dead. Aunt Barbara was knocked down, trampled on and thrown into a fit, as she thought she had met the devil!

Southern homes in those days were open to relatives and friends alike, and courtesy to a guest was paramount. It so happened that at this time there was an uncle-in-law, living in the home, a very nervous and irascible man, who took it upon himself to thrash the young boy, and not being content with one beating he undertook to repeat it every time Barbara had another fit. Young DuVal, becoming very disgusted, went to this father and told him he was going to leave home, adding: "Uncle John and I cannot live in the same house."

"Well," answered his father, "I am afraid then, you will have to go, as your uncle John is our guest."

The winter wore on and everyone thought the fuss had blown over, but with the coming of spring, William DuVal announced that he would be leaving the next day.

"And, where are you going?" asked his father.

"To Kentucky," replied the youth. His uncle Claiborne DuVal had already gone there to live.

"And, what do you propose to do?" again asked the Major, laughing.

"To hunt," said William, "and Sir, I wish you would let me have my man and horse."

"A horse!" said his father, "Why you would not go a mile without racing him and breaking your neck; and as for a servant, you cannot take care of yourself, much less of him."

"How am I to travel then?" demanded the angry youth.

"If you are man enough to go, you are man enough to walk. You may, however, take this," said his father, and taking from a chest a long green purse, well filled with gold, he tossed it to his son. It is thought that he believed that would be a check to the young man's ardor - but not at all.

Picking up the purse and thanking him, young DuVal left the room, and going to his own room he got together all the clothing he could take and tied it into a bundle. He put a dirk in his bosom, girt a couple of pistols around his waist, and set out for his grand adventure in Kentucky. His sister Lucy hung around him and wept, begging him not to go, and so did Barbara, apologizing for her "carrying on." But to no avail.

"When will you come back?" his sister asked.

"Never, by heavens," he answered, "until I come back a member of Congress from Kentucky. I am determined to show that I am not the tail-end of the family."

Such was his outset from home. By working his way, begging rides, and so on, and after several adventures, he finally embarked at Wheeling, on a flat-bottomed family boat, then called a "broad horn", a prime river conveyance of that age. In this ark he floated for two weeks down the Ohio River, gliding past Cincinnati, then a mere group of log cabins, and past Louisville, then designated by a solitary house. Near the confluence of the Green and the Ohio Rivers, he landed and struck for the interior of the state. Eventually he made his way to the habitation of one Bill Smithers, a log hut with a square hole for a window and a chimney made of sticks and mud. Under the tutelage of this first rate hunter, DuVal received his first effective lessons in woodcraft. Lessons DuVal knew he must learn, since just across the Ohio river was the Indiana territory where Indian troubles were always brewing. Irving quotes DuVal as saying: "I had relatives in Lexington and other settled places (Danville) to whom I thought it probable that my father would write concerning me, so, as I was so full of manhood and independence, and resolutely bent on making my way in the world without assistance and control, I resolved to keep clear of them all."

After a week or so with Smithers, he heard of another Nimrod of the wilderness, who lived alone, and to him he went, was cordially received and a year followed, in which his ardent desire for hunting was satisfied, as he became proficient in his favorite occupation. This hunter friend of DuVal's was "Blue Bead Miller", so called from a blue wart over one eye.

The spirit of discontent overcame him and he felt that he should become something more than a mere hunter, carrying a rifle on his shoulder day by day. Finally he decided to become a lawyer, his father having been a very prominent one in Richmond. He felt keenly his lack of education but refused to be daunted. Remembering his boyish boast to his sister, he determined to fulfill it.

Ambition thus aroused, he resolved that, "If a man had but ordinary capacity, and would set to work heart and soul, and stick to it, he could do almost anything." This maxim became his mainstay through life and no doubt led to his success afterwards as a lawyer, a Congressman, and later a Governor, where he met and overcame difficulties and problems of every sort that challenged the heroic mettle of his spirit.

His success in life and his eminent services to his country were the result of the earnest resolve of this proud, ambitious descendant of a Claiborne - DuVal union of talents, endurance and a native born tendency for leadership.

Having set his course, he made his way into the nearest town (Bardstown, Ky.), intending to go from there to Lexington, Frankfort and other towns, in search of a favorable place to prepare himself for his chosen profession. He found upon inquiry, that he could get comfortable board and accommodations there with a private family, for a dollar and a half a week. He liked the place and decided to remain. He prepared to return to his forest friend, Blue Bead, and inform him of his plans.

He tells what happened that positively fixed his fate for the future: "I had taken my breakfast, and was waiting for my horse (one he had borrowed) when in pacing up and

down the piazza, I saw a young girl seated near a window. She was very pretty, with auburn hair and blue eyes and was dressed in white. I had seen nothing of the kind since I left Richmond. She was so delicate and dainty looking, and then her white dress - it was so perfectly dazzling! Never was poor youth more taken by surprise and suddenly bewitched. My heart yearned to know her, but how was I to accost her? That white dress and those auburn ringlets, and blue eyes, and delicate looks quite daunted while they fascinated me."

"I don't know what put it into my head but I thought all at once that I would kiss her! Nobody knew me here. I would just step in, snatch a kiss, mount my horse and ride off. She would not be the worse for it; and that kiss - Oh, I should die if I did not get it!"

"I gave no time for thought to cool, but entered the house and stepped lightly into the room. She was seated with her back to the door, looking out the window, and did not hear my approach. I tapped her chair and as she turned and looked up, I snatched as sweet a kiss as ever was stolen, and vanished in a twinkling. The next moment I was on horseback, galloping homeward, my very ears tingling at what I had done.

This lovely girl was Nancy Hynes, who resided with her widowed mother at Bardstown. Her father was Colonel Andrew Hynes, who founded the town of Elizabethtown, and named it for his wife. There is still standing in Bardstown the old "Stone Tavern" where they claim this incident occurred. Another party who owns a grey old two-story brick residence on the next corner of the square to this old Stone Tavern (sometimes called the Talbott House) asserts that her house is the one where William kissed Nancy, but all Bardstown tells with pride of this youthful romance of the man that once lived in their town.

After bidding his friend, Blue Bead, a reluctant farewell, DuVal returned to Bardstown and for a year studied earnestly, almost leading the life of a recluse. After that an old friend of his father - Judge Broadnax - called on him to offer assistance. At first he was disposed to reject all aid, but thought better of it and accepted. His talent as a speaker became known by his joining a debating society and he then was sought socially and so it happened one day at a tea, to which he was invited, he met the fair Nancy. The meeting was embarrassing and agitating at first, but love overcame and all things went well. At nineteen he was engaged to be married. The old Bardstown courthouse marriage book registry reveals the climax of this early Kentucky romance. It reads: "William P. DuVal and Nancy Hynes, Oct. 3, 1804, by William Taylor, preacher."

After consultation with the mother of Nancy, it was arranged that as soon as he obtained license to practice law and was fairly started in business the marriage should occur. Then his father offered to defray all expenses. But fate stepped in again and the death of Nancy's mother resulted in the above entry in the old marriage register.

The young couple bravely set up a modest establishment suited to their circumstances, a log house with two rooms, everything in a small way. In DuVal's words, "we were so poor, but then so happy."

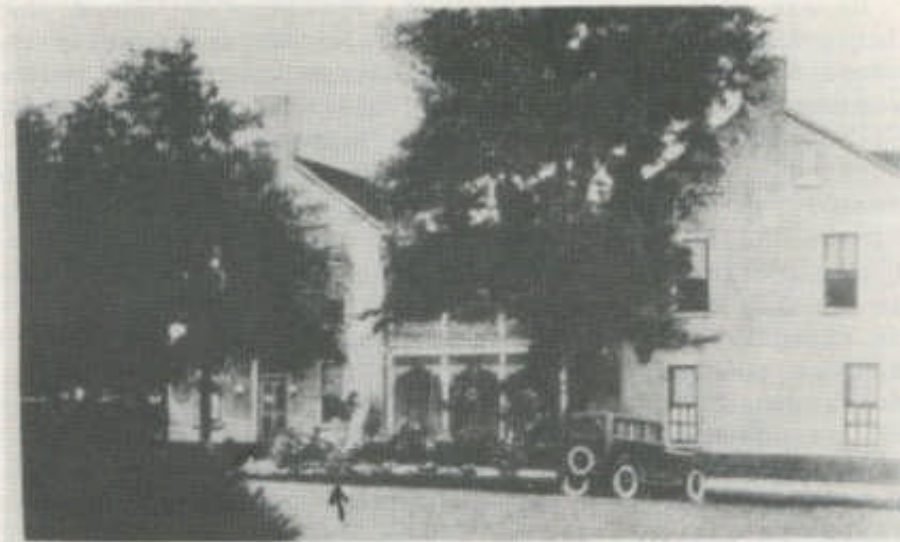
After winning his first case, DuVal's career as lawyer became one of steady success. He entered the practice of law in 1804 and was soon known as a coming man growing more popular and successful as a lawyer.

When the war of 1812 broke out he entered the army, and as Captain of the Mounted Rangers he helped to protect the frontier settlements in the valley of the Wabash from the Indians.

In the fall of 1812, he was elected to Congress, thus fulfilling his boyhood boast to his sister. As a Congressman, he became identified with a Democratic group of the South and West, whom John Randolph, of Roanoke, called the "War Hawks." He took active interest in the leading problems of the age. In 1815, at the expiration of his term in Congress, he resumed his law practice in Kentucky. Very soon after resuming his practice, President Monroe appointed him as United States Judge for East Florida. The following year he was appointed as the first civil Governor of the territory of Florida.

In those days the Floridas were only a territory, and the Indians were so troublesome that a man with courage, heart and decision was needed for their Governor. William Pope DuVal received the appointment in 1822, and was reappointed by both presidents Adams and Jackson, holding the office until 1834.

Governor DuVal's wife joined him in the new country that was looking to him for its leadership.



Where Gov. Wm. P. DuVal First Saw Nancy Hynes, Bardstown, Ky.  
Arrow points to window where she was sitting.  
Photo from out-of-print book "DuVals of Kentucky from  
Virginia" by Buchanan

Her gracious charm gave tone to the social development of the capital and she was a most beloved and popular "first lady" of Florida.

Three of the DuVal's eight children came into the family before he left Kentucky, and the other five arrived while in Florida. The youngest daughter was so fair and lovely, that she was named Florida for the "Land of Flowers."

The Governor lived in Tallahassee, which he named for an Indian tribe. Tallahassee was only three miles from the settlement of one of the most troublesome tribes, the Miccasookies, headed by Chief Neamathla, one of the most hostile and dangerous Indians in the country. He was vicious and notorious, bearing enmity not only to whites, but to all the smaller tribes of Indians, with whom he was continually at war.

In 1832 Governor DuVal rendered a remarkable service to the United States by putting down the insurrections of Chief Neamathla and his braves. Hearing through a night visit of "Yellow Hair", a friendly young brave, that Neamathla was holding a war dance at his settlement, preparatory to an attack on the whites, he rode with his interpreter directly into the Indian camp. He bravely walked into the council house and, in an authoritative tone, stated "I am well aware of the meaning of this war council; and deem it my duty to warn you against prosecuting the schemes you have been devising. If a single hair of a white man in this country falls to the ground, I will hang you and your chiefs on the trees around your council-house! You may kill me; I am but one man; but recollect, white men are as numerous as the leaves on the trees."

Such utter fearlessness totally conquered the old chief, who was afterward dethroned and made chief of a smaller tribe. This disappointed and humiliated him to such an extent that he soon died.

Governor DuVal finally succeeded in getting all the Indians except the friendly Seminoles out of Florida and into Indian Territory, without calling out the militia, and without the loss of any lives. It was considered a great diplomatic feat.

In Brevard's "History of Florida" we read of Governor DuVal: "Governor DuVal was possessed to an unusual degree of both force and judgment, coupled with tact that never failed him."

He kept open house, and was most hospitable to the young men who visited his daughters. However he was very strict about some things, among which was, that it mattered not whether a guest was leaving or spending the night, as often happened, the old butler always appeared promptly at 11 o'clock, with his waiter on which was the lighted candles to light them to the door of their rooms, and a good-night cocktail for each. Four of his daughters were celebrated beauties, and Marcia, who afterwards became the wife of Judge Paschal in Texas, inherited the lovely red hair of her mother's Scotch ancestors.

On the expiration of his term of service in Florida, he returned to Kentucky, where he resumed his practice of law. But Florida was loath to give up the man who had done so much for her, and her legislative council passed resolutions to the effect that "its members, realizing DuVal's long and faithful service, his integrity of purpose and his devotion to the interests and welfare of the Territory, hoped he might return and spend the evening of his days in the land so benefitted by his faithful services and embellished by his hospitality."

This cordial invitation probably influenced him to return to the land of which he had so long been chief executive. Before he left Kentucky, his sons, Burr and John, their young souls fired with sympathy for the Texans, so bravely struggling to gain their independence from Mexico, recruited a company of 100 men of the flower of Nelson County youth, and this gallant company of "Kentucky Mustangs", enthusiastically joined the Texas army asking for the greatest post of danger. This noble band of Kentucky youths were all captured and treacherously slain at the infamous massacre of Goliad, John DuVal and a few others being the only ones to escape, while his gallant brother, with four hundred others, were brutally slain by the Mexican General in direct violation of terms of surrender.

This tragedy broke the heart of his mother and brought to his father a personal loss that saddened his whole life. After thirteen years of residence in Florida, during which he took active part in all of the state's problems, Governor DuVal rendered notable service as a member of the first Florida Constitutional Convention, a service considered second in importance to his success in handling the Indian problem.

The document submitted by DuVal at this convention, six years later, became the first Constitution of the State of Florida. He was elected a member of the Senate and held office until 1841. Then came the crowning sorrow of his life, in the death of his adored wife from a scourge of yellow fever. This broke the spirit of the 59-year old man and though striving to serve his state in various ways, he was so saddened by his loss he joined his children in Texas.

Governor DuVal resided in Austin, Texas, with them most of the remainder of his life. At some point in his later years he spent some time with his half sister, Susan E. DuVal Adams at her home in Appomattox County. A Mr. Branch Walker writing in the Lynchburg News in an article "In Old Appomattox" remembers visiting the Adams home and listening to the adventures of the retired Governor DuVal. He writes as follows:

"Going back to the old families, I recall the Adams family--the industrious father and good Christian mother of Duval, Holcombe and Dick, and of Mrs. John W. Carroll. Mrs. Adams was a sister of the late Governor DuVal of Florida, and spent much of the latter part of his life at her home near the old courthouse writing a history of Florida.<sup>5</sup> He died before completing it. Some years ago I wrote a little piece about this most remarkable and adventurous old Governor, which The News did me the honor to print, with headlines, "By an intimate friend." I was only a boy of fifteen or sixteen when the governor died, and not an intimate - only an interested listener with Duval, Holcombe and Dick Adams, as the old man would tell us of his adventures in the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, where he went on foot at the age of fourteen, and grew up with the country, returning to see his father and sisters when on his way to take a seat in Congress."<sup>6</sup>

In the winter of 1854, he was called to Washington on official business and there suffered a stroke that caused his death a month later, on March 19, 1854. He is buried in the Congressional Cemetery there.

Thus ended the colorful life of a hero, devoted to the welfare of his country and unsparing in his efforts for the advancement of the interests he represented. Governor DuVal was a forceful and vigorous speaker. His reported speeches are characterized by exalted sentiments and a fervid patriotism. He added to superior talents the virtue of unswerving integrity, and all the genial graces that then marked the perfect Virginia gentleman.

One writer describes him as "a man in whom dwells a super-abundance of the milk of human kindness. As a social companion, ever mirthful and enlivening, he had no equal."

Another says of him: "Governor DuVal was a fascinating and fluent talker." One informant relates that whenever he stopped, on the street or elsewhere, a crowd gathered to listen to him. A venerable gentleman thus speaks of him: "I never knew a more charming conversationalist." It is impossible to exaggerate his powers in this respect. If he emerged from his lodgings, the public seemed to have its eye upon him. The moment he paused, an admiring company would gather around. He did all the talking and his hearers never tired.

Mrs. Gov. Helm said of him: "I knew Governor DuVal. He was fond of singing and sang well himself. He was a most charming man socially."

He possessed to an eminent degree such characteristics that attracted and held the devoted admiration of many of his friends. His early experiences in the pioneer days of Kentucky furnished him with a boundless store from which he drew, embellished by his

Note 5: I can find no trace of any history of Florida written by Governor DuVal, thus his notes were apparently lost.

Note 6: The amount of time Governor DuVal spent at the Adams' home was probably not as long as he mentions in his article. Other references state that Governor DuVal spent most of his later years with his children in Texas. The time he spent at the Adams' home was probably a long visit and may have been just prior to his trip to Washington, where the old Governor died.

native humor, and was the ready source of his many amusing and entertaining stories.

His well stored mind and eloquent speech added to his graphic descriptions, made him a warm friend of Washington Irving who says of him: "Governor DuVal was an extraordinary man in many ways. His personality was hypnotic in quality. This made him great as a speaker. Cold print fails to convey the charm of his personality, as did the hypnosis of his presence. One looks at you, eye to eye, and gives you a returning cordial handclasp. Wordless, yet each thereafter retains a lasting impression of the other."

The greatest thing in his life was his tender devotion to the lovely girl he first saw sitting at a window of the old Stone Tavern in Bardstown, Kentucky. The beautiful married life of the two made them adored by their children who ever held the memory of their pioneer courtship as a romance that lasted all through life and reached the land beyond the stars, where it shines as an everlasting halo that eternity enhances.

To William Pope DuVal and his wife Nancy Hynes were born eight children:

1. Burr DuVal, never married. killed in the massacre of Goliad in Texas.
2. Thomas Howard DuVal, m. Laura Peyton DuVal, daughter of General John Pope DuVal, his father's brother.
3. John Crittenden DuVal, called "Texas John" to distinguish him from the numerous other Johns in the family, and because of his associations with Texas. He made a good living writing historical short stories of Texas, which were very popular and were put into the school libraries because of their historical value. Some of his writing contained an account of his escape from the Goliad massacre and are considered the only authentic account of this incident by a participant. Some of his stories are "Early Days in Texas", "The Young Explorers", "Big Foot Wallace", and "The Adventures of John Dobell."
4. Marcia DuVal, m. 1st: William Price of Virginia (This was the son of the William Price buried in the Adams cemetery at Mt. Comfort and Lucy DuVal, Governor DuVal's half sister). m. 2nd: Judge George W. Paschal, Arkansas and Texas.
5. Elizabeth DuVal, m. Narborne Beall.
6. Mary DuVal, m. 1st: Mr. Robinson, from England. m. 2nd: Samuel Hopkins.
7. Laura Harrison DuVal, m. Dr. Arthur Moray Randolph, a descendant of Isham Randolph, of "Dunganess," Virginia.
8. Florida DuVal, m. 1st: Enoch Everett, m. 2nd: John Howard, her cousin.

John Pope DuVal was the son of Major William DuVal of Richmond and Ann Pope. General DuVal received a liberal education from Washington College and the College of William and Mary, at Williamsburg, Va. He studied law and was admitted to the Richmond Bar in 1811 at the age of 20. His father, Major William DuVal was already a prominent lawyer in Richmond.

On April 9, 1812, he became a First Lieutenant in the US Army infantry serving on the Canadian frontier. He was later promoted to Captain and served in Virginia.

After the close of the war he resigned from the army to practice law, but not succeeding as well as he anticipated, he sold his property in Virginia and went to Florida, where his brother, William Pope DuVal was then Governor.

Later on account of the climate, he went to Texas, where he raised forces in their war with Mexico, and was made a Brigadier General. Since the war closed with the taking of Santa Anna, the commander of the Mexican army, very soon after he arrived in Texas, he saw no military action.

He returned to Florida after the war where he did splendidly in law and became also the first Grand Master of Masons of Florida. He was appointed Secretary of State of Florida, and in 1840 was commissioned by Governor Call to write a Digest of Florida Territorial Laws, which he did.

General John Pope DuVal died in Tallahassee, Florida, in 1855 and was buried there.<sup>7,8,9</sup>

Note 7: Information on the DuVal families including William DuVal and his children was obtained principally from two excellent genealogies:

"The DuVal Family of Virginia" by Bessie Berry Grabowski (Va. Public Library)  
"DuVals of Kentucky from Virginia" by Margaret Gwin Buchanan (Mt. Comfort Plantation Library)

Note 8: Information on other children of Major William DuVal is very limited, thus they are not included here, even though they had contact with Mt. Comfort, and in fact the children of the Major's second marriage were born and raised here.

Note 9: Further information on Governor William Pope DuVal may be found by reading "Experiences of Ralph Ringwood"; "The Seminoles" and "The Conspiracy of Neamathla" all by Washington Irving. These three short stories may be found in Volume 16 of the collection of Washington Irving's works entitled "Wolfert's Roost"

Following the death of Major William DuVal, Mt. Comfort was purchased by Colonel John Johns. The exact date Colonel Johns acquired the estate from the DuVals is not known, however it was probably just after William DuVal's death in 1842. William DuVal's wife was apparently not able to manage the large estate, thus she sold it, and in 1850 she is shown living with her daughter at the adjoining farm of "Poplar Spring".

Colonel Johns apparently preferred the name "Mountain View" over "Mt. Comfort" and throughout the County land records the farm is recorded as "Mountain View".

It should be noted here that no positive proof exists that shows Colonel Johns purchased the William DuVal estate. In one newspaper article dated in 1900, Mr. Branch Walker reports that Colonel John Johns bought Major Philip DuVal's farm, (see later section) however this statement may be in error. The reason for believing that William DuVal was the original owner of Mt. Comfort is because William DuVal's daughter, his son-in-law, and his grandchild are all buried in the old cemetery near the home.

Both Philip DuVal and William DuVal were known by the title of "Major" since both served in the Revolutionary War. Also both brothers owned farms which joined each other. In fact, Isaac Adam's farm known as "Poplar Spring" may have been built by Philip DuVal. These confusing facts make tracing the ownership of Mt. Comfort very difficult, however since the DuVal-Adam's cemetery is located at Mt. Comfort we will assume William DuVal to be the original owner of Mt. Comfort. Hopefully at some future date some old maps or surveys will be discovered which will positively prove William DuVal was the original owner.

## THE JOHNS FAMILY

### COLONEL JOHN JOHNS

The Johns family was well to do and was one of the first families to settle in the Appomattox area. The earliest record of the Johns' family, being in then Buckingham County, may be found in the Virginia Land Grants, Grant 35, 1762-64, p. 222 which shows a William Johns being granted a 300 acre tract of land just North of the Appomattox River. A second grant was made to a David Johns of 210 acres also just north of the Appomattox River in the 1760's. A John Johns is listed as being in Buckingham County in 1773 and 1774. (From "Va. Titheables from Burned County Records")

Colonel John Johns is listed as being in Buckingham County in all the early Census Reports. The "Tracts of Land for Appomattox County" lists Colonel John Johns owning "Mountain View" from 1845 to his death in 1868.

In the census of 1850 Colonel Johns is listed on his farm of 619½ acres and living with the following people:

Mary Johns, his wife, aged 69

Paulina Layne, his housekeeper, aged 45

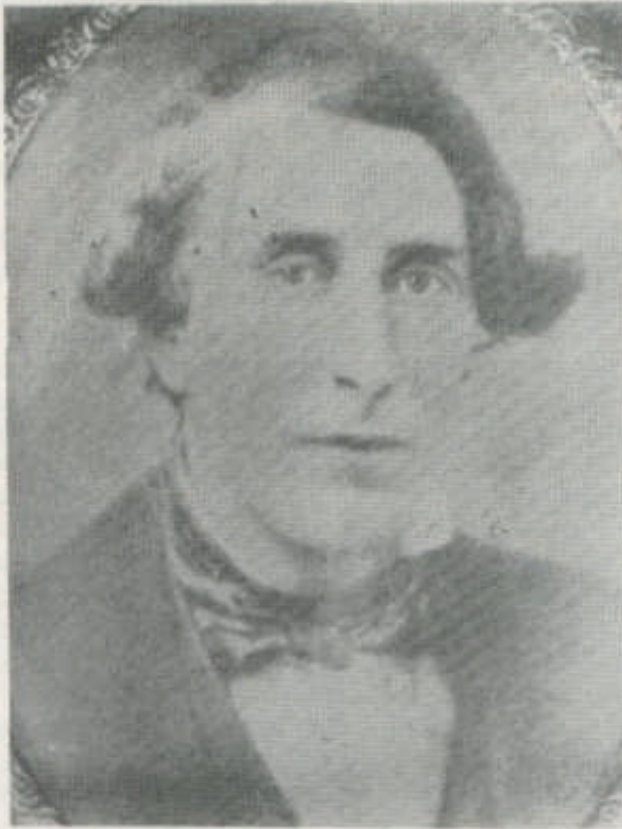
Mary E. Winston, I believe a relative of his wife, aged 18.

Colonel Johns is listed as a farmer, aged 65, owning lands and buildings valued at \$7,000.00 and having thirty slaves. His son, Thomas Winston Johns, is not listed in the 1850 census but appears in the land books as owning a 251½ acre farm adjoining his father.

Ten years later the census of 1860 shows Colonel John Johns owning two farms worth \$15,000.00 and personal property (including 42 slaves) valued at \$25,000.00. Colonel Johns is shown living with a new wife (Martha A., aged 58), his housekeeper (Paulina Layne), and a Mr. David B. Manley, aged 16.

In 1863 (from the tax records) Col. Johns paid \$109.64 in taxes on two farms located four miles northwest of the courthouse. One farm of 770½ acres (Mountain View) has buildings assessed at \$1,500.00 and the other of 311 acres has buildings assessed at only \$100.00. By 1865 the smaller farm was the property of Charles W. Statham of Lynchburg.

Colonel John Johns died at his farm in 1868 at about 83 years of age.



CAPTAIN THOMAS WINSTON JOHNS

1818-1904

Son of Colonel John Johns, Thomas Winston Johns was born in 1818 on his father's estate in then Buckingham County. Very little is known about Captain Johns' early life; however land records show he owned a farm of 251 ½ acres adjoining his father from 1845-1858. In 1858 he appears to have sold the farm and moved with his family to his father's home (Mountain View), probably to care for his aging father who was at that time 73 years old.

Captain Johns and his wife were members of the First Presbyterian Church in Lynchburg, Va., from October 1st, 1854, thru September, 1867. During this time period the Johns' family owned a home in Lynchburg, and spent time in both Lynchburg and Appomattox.

Captain Johns was very popular among the citizens of the county and was very hospitable, frequently inviting his friends and neighbors to his home. He was also very active in the political affairs of this area and when Appomattox County was first formed in 1845, he was appointed as the first Commissioner of the Revenue for the new county. It was Captain Johns who formed a posse to rescue little Beck Amos during a bad snow storm. (See "A True Story" written by his daughter, Anna Deane Johns, in the section following.)

Little is known of his military career except that he attained the rank of Captain. An interesting story is told which happened at Captain Johns' home during the war:

It seems that a detachment of Yankee troops entered the yard of Captain Thomas Johns and marched up to the house. Captain Johns was not at home at the time and his wife appeared on the porch carrying a double barreled shotgun and demanded to know what they wanted. Declaring their intent to burn the house, they demanded that she and any others inside get out before they commenced the burning. She defiantly declared: "Over my dead body!" daring the troops to shoot her down since she would not permit such a dirty business as long as she could resist. The bewildered troops, perhaps respecting her spunk, decided not to burn the house after-all and left the farm. (It is probable that this incident took place during the close of the war when Federal troops were trying to cut off Lee's retreating Confederate Army. This story is told to this day and, although it cannot be substantiated, it is a wonderful story and is included here as a part of the grand history of Mt. Comfort.)

Another incident occurred at Mt. Comfort just at the end of the war. This incident was found in an unpublished book in the Va. State Library entitled "The Cause We Lost and the Land We Love". A portion of this story is reproduced below exactly as it was written by Dr. Mason Graham Ellzey, Hunton's Brigade Surgeon, 8th Va. Regiment as follows:

....at Edward's Depot, where we expected to cross the railroad on the road to Danville; and the dullest, or most sanguine knew, that pinned in between the railroad and the river, without ammunition enough to fight a skirmish line, we were at the end of our resisting power. In that frame of mind, and with that fact staring us in the face, we arrived in the dusk of the evening at Appomattox Court House. Here I stumbled by accident upon the seven companions with whom I parted when I mounted Minnie Gray - after Sailor's Creek. They had nothing to eat, and were sitting around a fire on the wet ground. I had not now seen General Picket since we left Farmville, and knew nothing of what had befallen him.

I felt myself now to be near physical collapse, I knew that I had fever, and a cough and pain in my chest, and feared pneumonia had me in its grip, which would mean I should never see home. I found that seven men, who now remained of the 8th Va. Regiment, had procured muskets, and held themselves in readiness, expecting to go into battle in the morning. I urged them not to throw their lives away, or risk them further in that fashion. I told them what my own condition was, and that I intended to go to the house of Captain Johns, with whom I had boarded in Lynchburg when I was on duty in the hospital, and who was now living at his father's old home about a half mile from the Court House. I told them that in my opinion there was not the smallest doubt but that the end of possible resistance to fate had been reached by us - and begged that they would not leave the place where they were unless driven away, before I saw them in the morning. I had just parted with General Terry, who agreed with me fully as to the situation. I accordingly rode to Captain Johns' place, and was received by them with all the kindness

they could possibly have shown their own son. I was now nearly speechless with hoarseness, and while they were preparing a hot supper for me, I had my friend, Dr. Luck, whom I found there, examine the condition of my lungs, and he said he could detect no crepitant rale, and did not fear pneumonia. By that time they had my supper ready, and never in my life have I felt anything like the uplift I got from a cup of hot coffee. I declined positively an alcoholic stimulant, not because of any anti-drink fanaticism, but because I knew that on account of a personal idiosyncrasy an inconceivably small quantity of any alcoholic drink whatsoever would produce narcotism, and ugly collapse. Captain Johns put Minnie Gray, my horse, into his meat house, which was inside his yard and was thief proof, and gave her a good feed; and put me to bed in the best bed in the house, and left me with the understanding that if he heard firing in the direction of Edward's Depot in the morning, or during the night, he would let me know. I explained to him that if I surrendered here I would be compelled to walk back to Richmond, and I felt that I could not reach there alive. Of course, I was soon sleeping the sleep of the just, and moved not a hand or foot, until before sunrise Captain Johns came in to say he heard sharp firing about Edward's Depot. I told him that meant surrender, as General Lee could not possibly fight a real battle for want of both men and material to fight with, so he and I got a good breakfast, already in waiting. They said Dr. Luck had gone away soon after I went to bed - so I breakfasted and Captain Johns and I rode out to the Court House and I saw the white flags. He immediately returned home, and I went to the place where I left my companions the night before, and found them there.

Note: Dr. Ellzey is mistaken in his estimate of the distance from the Court House to Captain Johns' house. He stated the distance to be about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile when it is, in fact, over 3 miles. It is conceivable that a large body of men firing rifles and cannons could be heard at that distance especially since, according to the story, the firing occurred during the stillness of the night (before dawn).

After the war, the census of 1870 shows Captain Thomas Johns owned real-estate worth \$20,000.00 and held personal property valued at \$3,000.00. His father's 42 slaves valued at about \$22,000.00 were apparently liberated after the war. At this time he was living with his wife and daughters Bettie, Alice, Fannie, Anna Deane, and a son Willie.

Captain Johns was well liked by his neighbors and was considered a gentleman of means. He was active in the Presbyterian Church and served as an Elder for many years.

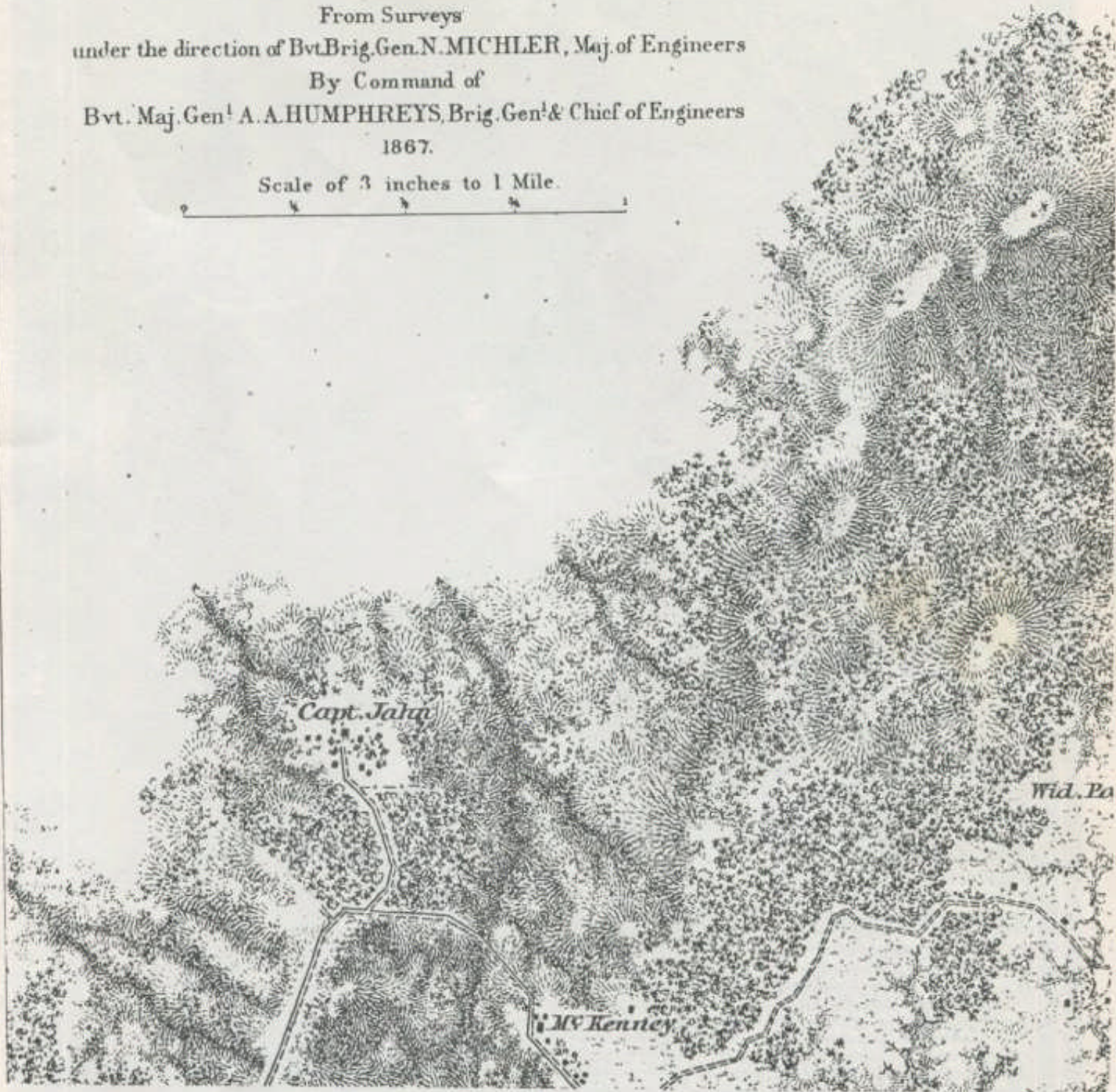
He married Mary Elizabeth Dudley, whom he affectionately called Lizzie. In 1877 Captain Johns apparently set up a trust arrangement or other agreement concerning his farm "Mountain View" because in that year the owner is shown being held in trust for his wife, the trustee being his son-in-law, Captain William H. Trent. This trust arrangement was kept until 1898 when Mrs. Johns died. Her will gives the farm back to her husband and stipulates that at his death the farm is to pass to his daughters. The reason for this strange trust arrangement is not clear. In any event when Mrs. Johns became ill in 1894 and was expected to die before her husband, the will was drawn up. Mrs. Johns died on August 29, 1898, at the age of 78. Captain Johns died on May 4, 1904 at the age of 86.



# APPOMATTOX COURT HOUSE

From Surveys  
under the direction of Bvt Brig. Gen. N. MICHLER, Maj. of Engineers  
By Command of  
Bvt. Maj. Gen<sup>l</sup> A. A. HUMPHREYS, Brig. Gen<sup>l</sup> & Chief of Engineers  
1867.

Scale of 3 inches to 1 Mile.

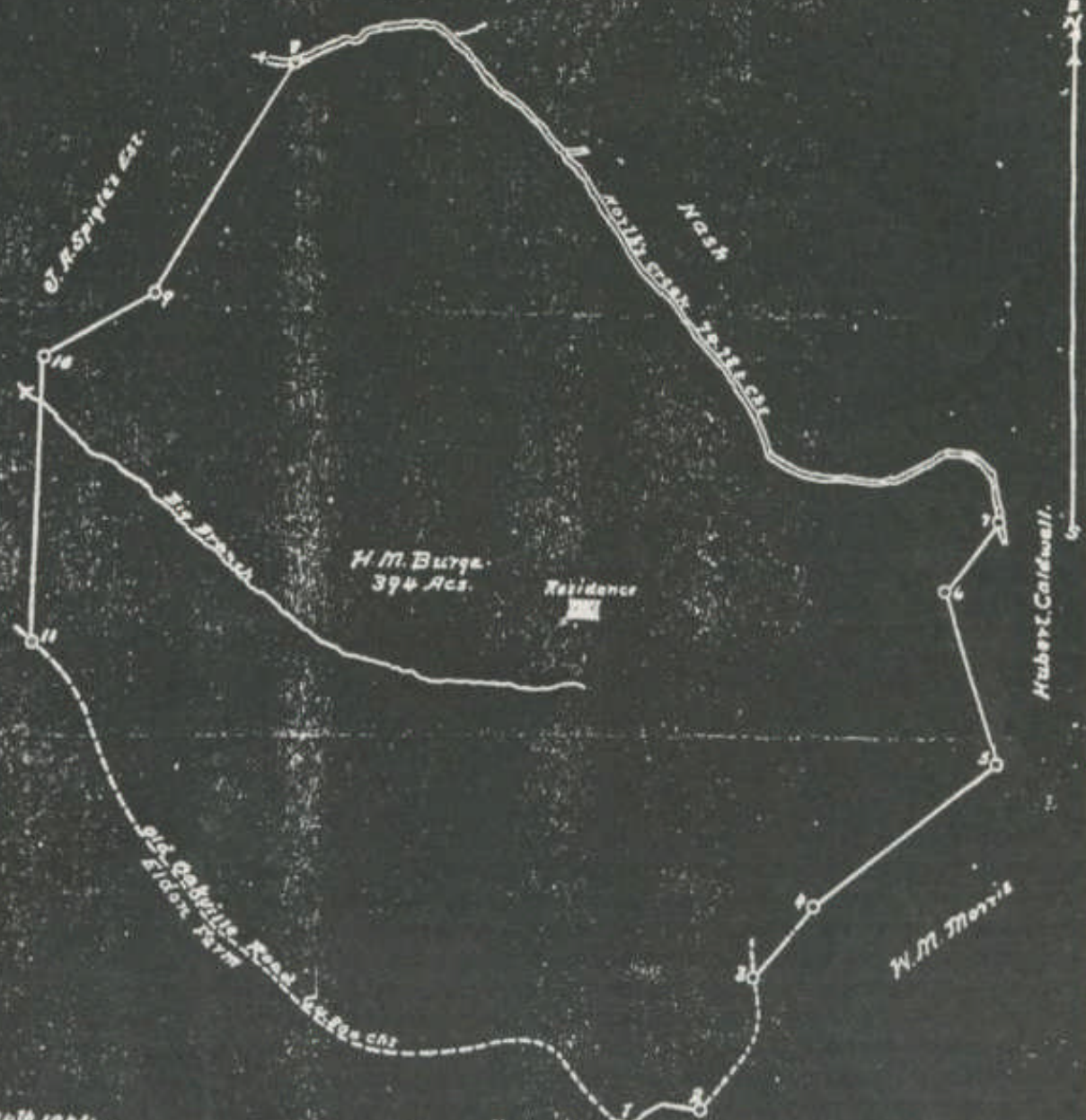


An Old Map Dated 1867, Showing Location Of Mt. Comfort.

This map was actually made from surveys done several years earlier. At the time this map was made, Captain Johns was living on his aging father's lands. Colonel John Johns died in 1868, and his son, Captain Thomas Winston Johns inherited the estate known as Mt. Comfort.

APPOMATTOX COUNTY LIBRARY

45519



July 24 1941  
 Surveyed for H. M. Burge Three Hundred and ninety four (394 Acs) Acres of land, situated about four miles north of Appomattox Va. Bounded and described as follows:  
 Beginning at an Iron stake at the intersection of the Old Oakville and Mountain Roads at (1); Thence an agreed line with W. M. Morris N 48° E 1.95 chains, N 60° E 1.20 chs, and S 83° E 3.00 to the middle of a road at a Gate at (2). Thence along the road N 41° E 5.50 chs, N 33° E 1.00 ch, N 24° E 1.00 ch, N 10° 30' E 2.00 chs, and N 12° 30' W 2.90 chs to a Pine at (3). Thence N 29° 30' E 4.80 chs to a Hickory, and N 38° 30' E 2.33 chs to a White Oak at (4). Thence N 52° 30' E 18.16 chs to the middle of a road at draw bars at (5). Thence with Hubert Caldwell N 15° W 14.00 chs to a Post at (6); and N 38° E 7.44 chs to North's Creek at (7). Thence down the creek as it meanders northwesterly 74.77 chs to J. A. Spigler Estate at (8). Thence with said Estate S 31° W 21.10 chs to a Stake at (9); S 60° 30' W

10.00 chs, to a Stake at (10), and S 2° W crossing Big Branch 22.10 chs to the middle of the Old Oakville Road at (11). Thence along said road S 44° 15' E 3.05 chs, S 30° 15' E 3.33 chs, S 23° E 7.50 chs, S 37° 15' E 12.00 chs, S 44° 30' E 12.00 chs, S 63° 15' E 2.00 chs, S 70° 15' E 2.75 chs, N 88° 45' E 6.00 chs, N 82° E 3.00 chs, N 89° E 3.00 chs, S 70° E 1.00 ch, S 48° E 1.00 ch, S 38° E 3.90 chs, and S 46° E 4.37 chs to Station (1).  
 W. A. Moses Sur  
 Scale 1" = 10.00 chains.

A survey of Mt. Comfort made July 24, 1941, for then owner Mr. H. M. Burge. Entrance to Mt. Comfort in 1865 left the old Oakville road at point no. 3 above and went almost due north to the house. (See 1867 map previous page.)

THE WILL OF MARY (DUDLEY) JOHNS:

The following will of Mary Elizabeth (Dudley) Johns was made September 18, 1894. The codicil to her will was made August 26, 1898, just prior to her death, and she, being unable to write it herself, had someone else write it for her. Her signature on the codicil suggests she was very near her death, and, in fact, she is listed as deceased six weeks later when her will was proved in court.

The will and codicil transfer the house and garden, after the death of Thomas W. Johns, to Miss Anna Deane Johns, provided that she not marry. The land itself was divided equally among three of the daughters: Anna Deane Johns, Mary W. Trent, and Fannie Moseley. They apparently decided to keep the farm intact, each owning a 1/3 interest. Later, on September 2, 1912, Miss Anna Deane Johns bought out the 1/3 interest owned by her sister Fannie P. Moseley, thus giving her 2/3 of Mt. Comfort. The will and codicil expressly states that Anna Deane Johns was to inherit the house and garden only if she never marries. Miss Deane Johns never did marry and died a spinster in 1935. Perhaps her loss of the farm was a factor in her decision to remain single. The will and codicil of Mary Elizabeth Johns, wife of Captain Thomas Winston Johns is as follows:

I, Mary E. Johns, of the county of Appomattox, Virginia, make this my last will and testament as follows:

1st. The estate held in trust for me \$1630.42 under the will of the late Elizabeth Davis, but with power to me to dispose of it by will, I give to my four daughters, as follows, the share of anyone who may die in my lifetime, unmarried and without issue, to be equally divided among the survivors:

To Mary W. Trent	\$300.00
To Fannie P. Johns	\$300.00
To Anna Deane Johns	\$450.00
To Bettie D. Johns	\$580.00

2nd. I give my farm called "Mountain View", upon which I reside, to my husband, Thomas W. Johns, during his lifetime, and at his death, it shall be disposed of as follows: The dwelling house, with its furniture and equipments, together with the yard and garden, containing about four acres, with the improvements and appurtenances thereto belonging, I give to my two daughters Bettie D. and Anna Deane Johns. The residue of my farm I give to my four daughters Mary W. Trent, Fannie P. Johns, Bettie D. Johns, and Anna Deane Johns; and if a division thereof in kind agreed upon, I wish my daughters, Bettie D. and Anna Deane Johns, to have the right of selection in the division. My farm contains 776 1/2 acres, less 200 acres, more or less, recently conveyed to Mary W. Trent, and I denied title to it under the Deed from Thomas W. Johns to William H. Trent, trustee for my benefit, dated March 1, 1872, of record in Appomattox County Court in Deed book no. 6, pages 281-2-3 and from B. T. Tinsley and wife to William H. Trent, trustee as aforesaid dated February 6, 1877, of record in Appomattox County Court. (These records referenced were destroyed in the fire of 1892)

3rd. All the residue of my estate, of whatever kind and description, I give to my four daughters, Mary W. Trent, Bettie D. Johns, Fannie P. Johns, and Anna Deane Johns.

4th. I wish my son William D. Johns, at my death to be released from the payment of any part of his indebtedness to me, by bond, or otherwise, and I appoint him executor of this my will, and request that he be allowed to qualify without security.

Mary E. Johns

Sept. 18, 1894

The codicil of Mary E. Johns, written just prior to her death is as follows:

Being of sound & disposing mind on this the 26th day of August 1898, I, Mary E. Johns, make this codicil to my will, revoking all the wills or parts of wills in conflict herewith.

I desire to change & by this codicil do change, the second clause of my will so as to read as follows: I give my farm called "Mountain View", to my husband, Thomas W. Johns, during his life & at his death to be disposed of the following manner: The dwelling house, with its furniture, together with the yard & garden, containing about four acres, with the appurtenances thereto belonging, I give to my daughter Anna Deane Johns, as long as she shall remain unmarried, with the condition that my daughter Bettie D. Johns, shall have a home there as long as she desires to and it is practicable that she should. The residue of my farm, and all of said farm, in the event that my daughter Anna Deane should marry, I give to my daughters, Mary W. Trent, Fannie P. Moseley & Anna Deane Johns, upon the condition that a one-fourth interest in the proceeds of said farm shall be paid annually to my daughter Bettie D. Johns, as long as she shall reside at "Mountain View" as heretofore suggested. If a division of said farm in kind is desired and is agreed upon, I wish my daughter Anna Deane to have the right of selection, unless she marries prior to the time of said division, in which event, I do not want any preference.

To Deb give my album & pictures\* like they were. Tell her I am with her in mind, soul & spirit, and would love dearly to be with her in person, and we probably will not meet here, but on the shining shore and she will be the first one I will greet.

Lloyd, give him my love & his words cheered & comforted me & did me great good. He was the last one who ministered communion to me.

Witness my hand this the 26th day of August 1898.

Mary E. Johns

Signed & published by Mary E. Johns as & for a codicil to her last will, which is dated September 18, 1894, in the presence of us, who in her presence & in the presence of each other, have hereunto subscribed our names as witnesses.

Grace Kinckle Adams

H. D. Flood

In Appomattox County Court, October 6th, 1898 a paper (this paper) purporting to be the last will and testament of Mary E. Johns, dec'd, with a codicil thereto attached, was this day produced in court, and there being no subscribing witnesses to the said will, the whole of the same including the signature to it was proved to be in the handwriting of the testatrix by the oath of Thomas W. Johns, and the codicil thereto was duly proved by the oath of H. D. Flood, one of the subscribing witnesses to it - and thereupon said will and codicil are ordered to be recorded as such, and on the motion of William D. Johns, the executor named in said will, he is permitted to qualify as such, thereupon he took the oath prescribed by law and entered into a bond in the penalty of three thousand dollars payable and conditioned according to law, but without security, the said will requesting that none be required, and certificate is granted him of the probate of said will and of his qualification as such executor.

A copy - Teste

Geo. S. Peers, Clk.

\* Note: I have tried, unsuccessfully, for many years to locate this photographic album. Old photographs of the Johns' family and possibly the house would add to the history of Mt. Comfort, and would be of interest to the Historic Society as well. I have no idea who the "Deb" is that is mentioned.

The Children of Captain Thomas Winston Johns (1818 - 1904)  
and his wife

Mary Elizabeth (Dudley) Johns (1820 - 1898)

are as follows:

Mary W. Johns born 1844, and died Feb. 21, 1905 at about 60 years of age. She married Captain William Henry Trent and moved to Lynchburg to live. They later moved to Roanoke where Captain Trent held an important public position. In 1878 Captain Trent became trustee for his mother-in-law, Mrs. Johns, holding the farm "Mountain View" in trust for her until she died in 1898. In 1895 Mary Trent purchased 200 acres of the "Mountain View" farm from her mother. Due to failing health, the Trents moved from Roanoke to her parent's farm in Appomattox. Mary (Johns) Trent died quite suddenly in her sleep on Feb. 21, 1905. Captain Trent died nine months later on Nov. 19, 1905. Both are buried in the Johns' family plot in Presbyterian Cemetery in Lynchburg.

Bettie D. Johns born 1845 and died May 1, 1915 at 71 years of age. Apparently Miss Johns never married and resided at "Mountain View" most of her life. She is buried with her mother and father and others of her family in Lynchburg.

John Anthony Johns born March 1847, died June 4th, 1850 at the age of 3 years and 3 months.

Nannie Johns born ?? and died August 27, 1862. She is buried in the Johns' family plot.

Alice R. Johns born 1851 and died August 1, 1885 at about 34 years of age. She is buried in Lynchburg next to her mother.

William Dudley Johns born Sept. 20, 1852 and died Jan. 30, 1934 at the age of 81. William Johns married Miss Julia Herbert Ward on October 13, 1881. He lived the greater part of his life in Lynchburg. He was appointed executor in his mother's will. His wife died on December 20, 1912, at the age of 56 after a prolonged illness. Her obituary stated that she had been an invalid for nearly 12 months prior to her death. Both are buried in Lynchburg.

Thomas Winston Johns Jr. born August 1854 and died June 5, 1858. His tombstone in the Johns' family plot reads as follows:

"LITTLE TOMMIE"

Son of Thos. W. & Lizzie Johns  
Aged 3 Years & 10 Mos.

*We prayed that thou might's't  
Live. Yet thou are gone. We weep  
Yet say O God thy will be done.*

Tommie Johns is buried next to Nannie Johns and his grave also has a foot stone marked with the date 1858

Francis (Fannie) P. Johns born 1856 and died ?? She married Mr. Edward Moseley and is recorded as living in Bedford in 1905. Neither she nor her husband are buried with others of the Johns' family. The date she died is not known.

Anna Deane Johns born June 26, 1860, and died Sept. 24, 1935, at the age of 75. She is buried next to her father in the Presbyterian Cemetery in Lynchburg. (See separate story following)



MISS DEANE JOHNS

Photo from a 1920 school year book was made late in the 1800's and shows Miss Deane when she was younger.



MISS DEANE JOHNS

Photo from a 1920 school year book. In this photo Miss Deane was posing with the school French Club of 1920. This picture is enlarged to the point that some detail is lost, however it shows Miss Deane as her students knew her in 1920.

Miss Anna Deane Johns, the daughter of Captain Thomas Johns, was born on June 26, 1860. She is most well known as a teacher in the Appomattox County school system where she taught school until she was well into her 70's. A very brilliant and scholarly woman, she was educated at Columbia & the University of Virginia. (From school board records.) Being from an affluent family, she was able to travel to Europe, Egypt and other far away places in pursuit of her love for knowledge and education. In her later years she enjoyed relating her travels to her students and especially liked to talk about the Black Forest and Italy.

Miss Deane Johns never married, apparently preferring scholarly pursuits over romantic interests. It should be noted that in 1884 at the time her mother's will was written, her mother willed the family farm to her, provided that she remain unmarried. This statement in the will was apparently not intended to keep Miss Johns single, but rather to provide a comfortable life for her in the event she did not marry. Whether her mother's will had any effect on her decision to remain unmarried is not known.

Miss Deane Johns taught school the greater part of her life in Paris, Texas, and was for many years a writer and contributor to educational materials and other periodicals. Some time after 1905 she returned to her home and began teaching in the Appomattox public schools. Although school board records indicate she did not begin teaching until 1928, she is known to have taught Appomattox High school in 1920 and perhaps earlier. One source indicated that Miss Johns was hired to replace Gladys Van Volkenburgh, who was to be married. Miss Deane Johns continued to teach at Appomattox until 1933, when she became too ill to teach anymore. After she retired she was for a short time the librarian at the Appomattox Public Library. In declining health, she lived at the home of Mr. and Mrs. N. R. Featherston, and died on September 24, 1935.

Miss Deane Johns, or just "Miss Deane" as her students used to call her, taught English, French, and History, especially Early European History.

She was raised on her father's estate just north of Appomattox and although she was quite young, she remembered incidents which occurred during the course of the Civil War. As a young girl she remembered seeing many soldiers at the old Court House and elsewhere, and later told her students that one Yankee soldier, as she was leaving, said to her: "Good-bye, little rebel." To this she replied: "Good-bye, big devil!"

During the very early 1920's automobiles were not very prevalent in Appomattox, and one day she told her class that the day would come when everyone would be driving a car, and people would forget how to walk. How very true was her prediction! Miss Deane loved to walk and this was her chosen means of transportation. She frequently walked from Appomattox to her home.

Physically, Miss Deane Johns was tall and erect and very stately looking. She wore very handsome, stylish clothes and frequently wore long beaded necklaces. She usually wore her high necked collars with stays, and in winter, was never without a narrow fur piece around her neck. She also wore a wig and had the peculiar habit of reaching up under her wig to scratch her head. She had a deep voice and this fact coupled with her stately appearance commanded respect in the class room. All of her students agree that she was very strict and there were definitely no escapades in her class room.

Miss Deane had a dry sense of humor and frequently chastised incorrect answers with a sarcastic remark. If any of her students did not act correctly in class or would say something which was not up to her expectations, she would run her hand up under her wig and say: "Let me get to the window, I think I shall be sick!"

One of her eighth grade students, being quick to tattle tale at that age, spotted Miss Deane approaching the class room one morning and ran out to tell her: "Miss Deane the \_\_\_\_\_ twins are dancing in your class room!" In her characteristic style, Miss Deane ran her fingers up under her wig and replied: "I am glad they have some sense in their feet, because they don't have any in their head!"

One day, discussing her trip to Egypt in her History class, she asked the question: "What do men carry with them when they go to a new land?" The answer she expected was their customs, but the student answered: "Their wives." To that answer Miss Deane quipped: "With that I could mash your head and get jelly!" To other incorrect answers

she would sometimes remark: "What do you use your head for; a hat rack?" Miss Deane's sarcastic remarks and strict discipline were intended to make her students think. She would educate them in spite of themselves!

Another regular accessory usually associated with Miss Deane was that she always carried an umbrella. Being a strict disciplinarian, her umbrella had more uses than just keeping off the rain! One student remembers one particular occasion at Appomattox High School when there was a fire drill. The information came to the third floor telling the students to leave the school because it was on fire. As this particular student passed down the steps, she glanced into one class room and beheld Miss Deane brandishing her umbrella, and standing in the corner was a young fellow who was in the process of being scolded in the most determined manner. Regardless of the fire drill, Miss Deane would not let him leave until she had finished her scolding campaign!

Although Miss Deane Johns was strict and often sarcastic, she is fondly remembered as an exceptional teacher. One student recalls how astute Miss Deane was. When the news that Von Hindenburg had turned his power over to Hitler around 1932, Miss Deane remarked: "The world will rue this day." Miss Deane did not live to see just how accurate her statement proved to be.

She was well liked and admired by her students. One student stated that she was not only the smartest, but the best teacher that particular student ever had. Another student stated that Miss Deane had made her outline every single chapter in her history book, which later gave her a thorough knowledge of history and instilled in her a life long love of the subject.

During the summers and after she retired, Miss Deane worked in the County Library, which was housed in the old dormitory. (This library was later destroyed.) One student, who would often go to check out books, was told by Miss Deane that she had qualities which would make her a good librarian. This student later became a college librarian and gives Miss Deane the credit for guiding her in that direction.

Miss Deane is long remembered by many as being one of the finest school teachers Appomattox County ever had. Despite her strictness and peculiarities, Miss Deane was also very sensitive and caring. In one high school remembrance book written about 1928 or 1929, may be found Miss Deane's bold and decisive hand writing as follows:

"May your life have just enough shadows to make a beautiful sunset."

A.D.J.

#### ANNA DEANE JOHNS' TRUE STORY

Miss Claudine O'Brien, one of Miss Deane's students, entered Farmville State Teacher's College in the fall of 1932. In 1933 she wrote to Miss Deane requesting her former teacher's assistance on a school project. Miss Deane was at this time retired from teaching and was working at the Appomattox Public Library. Miss Deane Johns sent back to Miss O'Brien a most remarkable story which she had written and named "A True Story" and which she told Miss O'Brien: "You can write the facts of this story to suit yourself." At the time Miss Deane wrote this story she was nearly 73 years old. The story is very well written and reflects the author's sharp and intelligent mind.

The story itself is very unique and startling when you consider that this incident actually took place in Appomattox. The story takes place around 1845 - 1846 while Captain Thomas Johns was Commissioner of Revenue for the new county of Appomattox. Captain Johns was living on his 252 1/4 acre farm adjoining his father's (Col. John Johns) estate. Miss Deane Johns' remarkable little story is reproduced below exactly as she wrote it together with her notation to Miss O'Brien at the end of the story:

## A TRUE STORY

In the early settlement of Appomattox County, a family by the name of Whitehead purchased the tract of land now owned by the Lucados and built a house. The family then consisted of Mr. and Mrs. Whitehead and Adam\*, a negro slave, and a white indentured servant called Becky Amos.

Mrs. Whitehead seldom visited her neighbors and lived a singularly isolated life. Strange tales, however, of her cruelty to Becky Amos and the negro slave seeped out and were eagerly repeated by the gossips of the community.

Among the nearest neighbors of the Whiteheads was the family of Captain Johns, living where the old Thomas home now stands.

Captain Johns was the first Commissioner of the revenue in Appomattox County, and on this particular night with which this story is concerned, was away from home on official business and would be late returning. So a lamp had been placed in the window to guide him through a blinding snow storm which had set in early in the day. Mrs. Johns and a servant were standing at the window anxiously awaiting his return when they saw a strange looking figure struggling through the storm, evidently trying to reach the lighted window. As it drew nearer they distinguished the figure of a woman and hurried to open the door. The woman fell exhausted across the threshold. After warm food and drink had been administered, she revived and told the following story.

She and Becky Amos for some slight disobedience had been for several days shut up in an outer cabin with no fire and no protection from the cold except a bed of straw, and fed bread and water only. Desperate the woman had climbed through the low chimney of sticks and mud, and though numb from cold, and weak from starvation, had managed to reach the Johns' home through the blinding blizzard. She said she was sure little Becky Amos would die before morning if she could not be reached.

When Mr. Johns heard this story on his return, he summoned a posse of men and rode to the cabin, broke in the door and rescued the child, but too late. The next day Becky Amos died. The verdict of the coroner read death caused by cruel treatment. In examining the body the coroner noticed the soles of the feet peppered with little holes. The negro slave explained to the shocked bystanders by saying that Mrs. Whitehead often punished the child by forcing her to walk over shorn spiked flax hackles.

Indignation was rife among the people and Mrs. Whitehead was arrested and tried for murder. The trial took place at the old court house. Mr. Whitehead, in the meantime had died, and a baby girl had been born soon after his death. On the day of the delayed trial Mrs. Whitehead appeared in the court room, shrouded in black, carrying the baby girl in her arms.

Able speeches were made on both sides and when the judge charged the jury, there were few in the court room but believed that this determined set of men would protect the childhood of the county from cruelty such as this. Just as the jury was about to enter the jury room a strange thing happened - a piercing scream from the baby startled the court room. The jury paused for a moment. The psychological effect of the pin-thrust was evident. After a short consultation the jury returned the verdict:

"NOT GUILTY!"

You can write the facts of this story to suit yourself. Mrs. Whitehead lived to be over a hundred and died as she had lived, lonely and isolated from human companionship. I saw her on her death-bed. I was there as a child and have never forgotten the impression.

A. D. JOHNS

\*NOTE: Miss Johns' hand writing is not clear and I am unsure of the slaves' name.

In checking the authenticity of this story I telephoned several members of the Lucado family. Mr. and Mrs. Harry Lucado informed me that Harry's father did indeed purchase the farm from Hector A. Whitehead in 1905. They further stated that they had heard of the murder and told the story as they had heard it. The details of the murder story as related by the Lucado family are remarkably similar to the story written by Miss Deane Johns. Mrs. Lucado added some interesting details as follows:

The Lucado family used to have an old colored woman by the name of Caroline Turner who used to come in to do their laundry. They all referred to Caroline Turner as "Aunt Caroline" and it was from this woman that the Lucado family learned the details of the murder story. It was Aunt Caroline's grandmother who was the slave that was mistreated by the Whitehead family and that had escaped to get help. Apparently the little girl, Becky Amos, had been brought into the Whitehead house in an attempt to revive her and she had died in an upstairs bedroom. Mrs. Lucado further stated that a blood stain can still be seen to this day on the floor of the bedroom. Apparently the little girl was still bleeding from the feet (as the coroner found) which caused a blood stain in the old wooden floor. When I suggested that a laboratory analysis be done to confirm that the stain was indeed human blood, Mrs. Lucado declined, saying she did not want to know for sure what caused the stain and was content to cover up the stain with an old rug so as not to be reminded of the story.

Several members of the community reported that they had heard of the murder and that the room where the little girl had died was haunted, however the Lucado family deny they have any ghosts in the room. In fact Mr. Robert Lucado says he has slept in the room many times and that it is definitely not haunted.

Finally one member of the research staff of Jones Memorial Library indicated that he did remember seeing a newspaper account of the trial, however being unsure of the date the murder occurred, the newspaper article could not be located. Hopefully we will be able to include the newspaper account of the murder and trial in a future edition of this book. Although I doubt any stories of haunted rooms there is sufficient evidence to suggest that this bizarre murder actually occurred sometime in the past history of Appomattox County.

A SUMMARY OF OWNERSHIP OF  
MT. COMFORT PLANTATION WITH REFERENCES

DATES OWNED	OWNERS	ACREAGE	EXPLANATION OF CHANGES		REFERENCES
				IN ACREAGE	
??	Samuel DuVal	628 ac.		--	1791-92 Land Grants Reel 91, Grant 25, p. 579,580
Approx. 1784 to Approx. 1842	Major William DuVal	??		--	Buckingham Co. Census for 1810 & 1840. Also Henrico Co. Will Book 1, p. 122
Approx. 1842 to 1856	Col. John Johns	619½ ac. "adj. Isaac Adams"		--	App. County Tracts of land 1845-1855
1857-1869	Col. John Johns	770½ ac. "adj. Isaac Adams" and beginning in 1859 description changes to "adj. J.T. Davis"	151 acres purchased (no explanation in books)	--	App. County Tracts of land 1857-1869
1870	Capt. Thos. Johns	770½ ac.		--	App. County Tracts of land 1870
1871-1876	Capt. Thos. Johns	776½ ac.	6 acres gained by bookkeeping error	--	App. County Tracts of land 1871-76
1877	Benjamin T. Tinsley Trustee	776½ ac.		--	App. Co. Tracts of land 1877
1878-1895	W.H. Trent, Trustee for M.E. Johns	776½ ac.		--	App. Co. Tracts of land 1878-95
1895-1898	W.H. Trent, Trustee for M.E. Johns	576½ ac.	in 1895 200 acres sold to Mary Trent, Capt. Johns' daughter	--	App. Co. Tracts of land 1895-98
1899-1904	Capt. Thos Johns	576½ ac.		--	App. Co. Tracts of land 1899-1904
1905-1936	Anna Deane Johns and others	426½ ac.	150 ac. sold to HD Flood in 1916	--	Will of Mary E. Johns, Will Book I, p. 62. Also App. Co. Tracts of land 1904-1936
9-11-36 to 5-18-39	Hopkins Brothers, Inc.	426½ ac.		--	Deed Bk. 36, p. 76

A SUMMARY OF OWNERSHIP OF  
MT. COMFORT PLANTATION--CONTINUED

<u>DATES OWNED</u>	<u>OWNERS</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>	<u>EXPLANATION OF CHANGES IN ACREAGE</u>	<u>REFERENCES</u>
5-18-39 to 9-1-45	Harrison M. Burge and his wife	426½ ac.	--	Deed Bk. 38, p. 274
9-1-45 to 1-29-69	Herbert C. Pulliam and his wife Elizabeth	394 ac.	survey corrected and acreage lost	Deed Bk. 47, p. 232 p. 549
1-29-69 to 2-14-69	Clayton C. Bryant and C. Douglass Branch	394 ac.	--	Deed. Bk. 95, p. 131
2-14-69 to 9-1-72	Burruss Land & Lumber Co., Inc.	394 ac.	191 acres sold off	Deed Bk. 96, p. 9
9-1-72 to 7-2-73	Hugh M. Weaver & his wife Hattie	203 ac.	177 acres sold to Danny A. Cash	Deed B. 108, p. 484
7-2-73 to 3-24-76	John T. Steedley & his wife Gail	45.6 ac.	25.6 ac. purchased from Mr. Weaver and 20 ac. purchased from D.A. Cash	Deed Bk. 113, p. 265
3-24-76 to 8-17-79	Robert D. Hippert & his wife Joann	45.6 ac.	--	Deed Bk. 126, p. 126
8-17-79 to present	Richard L. Guild & his wife Hope	45.6 ac.	--	Deed Bk. 143, p. 37

## THE ADAMS' FAMILY OF "POPLAR SPRING"

Following the death of William DuVal, tradition holds that Mt. Comfort was owned by Isaac Adams, and later by the Johns' family. Unfortunately the records at the Appomattox Court House do not support this tradition. County land records consistently place the Adams' estate adjacent to Colonel John Johns' home (Mt. Comfort). The probable reason for thinking that Isaac Adams was once an owner of Mt. Comfort is because Isaac Adams married William DuVal's daughter (Susan DuVal) and because Isaac Adams, his wife, and his daughter are all buried in the old cemetery at Mt. Comfort.

Isaac Adams owned an estate which he called "Poplar Spring", and which was located adjacent to and east of Mt. Comfort. The cemetery at Mt. Comfort should be correctly termed the DuVal - Adams cemetery since it was undoubtedly begun by the DuVal family. The oldest grave in the cemetery is that of William Price, son-in-law of William DuVal, and is dated 1808, two years before Mrs. Susan E. (DuVal) Adams was born.

Since Isaac Adams and his wife are buried at Mt. Comfort, and their children are descendants of William DuVal, we will include this interesting family in the history of Mt. Comfort. The Adams' family information is as follows:

Richard Adams of Abridge County, England, made a will in 1734. His third son, Ebenezer Adams of St. Peter's Parish, New Kent County, Virginia, was born in England and died in Virginia on June 13, 1735. He received a grant of 3,980 acres in New Kent County and Henrico Counties in 1714. He was a vestryman of St. Peter's Parish and was married in 1718 to Tabitha Cocke of Brems, Henrico County. He had two sons, Richard Adams, who was born in 1726 and died in 1800, and the name of the other son has been lost. Richard Adams was a member of the House of Burgesses, the Virginia Assembly, and was said to be the wealthiest man in Richmond at the time. His home was known as Church Hill and is now the convent of Monte Maria. Richard Adams had a brother or cousin of whom no information exists whose name was Samuel Adams. The age would have been right for him to have been the Samuel Adams who turned up in Bedford County. More research in Richmond might lead to the uncovering of this information. (Above information from the "William and Mary Quarterly", Vol. V, p. 159)

A Samuel Adams, according to Bedford County Court Records, on November 23, 1772, purchased from William Perry for the sum of 15 pounds, 50 acres of land on the south side of Otter River. On August 28, 1779, Samuel Adams purchased from James Chastain for 400 pounds, 100 acres of land at the mouth of Moses Branch, a south branch of the Otter River, and bounding land owned by George White, John Roberts, James Edens, and himself, Samuel Adams. This land is north of the present Lloyd Thomas store and there is supposed to be an Adams graveyard on the Whitten farm which was part of the Adams property. This Samuel Adams was either brother or cousin to Richard Adams of Richmond.

On June 1, 1806, Samuel Adams purchased for 270 pounds, 270 acres lying on both sides of Crab Orchard Creek and adjoining the Isaac Wade property. Bedford County records do not indicate where this Samuel Adams came from, when he died, or any will or distribution of his property. However the next Samuel Adams to own this property must surely have been his son. Samuel Adams, son of Samuel Adams described above was born in 1776 and died in 1846. He married Patsy (or Martha) Wade. This Martha Wade was the daughter of Isaac and Mary Wade.

Samuel Adams was an ensign in the militia about 1812. His name is frequently mentioned in the County Order books, where it can be read that his slaves, at his direction, worked on roads in his community and that he was exempt from taxes. His will leaves his estate to be divided among his children and a grand-daughter, Susan Gibbs. No breakdown as to property held at the time of his death can be found. County records show that he gave away several slaves during his lifetime and had seven at the time of his death. His sons, Samuel Adams and Isaac Adams, were appointed administrators of his estate. The settlement of the estate, however, is vague. Below is the will of Samuel Adams:

On the 16th of December in the year 1846, we, John B. Fields and Silas G. Wade, whose names are hereunto subscribed, were at the dwelling house of Samuel Adams in the County of Bedford during his last sickness and we were called on by said Samuel Adams to bear witness that he desired that his will should be as follows and that he did desire that it be considered as his will to wit: "That he desired that all of his just debts should be paid, that the remainder of his estate after payment of his debts should be equally divided among all of his children and his grandchild Susan Gibbs, who was to have an equal share of his said estate with his children and desired that the said share of his grand-child Susan Gibbs should be put out at interest until she came to the age of 21 years or married and that if his said grandchild should die before marrying or without issue before or after marriage that then her portion as aforesaid of his said estate should go to be equally divided among all of his other children and the said Samuel Adams desire that his sons Isaac Adams and Samuel Adams should administer his estate and be executors of that his will."

Subscribed by us as witnesses

John B. Field

Silas G. Wade

1846 Dec. 26

At court held for Bedford County January 25, 1847.

This the deposition of John B. Field and Silas G. Wade purporting the nuncupative will of Samuel Adams deceased was established by the court as the will of said Samuel Adams deceased and ordered to be recorded, which deposition was sworn to in court by the said will named who made oath together with Jeremiah Wade and Archibald Wade their securities entered into and acknowledged bond in the penalty of eight thousand dollars conditioned according to law, certificate is granted them for obtaining probate on said will in new form.

Teste

Jno. A Steptor

CBC

Children of Samuel Adams and Martha Wade of Bedford County, Va:

1. Isaac Adams, who married Susan Elizabeth Brown DuVal
2. Mary Adams, who married William Garnet Lee
3. Samuel Adams, who married Easter Austin
4. Ann Adams, who married William Pollard
5. Jack Adams, who married Martha Hogan
6. Martha Adams, who married Jack Tibbs
7. Louise Adams, who married William Fields
8. Frances B. Adams, who married A. B. Bigbee

ISAAC ADAMS

Isaac Adams was born and raised in Bedford County. As a young man he moved to Lynchburg and became a merchant, being in partnership with Mr. Ammon Hancock. On Ammon Hancock's death considerable litigation took place in the Lynchburg Courts to dissolve and settle this partnership. Court records show that a final settlement of \$23,000.00 was ordered by the court for Isaac Adams to pay to the heirs of Ammon Hancock in 1848.

On June 12th, 1832, Isaac Adams married Susan Elizabeth DuVal, the daughter of Major William DuVal, of then Buckingham County. The event was noted in the Lynchburg Virginian, June 18, 1832, p. 3, c. 3, as follows:

"Adams, Isaac, married on Tuesday evening the 12th inst. to Miss Susan E. DuVal, dau. of Major William DuVal of Buckingham, by the Rev. Thos. Burge. Groom is of Lynchburg."

The newly married Adams' couple apparently lived in Lynchburg for a time, then later moved to (then) Buckingham County.

Major William DuVal and his brother, Philip DuVal, are listed as heads of households in the 1810 through 1840 census for Buckingham County and no mention is made of Isaac Adams. The tax lists for Appomattox County in 1845, however show Isaac Adams as owning 748 acres in that county. Thus it appears that Isaac Adams, and his wife moved between 1840 and 1845.

It was in 1845 that Appomattox County was formed and Isaac Adams was appointed the assistant Marshall. His neighbor, Captain Thomas Winston Johns, was appointed the first Commissioner of Revenue of the new county.

In 1850 it was Isaac Adams who was in charge of taking the census of 1850 and it is interesting to note the large number of people living at "Poplar Spring" at this time. The census of 1850 shows:

<u>NAME</u>	<u>AGE</u>	<u>SEX</u>	<u>COLOR</u>	<u>PLACE OF BIRTH</u>	<u>OCCUPATION</u>	<u>VALUE OF REALESTATE</u>	<u>STUDENT</u>	<u>NO. OF SLAVES</u>
Isaac Adams	47	M		Va.	Farmer	5,300		15
Susan E. Adams (wife)	42	F		Va.				
William D. (son)	14	M		Va.			1	
Isaac H. (son)	12	M		Va.			1	
Richard H. T. (son)	10	M		Va.			1	
Sarah F. (dau.)	1	F		Va.				
Susan B. DuVal (moth-in-law)	70	F		Va.				
Francis B. Adams (his youngest sister)	22	F		Va.				
John W. Woodson (Note 10)	26	M		Va.	Attorney at Law & Teacher			
Mary Woodson (Note 10)	22	F		Va.				
Nancy O'Holleran (Note 11)	45	F		Va.				
John A Doll	27	M		Md.	Meth. Clergyman			
Henry Christian	22	M	B	Va.	Laborer			
Edward Fielas	25	M	B	Va.				

Note 10: John W. Woodson and his wife, Mary, were apparently living with the Adams' for the purpose of teaching the three young boys listed as students. It was common during this time period for hired tutors to live-in.

Note 11: Nancy O'Holleran was probably a free white housekeeper in the Adam's home. It was common to find people of Irish descent in this position.

The census of 1850 concludes with the following notation;

"This day Isaac Adams, Assistant Marshall for the County, aforesaid, personally appeared before me a Justice of the Peace for the County aforesaid and made oath that the foregoing Census for the whole of said county has been correctly made by him agreeable to his oath and instructions to the best of his knowledge and belief. Given my hand and seal this 26th day of October 1850."

J. W. West, J. P.

In 1851 Isaac Adams became the Commissioner of Revenue for Appomattox County, succeeding Johnathan Christian who had died.

Isaac Adams was born in 1803 and died November 10th, 1857, at the age of 54, and was buried in the old cemetery at Mt. Comfort. Numerous references incorrectly state his birthdate and date of his death; however, we can assume, since he took the census of 1850 which includes his age, that he knew how old he was. Also an entry in the old Adams Bible states under deaths:

"On the 10th of November, 1857, in the 54th year of his age, Isaac Adams, at his residence in Appomattox, Virginia." This entry also coincides with his age in the census of 1850.

The tombstone over his grave apparently was placed after the death of his wife and the dates shown for Isaac Adams are not correct. Likewise the dates shown on his daughter's tombstone are questionable since they do not coincide with her obituary. The main headstone in the Adam's cemetery is a large one being about 2 x 5 feet at the base and is about 5 feet high with ADAMS inscribed in large letters at the base. There are two foot stones, one has FATHER on it, the other MOTHER. The large tombstone has inscribed:

Isaac Adams  
1806 - 1854

-----  
Susan E. DuVal  
Wife of  
Isaac Adams  
1810 - 1869

ASLEEP IN JESUS

Another tombstone which is in the old cemetery is that of William Price, the husband of Lucy DuVal. A smaller foot stone at his grave is marked: H.A.P. The main stone is inscribed:

Sacred  
to  
the memory of  
William Price  
the fourth son of  
Samuel Price  
of the County of Henrico  
was born  
on the 17th day of April, 1772  
and died  
October 10th, 1808

The only other tombstone which is inscribed in the cemetery is that of Susan Brown Adams. She also has a foot stone marked with S.B.A. The main stone is inscribed:

Departed this life on the 17th May 1848 in the  
fullest assurance of a glorious immortality  
Susan Brown  
only daughter of  
Isaac and Susan E. Adams  
Age 15 years and 17 days

She hath passed - but oh! sweet as the violets bloom,  
From her last lonely dwelling - the dust of the tomb,  
The charm of her virtues, as Heavens own breath,  
Shall rise like incense from darkness and death.

The cemetery itself is enclosed by a wrought iron fence, and is about 60 x 60 feet square. Other stones may be found but are not inscribed. By my count there are twelve graves which are marked by stones and most probably there are other graves as well, which are unmarked. It is quite possible that there is also other graves outside the fence since it was common practice to bury slaves in this manner.

Isaac Adams and Susan Elizabeth DuVal had five children as follows:

1. Susan Brown Adams b. April 30, 1833; d. May 16, 1848
2. William DuVal Adams b. in Lynchburg, Va. July 10, 1835; d. 1906
3. Isaac Holcombe Adams b. Lynchburg, Va. August 12, 1837; d. 1911
4. Richard Henry Toler Adams b. Lynchburg, Va. Nov. 6, 1839, d. 1900
5. Sarah Frances Adams (Called Sally Fannie) b. Appomattox, Va. June 9, 1849; d. July 23, 1920

Susan Brown Adams, the first child born to Isaac & Susan Adams became ill while still very young and died at her parent's home in Appomattox, Va. Her obituary was published in the Lynchburg newspaper in 1848 as follows:

"These thoughts have been suggested by the brief Christian experience and peaceful death of Susan Brown Adams, eldest child and only daughter of Isaac and Susan E. Adams, formerly of Lynchburg but now of Appomattox County.

She was born the 30th of April 1833 and died on the 16th of May, 1848 - just upon the threshold of her 16th year. The natural amiableness of her disposition and sprightliness of her intellect won for her, even in childhood, the affection and admiration of all who knew her, and induced her parents to afford her all the advantages of the best culture within their reach. For this purpose, after they left Lynchburg, they engaged the services of a competent female teacher at their private residence in the county of Appomattox. And with all these facilities, she was rapidly acquiring all the advantages and ornaments of an accomplished education. But there was wanting the "one thing needful" - to give polish and perfection to all the rest of her acquirements, and to prepare her fully for the duties of this life and the enjoyments of a better. This she sought and obtained in the month of July last. On the 19th of that month it was the happiness of the writer of this tribute to her memory, to see her approach the mercy seat, with several others of her school mates, and to give her heart to God. The offering was accepted. For -

"A flower when offered in the bud,  
Is no mean sacrifice."

And soon the blossoms and fruits of early piety, began most beautifully to unfold and ripen, both in her heart and life.

At this time, as previously, and for several months afterwards, her constitution was firm, and her health was unimpaired. But with the approach of Autumn, the spoiler came, and laid his blighting hand upon this beautiful flower, and it showed symptoms of decay. On the 16th of January she was laid low upon the bed of languishment, and for the space of four months, she suffered a very uncommon and painful illness which defied the assiduity and skill of all her physicians. It was ascertained some two months before she died that her disease was incurable and must eventuate in her death. Although she

had some apprehensions of this fact herself, yet she was not definitely appraised of it, until she happened on one occasion unintentionally to get hold of a letter, which had been written by some member of the family to a distant relation expressing the hopelessness of her situation. Soon after she had read it, her father came into the room, and she said to him with very great composure:

"Pa, how long has it been since the doctors gave me out?" With a bleeding heart, he was constrained to give her the desired information. She shed a few tears only, and then through grace, the struggle was over. From this time she spoke of her death with as much calmness as would have been manifested by a Christian of three score years and ten.

As long as she had strength to do it, much of her time in the day was spent in reading the Bible, both for her own comfort and for the instruction of her nurse, an excellent female of the neighborhood, who was not herself able to read. And for weeks before she died, she was in the habit of singing during the quiet hours of the night, her favorite hymns of praise to God. The writer of these lines had the privilege of seeing her some ten days before her death. He conversed, sang, and prayed with her; and in the midst of these exercises, she was constrained, feeble as she was to praise the Lord for His goodness, and to rejoice in the hope of heaven. He saw her again the day before she died, and it was evident to him, that her end was nigh. Her tender frame was much emaciated and her brow was well nigh as white as marble. But the light of immortality was beaming brightly in her eyes, and the calm resignation composed every feature of her countenance. The next day she was transferred from earth to heaven. A flower to bloom amid the bowers of Paradise. A jewel to deck the crown of her Savior. And perhaps a ministering angel, to watch over her surviving friends.

I know she is gone where her forehead is starred,  
With the beauty that dwelt in her soul,  
Where the light of her loveliness can never be marred,  
Nor her heart be flung back from its goal.  
Where love has put off in the land of its birth,  
The stains it had gathered in this,  
And hope, the sweet singer that gladdened the earth,  
Exalts in the region of bliss.

G.W.N.

Note:

The above obituary appeared in the Lynchburg Virginian, Monday, May 29, 1848.

## ISAAC ADAMS' PROMINENT SONS

William DuVal Adams, Isaac Holcombe Adams, and Richard Henry Toler Adams, sons of Isaac Adams, were all Confederate soldiers and after the war became very successful businessmen in Lynchburg, Virginia. They operated one of the largest business enterprises in Lynchburg. W. D. Adams, the oldest son, had some experience in the lumber business prior to the Civil War and after the war he entered into business in partnership with his brother, I. H. Adams. The company they formed was called I. H. Adams and Brother. A short time later the third brother, Captain R. H. T. Adams entered the firm as did another partner by the name of Payne and the firm became known as Adams Brothers - Payne Company. In an advertisement for the firm dated 1899, the firm sold lumber, cement, bricks, and other building materials, as well as coal, hay, corn, oats, and misc. feed. The advertisement for the firm stated that they "manufacture 15 million bricks per annum." The company originally founded by the Adams brothers is still in business today and is operating under the name of Campbell-Payne, Inc. By the late 1800's all three brothers were very successful and had amassed considerable wealth. They owned six large business concerns as well as owning an interest in several other small companies. In addition they were very active in the civic and political affairs of Lynchburg. (From a special edition of The News dated October 1900, entitled "Lynchburg at the 20th Century."

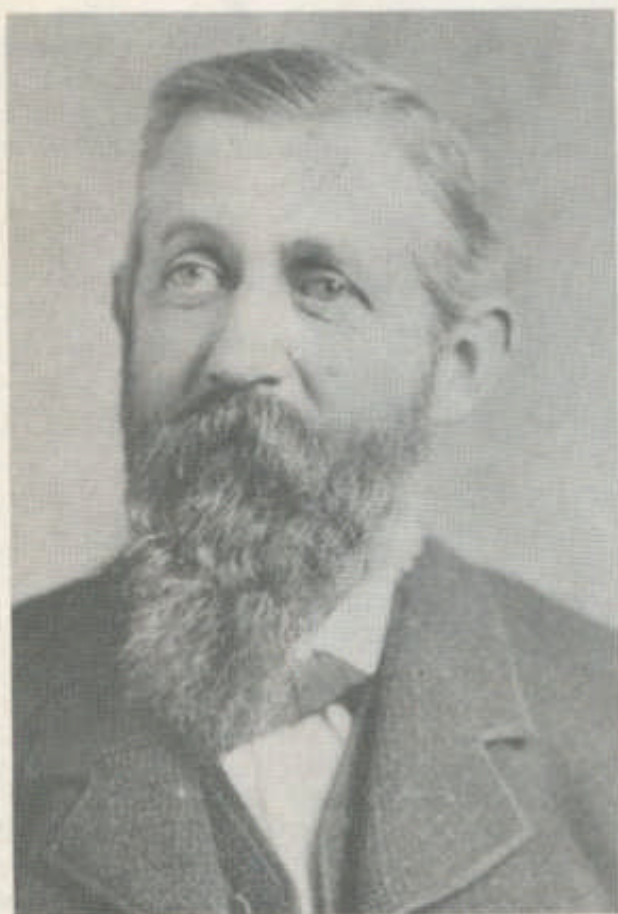


Campbell - Payne, Inc., founded by the Adams' brothers is still in operation today. Photo by the author, April 1983.

WILLIAM DUVAL ADAMS

William DuVal Adams, the oldest son of Isaac Adams, was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on July 10, 1835. At the age of twelve he moved to Appomattox County with his parents where he attended neighborhood schools as well as help work on his parent's farm. This early exposure to country living gave him a life long love for country life and he especially enjoyed horses of which he was an excellent judge. His favorite sports throughout his life were those of the rod and gun. In his early manhood he moved back to Lynchburg and entered into the lumber trade, and was one of the first men to introduce latter-day lumber methods in Lynchburg. His first independent business venture was in the lumber trade which he established with a partner sometime in the 1850's. Within a short time this partnership soon dissolved and W. D. Adams became a clerk in the city post office. When the Civil War began, Governor Letcher ordered him to report for work in the railway mail service which he did for about 15 months. During the later part of the war he was assigned to duty in connection with the mining of coal in Montgomery County for the Confederate Navy. After the war he joined his brother, I. H. Adams, and went back into the lumber business, forming the firm I. H. Adams & Brother. He later joined his brothers in several other business ventures and was able to amass considerable wealth. He was very beloved and well known in Lynchburg. He served two terms on the City Council as well as being Chairman of the Committee on Water. He was a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church and was active in civic affairs. In July of 1865 he married Miss Elizabeth Victoria Mullan and they had eleven children. He died in Lynchburg on August 26, 1906.

(From "Men of Mark in Virginia", Vol. V, by L. G. Tyler)



Two photos of William DuVal Adams  
Courtesy Miss M.D. Leys, Lynchburg

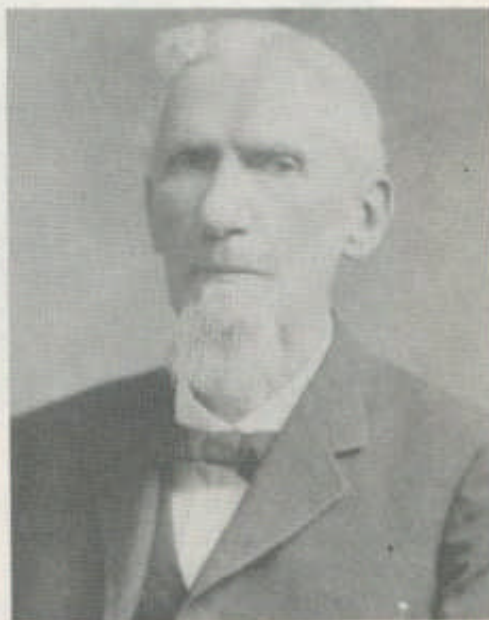
ISAAC HOLCOMBE ADAMS

Isaac Holcombe Adams was born in Lynchburg, Virginia, on August 12, 1837. When he was about ten years old he moved with his family to Appomattox County to live. He attended the Appomattox County schools and worked with his brother and parents on the family farm. At the outbreak of the Civil War he served as a Confederate soldier and following the war he entered the lumber business with his brother, forming the firm of I.H. Adams & Brother. He also entered the tobacco business with his brothers forming the firm of Adams, Chambers, & Co. in 1875.

I.H. Adams was also interested in the land business as well as the building trade and he was president of the Citizens Building & Banking Company of Lynchburg which owned a substantial amount of land. Although very little information is known about I.H. Adams, he may have been the most successful of the Adams brothers since in an advertisement for the Citizens, Building & Banking Company it is stated that he was one of the wealthiest individuals in Lynchburg at the time.

On December 1, 1859, I.H. Adams married Miss Mary Ann Patteson and the couple had twelve children:

Isaac Holcombe Adams Jr.,	Born October 13, 1860
Henry Patteson Adams,	Born December 27, 1862
Mary Frances Adams,	Born November 23, 1864
Sue Duval Adams,	Born August 25, 1866
Richard Hill Adams,	Born July 14, 1868
Ettie Lee Adams,	Born August 12, 1870
Benjamin Bransford Adams,	Born August 25, 1872
Sallie Adams,	Born June 10, 1875
John Carroll Adams,	Born June 25, 1877
Tell Christian Adams,	Born August 7, 1880
Robert Patteson Adams,	Born January 21, 1883
infant daughter - lived only one day,	Born December 27, 1885.



Two photos of Isaac Holcombe Adams  
Courtesy of Miss M.D. Leys, Lynchburg, Va.

CAPTAIN RICHARD HENRY TOLER ADAMS



Captain R.H.T. Adams' home at 405 Cabell St. in Lynchburg, Virginia. This well known home was built in 1853 by Albert Galatin Dabney, Mr. Dabney sold the home in 1856 to Mr. Charles Scott. When Mr. Scott died in 1865, his daughter, Mrs. R.H.T. Adams and her husband inherited the home. This beautiful 20-room house was kept in the Adams family until 1969 when it was deeded to the Lynchburg Historical Foundation.

CAPTAIN RICHARD HENRY TOLER ADAMS

Captain R.H.T. Adams was born in Appomattox County on November 6, 1839. In early manhood he moved to Richmond and became engaged in the mercantile house of Trusley, Tasy, & Williams. At the outbreak of the war he went to Lynchburg, Virginia, and enlisted in the "house guard", Co. 9, 11th Virginia Infantry. He served on the staff of General A.P. Hill, and was injured at the Battle of Petersburg. He distinguished himself in the Signal Corps, rising to the rank of Captain by the end of the war. After the war he returned to Lynchburg, joining his brothers in the firm of Adams Brothers - Payne Company. He later became president of Adams, Chambers & Company which was established in 1875 by all three of the Adams brothers and Mr. Chambers. Adams, Chambers & Company was one of the largest firms engaged in the leaf tobacco market in Lynchburg, Virginia, at the time. In 1899 this firm handled more than four million pounds of tobacco, the bulk of it being shipped overseas. Captain R.H.T. Adams became president of the Virginia Paving & Brick Co., The Lynchburg Coal & Coke Company, Eureka Coal & Coke Company of West Virginia as well as being a director of the lumber and tobacco businesses owned by all three Adams' brothers. He was also a member of the Lynchburg City Council for several terms and later became president of the First National Bank of Lynchburg. He was a very prominent man in Lynchburg as were his brothers and amassed considerable wealth. Captain Adams married Miss Susan Leigh Scott and they had eight children that survived to adulthood. Captain R.H.T. Adams died at his residence in Lynchburg on November 14, 1900. Below is a family picture of this well known Lynchburg family which was taken about 1898.

(Information from the S. Bassett French Biographical Sketches, Reel 1, Page 20 and from "Lynchburg at the 20th Century - The News", October 1900.)



The family of Captain Richard Henry Toler Adams including his son-in-law Henry Herbert Harris and his grandson. Photograph made about 1898 at Captain Adams' home at 405 Cabell Street, Lynchburg, Virginia.

Front row - left to right: Charles Scott (Tom) Adams; Mrs. R.H.T. Adams; Holcombe Chambers (Hock) Adams; Captain R.H.T. Adams; Henry Herbert Harris Jr.; Annie Scott Adams (Mrs. Herbert Harris); Elizabeth DuVal (Lizzie) Adams (later became Mrs. Hull)

Back row - left to right: Sue Scott (Ootie) Adams; Powell Hill (Jack) Adams; R.H.T. (Dick) Adams Jr.; Henry Herbert Harris, James DuVal (Didy of Jim) Adams.

(Courtesy of Mr. & Mrs. Richard A. Harris, Jr. of Lynchburg)



SARAH FRANCIS ADAMS  
(Called Sally Fannie)  
1849 - 1920

FURTHER EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT OWNERSHIP  
OF "POPLAR SPRING" BY ISAAC ADAMS.

"Poplar Spring" was apparently the name given the estate by Isaac Adams and it appears in several places in the land books at the Appomattox Court House. In addition the land books consistently place the Johns' home "adjacent to Isaac Adams" and later "adjacent to J.T. Davis". The plot on the following page does place the estate adjacent to the Johns' home.

Several of the Adams descendants produced old photographs of what they were told was the Isaac Adams home and, in fact, on the back of one photograph was found a notation confirming this fact. These old photographs were shown to Mr. Leslie Gordon who positively identified it as the house where he was born in 1918, and he further stated that it was the old Miles house. Mr. Gordon even produced an old deed (Book 10, pg. 219 at the clerk's office) which indicates the property to be the old George Miles estate. Mr. Gordon indicated that the property had many very large poplar trees growing on it, and said that one particular very large poplar tree grew next to the spring and that it was at least four feet in diameter. It is probable that this is the reason for the name "Poplar Spring".

Finally Mr. Hubert Caldwell, who has been living in this area since 1902, identified the house as belonging to George Miles and previous to him belonged to the Langhorne family. Mr. Caldwell's excellent memory was, in fact, how I was first able to support Isaac Adams ownership of this house.

Below are the photographs supplied by the Adams's descendants showing Isaac Adams' home:



These two photographs appeared on a 1907 calendar. They show "Poplar Spring" as it appeared late in the 1800's.

(Courtesy of Miss M.D. Leys,  
Lynchburg, Va.)



"POPLAR SPRING" - HOME OF ISAAC ADAMS



Three photographs of Isaac Adams' home in Appomattox Co.  
These pictures were made in the early 1900's probably  
about the time the Gordon family owned the farm.  
(Courtesy of Miss Marion DuVal Leys, Lynchburg)

A SUMMARY OF OWNERSHIP OF "POPLAR SPRING"  
BASED ON APPOMATTOX COUNTY LAND BOOKS.

<u>DATES OWNED</u>	<u>OWNER</u>	<u>ACREAGE</u>	<u>DESCRIPTION</u>	<u>EXPLANATION OF CHANGES IN ACREAGE</u>
Prior to 1845	??	??	--	--
1845-1847	Isaac Adams	748 $\frac{1}{4}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	--
1847-1859	Isaac Adams	708 $\frac{1}{4}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	40 acres sold off or survey corrected--no correcting entry.
1860-1871	John T. Davis	708 ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	$\frac{1}{4}$ ac. dropped from records.
1872	Trust held by Maurice, Daniel, John & James Langhorne attnys for Wm. H. Langhorne, wife & children	383 $\frac{1}{2}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	Balance of property described as "on Naked Mtn." held by J.T. Davis until his death, in 1896. 285 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac. was sold to I.H. Adams in 1890.
1873	Wm. Langhorne trust	324 $\frac{1}{2}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	59 acres sold
1874-1882	Wm. Langhorne trust	216 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	107 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac. sold to I.H. Adams
1883-1888	Wm. Langhorne trust	215 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	1 acre sold
1889-1899	George Miles trust	323 $\frac{1}{2}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	107 $\frac{3}{4}$ ac. bought from I.H. Adams
1900-1908	George Miles trust	320 $\frac{1}{2}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	3 acres sold to Cornelius Christian
1908-1917	R.W. Burkey	318 $\frac{1}{8}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	Acreege corrected by survey of July 9, 1907 (see attached)
1917-1945*	G.D. Gordon, J.L. Gordon, F.C. Gordon, R.M. Mitchell	318 $\frac{1}{8}$ ac.	"Near Naked Mtn."	

\* Mr. Gordon sold the house about 1945 to a Mr. Burnie Guinn from Tennessee, who sold it to a Mr. Cordell, who sold it to Continental Can Company. The old house was torn down late in the 1950's. The property today is a timber tract and no trace of the home remains. It is my understanding that the National Park Service used portions of the old house to restore the tavern at the surrendering ground.

July 9th 1909. Surveyed for R. W. Burkey Attorney for  
 R. W. Burkey Three Hundred eighteen and one-fourth acres  
 of land situated South-west of and near to Bald Head  
 cove in Annapolis County Va. Bounded and described  
 as follows to-wit. Beginning at a stake in Lucards  
 line at the head of Dismal Lane at 1. thence with  
 Lucards N 41° 42' W 420 chains to Gum point at  
 2. N 85° W 12.00 ch to Post Oak at 3. N 87° 15' W 972  
 ch to a planted stone at 4. N 89° 42' W passing Mount  
 and Gilbert's corner at 5. S 31.33 ch to Oak and Cherry  
 pointers on M. C. Caldwell at 6. thence with his line  
 N 37° W 25.37 ch to old Gals Post at 89  
 7. N 9° 15' E 506.4 ch to stake in  
 Old Roadway at 8. N 15° E 1475 ch  
 ch to stake in said old road at 9.  
 N 4° 15' E crossing above 27.27 ch  
 a creek at 10. N 19° 30' W 50 ch to corner  
 with White Lucards at 11. thence with Lucards  
 line N 70° E 34.01 ch to stake in old Road  
 at 12. thence S 18° 15' W 867 ch to a planted  
 Stone corner in the Cavillius Christman tract at  
 13. thence with said tract S 70° 30' E 187 ch to a  
 creek at 14. S 55° 30' E 1672 to Myers line at 15  
 thence with said line it being the Old Pendergast's tract, S 6° 10' W 909 ch to 16 S 25° 40'  
 N 344 ch to creek at 17. S 85° 10' W 1960 ch to the middle of Old Cadville Road at 18  
 thence with the Old Road S 56° 45' E 140. S 67° 15' E 468 and S 59° E 96 ch to cor-  
 ner of the Diaz tract, thence down Old Road with said tract, S 80° E 600, S 25° E 500  
 S 25° E 900 and S 33° 30' E 480 ch to beginning

*R. W. Burkey*

A plot and survey of 318 1/8 acres made for R.W. Burkey on July 9, 1909.  
 R.W. Burkey was one of the owners of Isaac Adams' home known as "Poplar Spring."

The best description of life in Appomattox during the 1800's was found in a newspaper article written by Mr. Branch Walker and published in the Lynchburg News about Jan., 1900. This article is Mr. Walker's recollections of his life in Appomattox County both before and after the Civil War. Mr. Walker was born, as near as I can tell, about 1838, thus he was about 62 years old when the article was written. Although I have not verified every one of his facts, I believe them to be quite correct. I have made no effort to edit this article, but rather it is reproduced here exactly as it appeared in the Lynchburg News at the turn of the century:

IN OLD APPOMATTOX

---

INTERESTING RECOLLECTIONS

OF DAYS LONG GONE BY.

---

Homes Famous for Their Hospitality and  
Some of the Men and Women Who Made the Life  
County What It Was.

(For the News)

At the beginning of a new year and century, what more natural than that we indulge in a little retrospect. Especially is this true of one who is cut off from the living present by deafness, from the future by the knowledge that he has nearly reached the limit of life allotted by the Psalmist; so, retrospect--the chief pleasure of the old--is his only comfort.

That pleasure is enhanced, however, by the fact that his early footsteps trod the soil made memorable by the name of Appomattox. The name is an Indian one, and was given to a stream that rises on the farm of Major J. W. Flood, passed a little north of the old Courthouse near the spot at which General Lee's camp was pitched, flows near Farmville and Petersburg and unites with the James at City Point. This little stream has history at both ends--its source made memorable by the surrender of General Lee, its mouth by the corking up of Spoon Butler by General Beauregard. Appomattox is destined to go down in history alongside of Waterloo. May I not hope then, that some reminiscences of the famous village and the good people who lived thereabouts may be enjoyed by at least the descendants of those old people.

Before the county was formed, and when stage coaches were the chief means of travel, there was a stage stand at Clover Hill, where a change of horses took place and the tired traveler could find meals and lodging and possibly a toddy. The generation who lived near Clover Hill before my recollection, were people of wealth and culture and lavish hospitality. Nearest the village the Franciscos, the Floods, then John M. Walker, Major William Duval, Major Phil Duval, Henry A. Christian, Sam P. Christian, the Pattersons, and others. A little later and within my recollection these were succeeded on the east by Dr. Joel W. Flood, great grandfather of the Congressman-elect, Colonel Thomas Flood, father of the late Major John. H. Flood, of Lynchburg.

Major John W. West succeeded to the Francisco place on the north, a man genial, open and kind, who could dispense old Virginia hospitality with the ease and grace of a Chesterfield. Next Major Samuel J. Walker succeeded his father at the place at present owned by Frank McKinney. Issac Adams, who married Susan Duval at the place recently owned by the late John T. Davis. Colonel John Johns bought and lived at Major Phil Duval's old place, and Mr. Henry Patterson lived and died at the old Patterson place, southeast and near Bald Mountain.

At the foot of Bald Mountain lived the late Jonathan Christian, and at Rocky farm, where the Appomattox river finds its source, lived the late Henry A. Christian, the father of Dr. Andrews, Dr. Samuel B., Edward D., and Phil, children by his first marriage, and Tell, Jack and Sprat Christian, sons of the last marriage.

At the place later owned by Dick North lived the third Christian (a brother of the two men above)—Sam P. Christian, who was the father of Major Billy Christian and Betsy Christian, the first wife of the late Robert H. Glass, of Lynchburg.

It was about this time (or a little later) that the writer's acquaintance with the now historic Appomattox Courthouse and vicinity, commenced. These were all good people, educated, wealthy and refined, and scarcely a day passed but the old "bug-back carriages" could be seen on the road taking the occupants to some neighbors to a dining. Here my acquaintance and friendship with Tell, Jack and Sprat Christian; Duval, Holcombe and Dick Adams, Bob Patterson (afterwards Dr. Bob) began. Tell and Sprat Christian, Dick Adams and Bob Patterson are sleeping their last sleep, with Isaac and Harvey Walker, while Jack Christian, Duval and Holcombe Adams with the writer are nearing "the bourne from which no traveler has yet returned."

At the Francisco place (later the West place), a gang of counterfeiters were detected with their tools concealed between the weather boarding and plastering.

At the now McKinney place, Susan Christian married the late John M. Walker. Her father, Harvey John Christian dropped dead the night of the wedding, and the joy of the occasion turned into mourning.

#### THE COUNTY FORMED

Not long after this the county of Appomattox was formed by taking the western portion of Buckingham and Prince Edward, the northern slice from Charlotte, and the eastern part of Campbell. The Courthouse was located at Clover Hill. The first clerk was, I believe, Mr. John Bocock, who was succeeded by his son, Henry F. Bocock, who filled the position until the war. This Bocock family was one distinguished as few families have been for talent. From this family (Mr. John Bocock, whose wife was a Miss Flood), came the late Dr. John H. Bocock, an able divine of the Presbyterian Church; the late Willis P. Bocock, Attorney General of the State; the late Thomas S. Bocock, for ten terms a member of the United States Congress, (who would have been Speaker of the House but for the Lincoln-John Brown raid, which ruined all at Appomattox. He was elected to the Confederate Congress and made Speaker of the House); the late Henry Flood Bocock, clerk of the county for a long term; the late Nicholas F. Bocock, an able lawyer, and others, all men of decided culture and talent. The present floater Representative from Campbell and Appomattox is a grandson of the elder Bocock, and as his name (Rolf) indicates, a descendant of Pocahontas.

It would extend this retrospect to too great a length to enumerate all the good people of this county. Yet a bad boy (deserving of many rebukes for his youthful folly, who cannot recall a single censure, but on the contrary hearty greetings and warm handshakes from the worthy, solid people among whom he grew to manhood) cannot forego the pleasure of naming the Davidsons—Jesse T., Samuel S., and Tom. The Carsons—from old man John (who was a soldier of the first Revolution); his son, James Carson, and grandsons, William, John, Watt, Palmer, & Watt ended the war as captain of the Appomattox troop of calvary in the Second Virginia Regiment, whose colonel told the writer "Watt was as fine a soldier as ever wielded a sabre."

The Strattons,--old Dr. Stratton and the late Daniel Stratton, who (used to salute the writer always with, "How are you, Mischief?" The younger Strattons, Burwell, Albion, Pleasant, Ned, and the LeGrands, descendants of Daniel Stratton. the Hammers--the Rev. John C., James A. and Dr. Wyatt W. Hammer. The Carnifixs--John, Ned and Shep. The Diuguids, from whom the present family in Lynchburg derive their origin. The name can be spelled both ways (back and forth) and one of the older Diuguids, struck with this, dubbed one of the boys with a given name that could be similarly spelled--"Burgrub," and the present Meem Diuguid is subject to the name peculiarity in spelling.

These people were the salt of the earth--honest, quiet, law-abiding and law-loving people; many of them with hoe-handle corns on their hands, self-made; good neighbors, who visited the sick, helped the poor, who were full of the milk of human kindness, whose broad breasts contained big hearts capable of generous impulses; such men as filled the ranks of Cromwell's Ironsides. Such are the people among whom I grew up and I would like to place a memorial window in the old Hebron church to every one of them.

On the old stage road leading from the old Courthouse to Lynchburg, were the Stathams (where the writer attended his first circus); the Robertson; old Mrs. John Plunkett, at the Spout. A little above, old Mr. Sam Glover--ponderous in figure, but genial, kind and loveable in disposition, with a mighty sweet daughter, too, whose track in the road the writer used to cherish; whom he used to escort to her school every morning but could never summons courage to give her the boquet he longed to present, but would send it back to her by the girls he met coming the other way. Had she not been too modest to help a fellow out a little, who can say what might have happened?

A little further west was Chilton's.

At all these places in the long ago, stages stopped. Travellers to and from the springs in private carriages would stop at night. It was no unusual thing to see the stable yard full of vehicles, and droves of hogs driven on foot from Western Virginia, Kentucky and Tennessee by the 500 and 1,000 in a drove. Dr. Bagby, Virginia's greatest humorist, has told us of the old stage horn whose music reverberated along the hills and valleys. These places afforded a market for all the butter, eggs and chickens of the nearby farmers and in return supplied meat to those who failed to raise enough. I could fill a volume with the characteristics and peculiar traditions of these good people. Old man Jonathan Christian, who lived at the foot of Bald Mountain, was a small, dried-up, or (as George Bagby would say) "weevil-eaten little old man," who had his saddle so deeply covered with yellow sheep skins he could hardly free himself from the crotch, was yet as full of dry wit and fun as a clown. On one occasion he was riding along when a stranger, finely mounted, overtook him on his sheep-skin saddle; after some talk the stranger was curious to know who his fellow traveller was. So he asked "May I be so bold as to ask your name, sir?"

"Yes, sir," replied old man Jonathan. Then there was a pause. After a little the stranger summoned resolution to try again;"May I ask you to tell me your name, sir?"

"Yes, sir;" reiterated old man Christian, with an inward chuckle, enjoying the discomfiture of the stranger, who never did find out the old man buried in sheepskins.

Among the later residents of the old Courthouse was Daniel Isbell, long while attorney for the Commonwealth. He was an uncle of Mrs. Ned Glass. A more genial, warm-hearted, good man never lived. With it he possessed a vein of wit and humor that made him a welcome guest and the center of every circle. I was with him on one occasion on a call upon Miss Jennie Harris, whose father bought the old West place. A thunder storm came up, and Miss Jennie was terribly afraid of lightning. She occupied a short sofa with Isbell. At a loud clap of thunder and a vivid flash of lightning she involuntarily sprang at Isbell, when with his characteristic humor he said, "Set up close, stick close to me, Miss Jennie, I'm the best lightning rod you ever saw." Isbell went West and I do not know if he is living. If so he is on "borrowed time," long past his "threescore and ten." How well I

recall his parodies. One he often repeated to the girls:

"The girls are all deceitful show  
For man's deception given,  
Their smiles of joy and tears of woe,  
Deceitful shine, deceitful flow.  
There aint one true in "leven."

#### BUCK TRENT'S ANSWER

What would Appomattox be without Buck Trent? Genial, jolly, fat Buck Trent.

I have already alluded to the hospitality of Major West and his interesting family, yet I must recur to it again. I am debtor for some of the happiest hours of my life to those good people. They had then four grown daughters, and with their numerous pretty cousins who visited the place, 'twas of course the resort of we young men. It was approached by two roads meeting at right angles at the horse-rack. How often as Jim Robertson and myself would strike the clearing on one road, would we see Daniel Isbell, Buck Trent and Crawford Jones approaching on the other, when we would all dismount in a group at the gate.

On one occasion, (Christmas night), the Major gave an oyster supper. Among the guests were the old people of the neighborhood in the private part of the mansion and enough of us younger ones to nearly fill the parlor. As the "wee sma' hours" of the night approached, the older people came into the parlor as they donned their wraps for the night ride home. For a moment there was a scarcity of seats, and while the small butler, Archer, was bringing in chairs, the old Major thought to fill in the time with a little trick for the boys. His plan was to place a lighted candle on the table, blindfold a boy, make him turn three times and approach the candle to blow it out. Bob West was a very bashful boy. He had a hen-house and was fond of chickens, and had been after his father for a few pullets he had bought for the table. To induce him to try the candle the Major said, "Come, Bob, if you will blow it out I'll give you two of my pullets." Buck Trent, who had long had a weakness for one of the Major's pretty daughters, jumped up, and with that brass that only Buck could show, said, "Major, if you'll just give me one of your pullets I'll blow it out." Of course, the room roared, and the Major had to give attention to Archer and the chairs.

A little northwest of the Courthouse lived Dr. Palmer, an educated, refined, accomplished old Virginia gentleman. Like "Doc Sifers," he tramped those roads and forded those streams,—or "swum up—for two generations. I can remember when he kept three horses, and kept them all busy, too. He must have had an iron constitution. His practice embraced Appomattox, a portion of Campbell and Buckingham, and often over into Amherst. Who can tell the joy of the grieved mother and anxious father as they watched the fevered brow of a loved child, to see the Doctor ride up on old Liver, and unbuckle the little hairy valise—he never carried saddle bags—and hasten to the relief of the suffering. How often I have heard and felt the click of his lancet and seen the red blood spurt on his hand. This practice, long since abandoned, I sometimes think, (but for fashion) could very well be partially resumed.

What responsibility a physician has to bear! At my daughter's in your city I often stop to gaze at a painting representing the doctor with anxious eye watching the life ebb from a dying child. The mother—all hope abandoned—sits with face buried in her hands, while the father, with nerves unstrung and a bleeding heart, stands, the picture of despair. No one can appreciate this picture save a father who has had the bitter cup to his lips, and heard the clods fall on the coffin of a dear little child.

A good man, ripe in years and full of good works, he has long since passed to his reward. He never "let his left hand know what he did with his right." "He did not his alms before men." In looking over his old letters I find thanks from people he helped and

never spoke of to any. I read a letter from a minister who now fills a prominent position in the Methodist Conference thanking for money while pursuing his studies at college. Dr. Palmer lived and died without letting the world know the help he gave his fellow man. I have seen him burn in one pile over \$2,000 worth of bonds which he forebore to try to collect, because it might bring privation to some good soul.

Jack Christian is a nephew of Dr. Palmer and frequently spent a portion of his vacation there. On one occasion he got there and found the white family absent. He wanted to get to cousin Susan Adams', and took the liberty of borrowing a horse. He saddled and mounted a little mare then called "Guinea," and struck off for Cousin Susan's. That night "Guinea" was taken with a bad attack of grubbs, keeled over and died in the tack yard. The boys had a good one on Jack for losing his self-loaned horse, and I think Jack rather hesitated to meet his "Uncle Reuben." But the old gentleman never let it be known that he had a nag named "Guinea," and never mentioned the loss to Jack. He was too noble to wound a boy's feelings.

Going back to the old families, I recall the Adams family--the industrious father and good Christian mother of Duval, Holcombe and Dick, and of Mrs. John W. Carroll. Mrs. Adams was a sister of the late Governor Duval of Florida, and spent much of the latter part of his life at her home near the old Courthouse writing a history of Florida. He died before completing it. Some years ago I wrote a little piece about this most remarkable and adventurous old governor, which The News did me the honor to print, with headlines, "By an intimate friend." I was only a boy of fifteen or sixteen when the governor died, and not an intimate--only an interested listener with Duval, Holcombe and Dick Adams, as the old man would tell us of his adventures in the "dark and bloody ground" of Kentucky, where he went on foot at the age of fourteen, and grew up with the country, returning to see his father and sisters when on his way to take a seat in Congress

I recall happy hours at "Old Home," the residence now of Major Joel W. Flood, then occupied by old Dr. Flood, who, with his genial, aristocratic face, could handle the fiddle and the bow. The "jink and diddle" of his elbow as he accompanied his granddaughter on the piano, made the hours pass speedily and delightfully. She married Tom Flood, son of Colonel Tom Flood, many years the handsome and able State Senator of the district.

How well I can recall Colonel John Johns and his lovely wife--"Aunt Polly," as we called her. She was a daughter of Judge Winston and a sister of the late Edmund Winston, of Amherst. Judge Winston's second wife was the widow of Patrick Henry. After him was named "Winston's Hill," the first hill on the old turnpike east of Lynchburg. Colonel Johns dispensed a lavish hospitality, and Aunt Polly was equally as lavish with her cats. I have seen the house full, porch full, and yard full of the cleanest, sleekest, fat cats. They were so well trained that they would never disturb a dish, but wait with good manners until a whopping big dish filled for them was put under the table, and then such a cat-feast!

The long, ripe Jackson watermelons I have enjoyed in the back porch, shaded by green shutters; the circular flower garden, just in front of the yard gate, brilliant and aromatic with lovely flowers! It was a benediction to hear Aunt Polly talk--her gentle, soft, musical voice lingers in my ears across the gap of half a century.

A little north of Major Sam P. Christian's old place, with its tall Lombardy poplar trees, is Oakville. This was the residence and store of the late Bryant Nowlin, the father of John, William C. and S. W. Nowlin. He always wore a claw-hammer broadcloth coat, and a beaver hat with a flowing wig. I can recall him as he used to attend court with his red leather saddle-bags, filled with store accounts, swinging over his left arm, and his right resting under his claw-hammer coat-tails. Nearby towards Bald Mountain, lived his brother, Perkins Nowlin. He was not a model farmer, and allowed his land to wash into gullies. The late Mr. Overton one day asked him: "Perkins, when are you going to move?" Perkins replied, "I have no intention of moving. Why do you ask?" "Well," says old man Overton, "if you don't move on soon the gullies will get so deep around you you can't get out of

your yard."

A little northwest of Oakville stands old Red Oak church. Here the good Baptists from miles around assembled to hear old Parson Sam Davidson.

#### WHEN PARSON DAVIDSON PREACHED.

They used to mount me on old "Jane Taylor," a hard-trotting old mare capariscned with my father's big saddle. It had been a very fine saddle, quilted and stiched; but time and the rats had exposed much of the white cotton quilting, and it hung in rolls on each side like the hair on an Angora goat. It was then the fashion, as now, for boys to wear very wide collars. Mine extended out as far as my shoulders, with a heavy, wide ruffle. As old "Jane Taylor" would bounce me about six inches every trot, the rolls of white cotton flying up and down like stockings on a clothes line on a windy day, and my wide, ruffled collar would flop up and down like the wings of a buzzard as he first starts to fly, I offered great amusement to the vivacious Miss Jane Harris and her better mounted beau, as we would leave the "main plain road" and turn in towards old "Red Oak." The rows of ox carts arranged on either side were filled with "Joe Johnston" and "rattlesnake" water-melons. Then we would pass the "tumbler cart" of old "Cake-Baker" West, filled with horse ginger cakes. The neigh of the horses, the bray of the mules and lowing of oxen gave evidence of a big crowd and that old Parson Davidson would be at his best.

A part of the old brick church was by a partition, assigned to the colored folks, and one particular old woman was a standing shoulder. As old Parson Sam, first in deliberate and measured tones, interlarded with many "ahems" and ahas," then by degrees warming up, this old negro would begin to careen from side to side, with an occasional "Bless-de-Lord," at every pause. As old Sam would acquire momentum, she would clap her hands and shout, "My Marster." Not to be outdone, old Sam would open the throttle and put on more steam. Then the old woman would bounce up, and hugging first "Bre'r Absolem" and then "Sister Mourning" with "Whar's yo'r 'ligion?" "Why don't you shout?" "Bless-de-Lord!" "My Marster!" First above the din you could hear old Sam in loud "and-ah-aura,--very deer brethren." Then the old nigger would get in ahead, until both, under full steam, forty miles an hour, with the wheels rattling over the rail joints in a rapid kachuck, kachuck, achuc, achuc, until you countn't hear your ears. All at once there would be a sudden slow-up, as if the air brakes had clutched everywhere, throwing the passengers against the seat in front. Old Sam would fall back, out of breath, in his seat, take his two-foot-square red bandanna from his coat --which in the heat of the race he has hung upon the edge of the pulpit--mop the great beads of sweat that shined on his bald pate, and ply his fan for a cool breath. The old nigger would be in a slump on the floor, with "Sister Mourning" and "Sister Judy Ann" pumping breath into her with two big "turkey-wing" fans. Now and then a returning paroxysm (the old woman was scissors to the last) would bring out an audible "My Marster." After old Sam had regained his breath he would rise and raise his hand, still grasping the big bandanna, and the congregation would rise for the benediction. The good old sisters would draw their long-eared bonnets over their heads and the wide calico strings in a big bow-knot under their chins. The brethren would resume their hats, and all made for fresh air in the grove.

You could hear the "ca-chick, ca-chick, ca-chick," as the negro drivers would let down the leather and iron steps from their folded position in the old "bug-back" carriages and barouches. The black "Jehus" (Colonel John's old six-eye Bob conspicuous above them all) would crack their whips and the caravan would file out to the big road. The poorer class would back up old "Mark and Merryman" and insert the big split ox tongue through the ring in the yoke and let fall with a "click" the iron pin to pull by. The negro driver with a huge whip, would bounce up on the split tongue at the heels of the steers, and join the procession. Old Cake-Baker West and his tumbler-cart (his cakes all exchanged for coppers) would bring up the rear. Old Brother Davidson, on his pale sorrel, with flax mane and tail, would wind out towards "Terrapin Knob." The husband of the old woman would lead her to a black and ancient mule, with a saddle all patched up with raw sheep-skin with the white wool still on, and the old woman (with consciousness restored) would mount the mule, with her "rid-o-cule" on her left arm and a pipe stem sticking through the wide

black ruine at the draw string. Then the old man, leaving the mule, would file on after "Parson Sam"--each to gather steam for another race next Sunday. Old Red Oak then (deserted to the jar-flies and katydids and a few razor-back hogs that would come to gather the corn and oats where the teams had been fed) would be silent until the next Sunday.

As I look at Red Oak now I recall the lines in Blandford:

"The tramp of many a busy foot  
That sought thy aisles is o'er,  
And many a weary heart around  
Is still forever more  
O! could we call the many back  
Who've gathered here in vain,--  
Who've careless roved where we do now,  
Who'll never meet again;  
How would our very souls be stirred  
To meet the earnest gaze  
Of the lovely and the beautiful,  
The lights of other days."

In the grove around old "Red Oak" the celebrated "Washington Artillery" of the army of Northern Virginia packed and abandoned their guns, the men, to avoid surrender, going across the river into Amherst.

A few miles northwest of "Red Oak" on the river hills stands "Laurel Hill," once the hospitable home of Colonel B. P. Walker, the father of Mrs. Sue Boccock, of Bedford; of Miss Maria, Dan. T. and Kate Walker, of Lynchburg. This place, long a sort of headquarters for the old Whigs, with Colonel Walker as chief, has been long noted as a fertile farm, famous for its fine horses. I can recall my uncle mounted on "Florizel," or "Simon" (a sorrel and a dun), famous for the saddle, as he would wind along the roads of the farm, talking to himself and gesticulating vehemently over the exploits of Henry Clay, or Daniel Webster. This farm is now the "Laurel Hill" dairy and stock farm, C. F. and Joseph Button, and as famous for its fine Jersey cattle and rolls of yellow butter as it once was for its fine horses and rich shipping leaf.

#### A PERSONAL REMINISCENCE.

How glad I was once (when a homesick college boy) to see my uncle (mounted on old Simon) canter over the campus at Hampden-Sidney to pay me a visit on his way to Farmville to a meeting of the Grand Lodge. A Mr. Evans, a noted orator from Richmond, was to address the people, and my uncle invited me to attend. The next day quite a number of "we boys" footed in seven miles to Farmville. I got a seat in the right gallery of the old Presbyterian church. My elbow neighbor was Tom Hooper, now the Rev. Dr. Hooper, of Christiansburg. A bevy of pretty girls entered the opposite gallery, dressed as school girls, in short skirts and white bib aprons. One with raven hair and jet black eyes caught my fancy. I asked Hooper "who they were?": He said: "Hi, boy, don't you know Jennie Red's little sisters?" Miss Jennie Venable was a noted belle who captured many college boys, and the "Cousin Jennie" and chief character in Dr. Bagby's "Wife and My Theory on Wives." I was so taken with the black eyed sister in the short dress and white bib apron that I said to Hooper, "I am going for that little sister." I went--and that same pair of black eyes, with the aid of nose glasses, is near me now, reading "Janice Meredith."

But I started out to talk Appomattox and here I am on matters purely personal. In the neighborhood of the old Union Academy, some miles above the courthouse, lived many good, worthy people. I recall Mrs. Ellis Hunter, with whom I first boarded as a boy of nine years old. A good, motherly, loveable woman she was. Old Mr. Tom Moseley (six feet three), with his long gray hair combed straight back; Mr. Bob Hunter (a sweet singer and devoted Christian), father of Rev. Joshua Hunter, of the Virginia Conference; John A. Shearer, who retained his knowledge of Latin to old age, and was a terror on examination

days to "we small fry," wrestling with Caesar, Sallust and Virgil; old Jimmy Shearer who was so absent-minded that he would put the right boot on the left foot and never know why it hurt. It was said that if his horse fell with him he would walk on home and forget he had been mounted.

I recall my first efforts at declamation, when with confused face and halting tongue, twisting the corners of my short sack coat, I blurted out,

"Twinkle, twinkle, little star,  
How I wonder where you are."

to the amusement of a crowded house.

Then there was Archer Moon, Billy Moon, Lock Davenport, Tom Davenport, and E. Davenport. Archer and Billy Moon were boys of decided talent. Had their talents been directed in proper channels they would have succeeded at anything. Billy was a great wag, and something of a poet. He composed the words of "Do Johnny Booker," so entertainingly sung and played by Dick Sweeney. Archer was a man of fine mind and bright talent.

Among the celebrities of old Appomattox one cannot omit the Sweeneys--great musical geniuses. The elder, old Joe Sweeney, then Dick and Sam. Who does not recall the two violins of old Joe and Sam, with Dick on the banjo? Dick and Sam--tenor and basso--to my ear were far superior to any I ever heard. Old Joe was the first to introduce negro minstrelsy, by blacking his face and personating negro character. He began in Virginia alone and visited Europe and played before the Queen. After his brothers Dick and Sam grew up, they organized a troupe and traveled the world over. General J. E. B. Stuart was so taken with Dick and Sam that he kept them near his headquarters and would chant their songs as he rode to the charge. Poor Dick, amiable, good fellow, I believe, fell a victim to smallpox during the war. What became of Sam I never learned. They had a sister, Miss Missouri, who played delightfully on the violin and banjo both, then a rare accomplishment for a lady, but now I believe quite the fashion. A cousin of the above--Bob Miller Sweeney--(who used the bow in his left hand), used to accompany the three brothers when at home on a rest, to the weddings, balls and dances.

It was with feelings of sadness that last summer I drove over to my grandfather's old place to have the grave of my father renewed and inclosed. I stood at the door, front and back, where the grass now comes to the steps, and recalled my youthful visits there, when the space under the mulberries at the front and under the grand old larks at the back door was a nice marble yard, and my Uncle Sam, with that knightly courtesy to a visitor, used to take me as a partner against Ike and Harvey (his two sons). I could rely on him to keep Harvey from poking.

I drove over to the new Courthouse, now quite a town, with one or two well kept hotels, a livery stable, quite a number of stores, handsome residences; and I recalled how I stood with others on the side of the track--with all around then in original forest--to see the first locomotive approach over the old South Side road from Pamplin. It was with difficulty I could recall the old places along the turnpike as I drove up as far as the Spout. Not a house as it was in my boyhood days. Even the corner stores has been by vandal hands taken from the corner of old Union Academy--where it was placed with impressive Masonic rites--and robbed of its relics.

We are entering upon the threshold of a new century. Will it Waterloo,-- an Appomattox? Will it produce a Lee, a Jackson, a Johnston, a Stuart? The last century dawned upon us fresh from a victory for liberty and the right for every free people to change their form of government whenever they thought best. It witnessed the descendants of that people (whose liberties were won for them by Southern soldiers under a Washington and a Green) grow to strength of "numbers and resources" and with fanatical

madness deny the right to eight million of their fellow-citizens; and not content with this, until, with fiendish revenge, they made the blunder of the nineteenth century by an effort to place the heel of the African upon the neck of the Anglo-Saxon; and I fear have so far cowed and humiliated us that to our shame be it said, men are found who avow an unwillingness, by convention, to free our necks from this black burden.

"What crimes are committed in thy name, oh Liberty!"

Branch Walker - CIVIS.

NOTES:

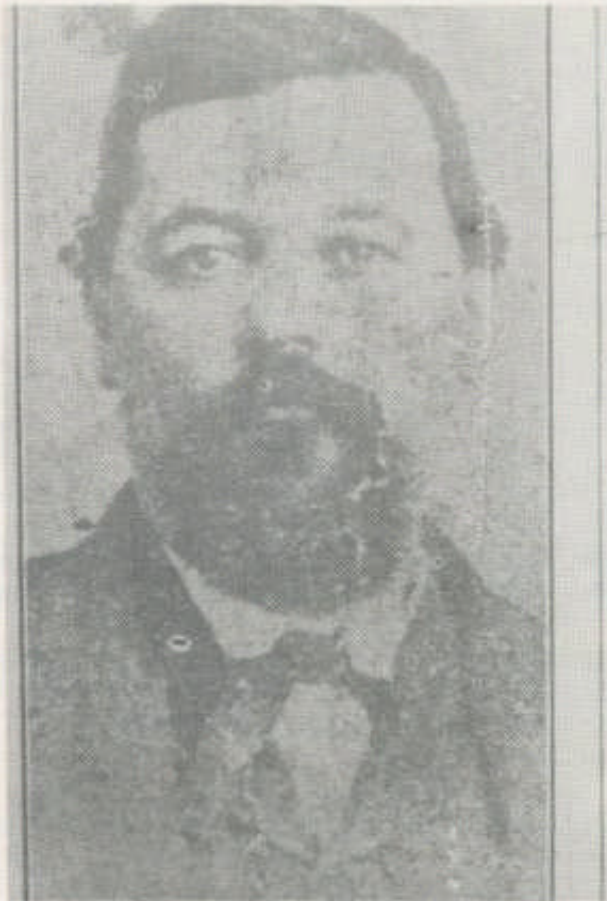
1. The underlining in the above article was added by Duval Adams.
2. Mr. Branch Walker was the father of the late Mrs. John Lee and grandfather of Felda Lee Wagner and Mrs. John Lewis Abbot of Lynchburg, Virginia.

BUCK TRENT

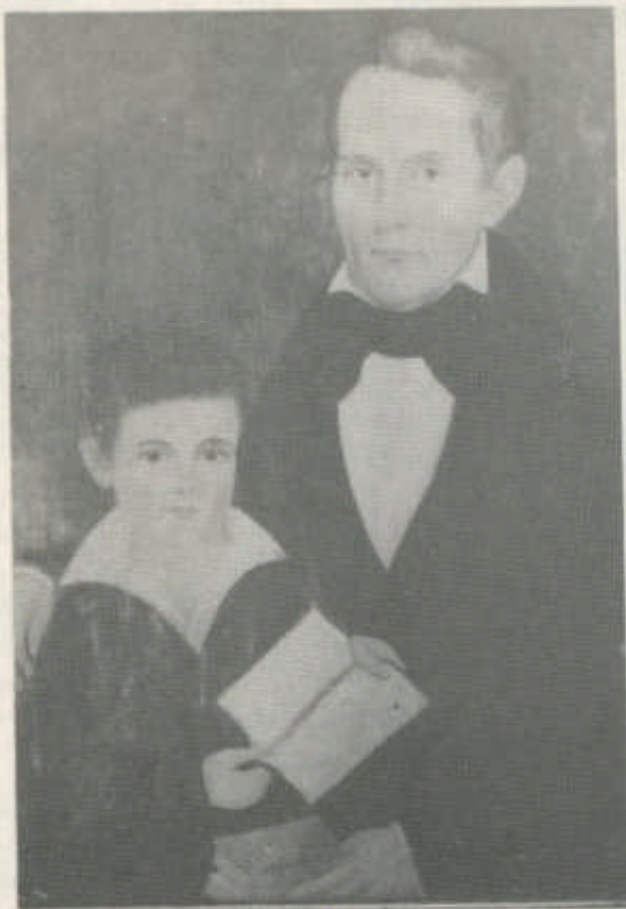
"Genial, jolly, fat Buck Trent," referred to in the previous article by Branch Walker was Captain William Henry Trent, husband of Mary W. Johns. Buck Trent was born in 1832, son of Captain Thomas Trent Jr. and Martha Walker Holland Trent of "Rural View." He was known by all as "fat, jolly, Buck Trent."

Captain William Trent was a confederate soldier from 1861 - 1865, and conducted a farm prior to, and for a number of years after the war. He married Miss Mary W. Johns, daughter of Captain Thomas W. Johns. He later went to Lynchburg and engaged in the mercantile business, however he was not successful at it. He and his family then moved to Roanoke where he became the Deputy Clerk for his friend, Colonel Brooke. He held this position until he was forced by failing health to give it up. He then moved back to Appomattox, living at Mt. Comfort, thinking that the country living would be better for his health. He lived in Appomattox just a short time when his wife died suddenly in her sleep on February 21, 1905. Captain Trent then went to live with one of his children in Roanoke but died nine months after his wife. He was 73 years old when he died on November 19, 1905. Captain Trent is buried next to his wife in the Johns' family plot at Presbyterian Cemetery in Lynchburg. His obituary states: "He was a most popular man, because a most delightful one. His high character, his charming personality, his graceful manner, his delightful comradeship, - these are things that in the solemnity of his death came close to the hearts of his friends."

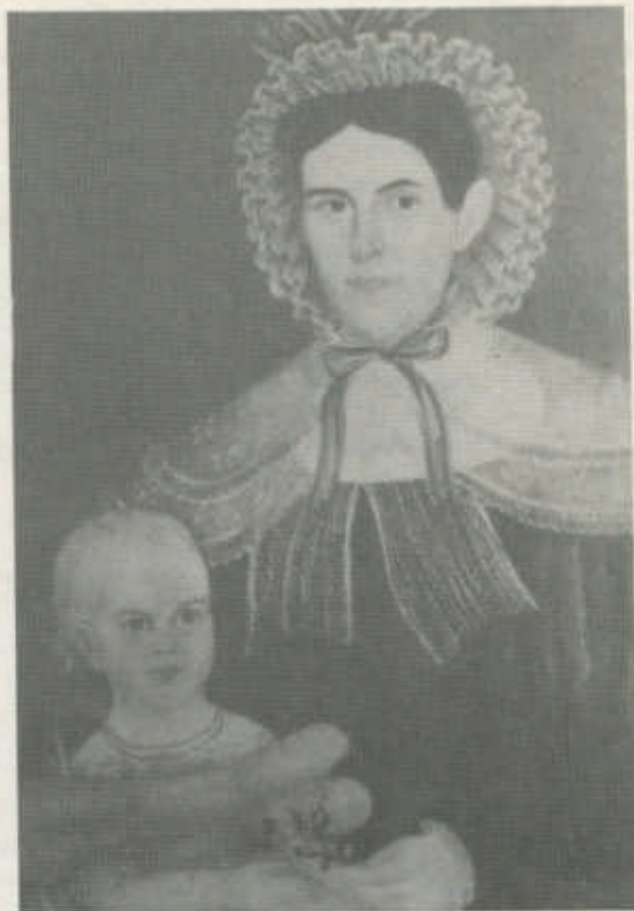
(The above information was found in William Trent's obituary. The three photographs below, as well as Captain Trent's obituary, were provided courtesy of Mr. Thomas Terry of Appomattox, Virginia.)



Captain William Henry "Buck" Trent - From a newspaper photo published with his obituary.



Captain Thomas Trent Jr.  
and his son, "Buck" Trent.



Martha Walker Holland Trent and  
her daughter, Miss Ella Trent

The above photographs of Buck Trent's parents were made from two portraits and are provided courtesy of Mr. Thomas Terry of Appomattox, Virginia. The portraits were painted about 1837. Buck Trent would have been five years old at the time the portraits were made.

## MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF MT. COMFORT

### THE LEGEND OF SUSANS

On April 10, 1833, Susan Brown Adams, the daughter of Isaac and Susan Adams, died of some unknown illness despite all the skills and efforts of her doctors. She was only 15 years old at her death and her loss was felt very deeply by her family and friends.

According to legend, all of the owners of Mt. Comfort since Susan Adams died have had a daughter named Susan and that their daughter died while still young. I admit this tale was a bit unsettling to me when I first heard it since I also have a daughter named Susan, as do the people who sold me the house. In fact most of the recent owners of Mt. Comfort have daughters named Susan! However, I can only attribute this mysterious fact to coincidence. My research shows that not all of the owners had a daughter named Susan. Captain Thomas Winston Johns did not, and his daughter, Miss Anna Deane Johns never married. Thus for at least 68 years of Mt. Comfort's history no daughters named Susan were evident. At the time this legend was told to me, it was thought that Isaac Adams was at one time an owner of Mt. Comfort, however my research shows that he was not. In fact Susan Brown Adams did not even live here! How this story got started is a mystery to me, yet the story persists to this day. It is, however, a very interesting tale even if it is untrue.

### BURIED TREASURE

I am frequently asked if I ever found any buried treasure (money or artifacts) here at Mt. Comfort. The answer is no, I have not. Although some people did bury money back in colonial times before banks were available, money was just as valuable then as it is today. I have my doubts if very many people sold their homes without first digging up their life savings!

I have found pieces of blacksmith made iron and pottery chips in the yard and fields surrounding the house but they were not valuable. These little scraps of Colonial history are quiet interesting but I have yet to have anyone offer me a good chunk of money for an old horseshoe or a chip of pottery.

Another buried treasure story which I have been informed of is that at the end of the Civil War the Confederate Army, hearing of the surrender, buried their arms and equipment and headed for home. This incident was supposed to have happened somewhere along the old Oakville Road. Although there were Confederate troops on the old road, I doubt if it ever happened. Firearms would have been too valuable to the troops returning home and it is doubtful they buried their weapons. During both the colonial and Civil War period, firearms were a valuable tool used by the settlers to procure food for the table, thus it is not very likely they would discard them.

Occasionally Civil War artifacts are dug up in the Appomattox area; however, they are not large caches as this tale suggests. Although I am dubious about this buried treasure, I don't think anyone has ever gone along the old roadway with a metal detector, which would make for an interesting outing. Please let me know if you find anything!

### GHOSTS OF MT. COMFORT

One of the first things I am asked by visitors, is do we have any ghosts haunting the old house. No; we have none. Despite the many people that have died in this house over the years, we have never heard or seen anything strange or unusual.

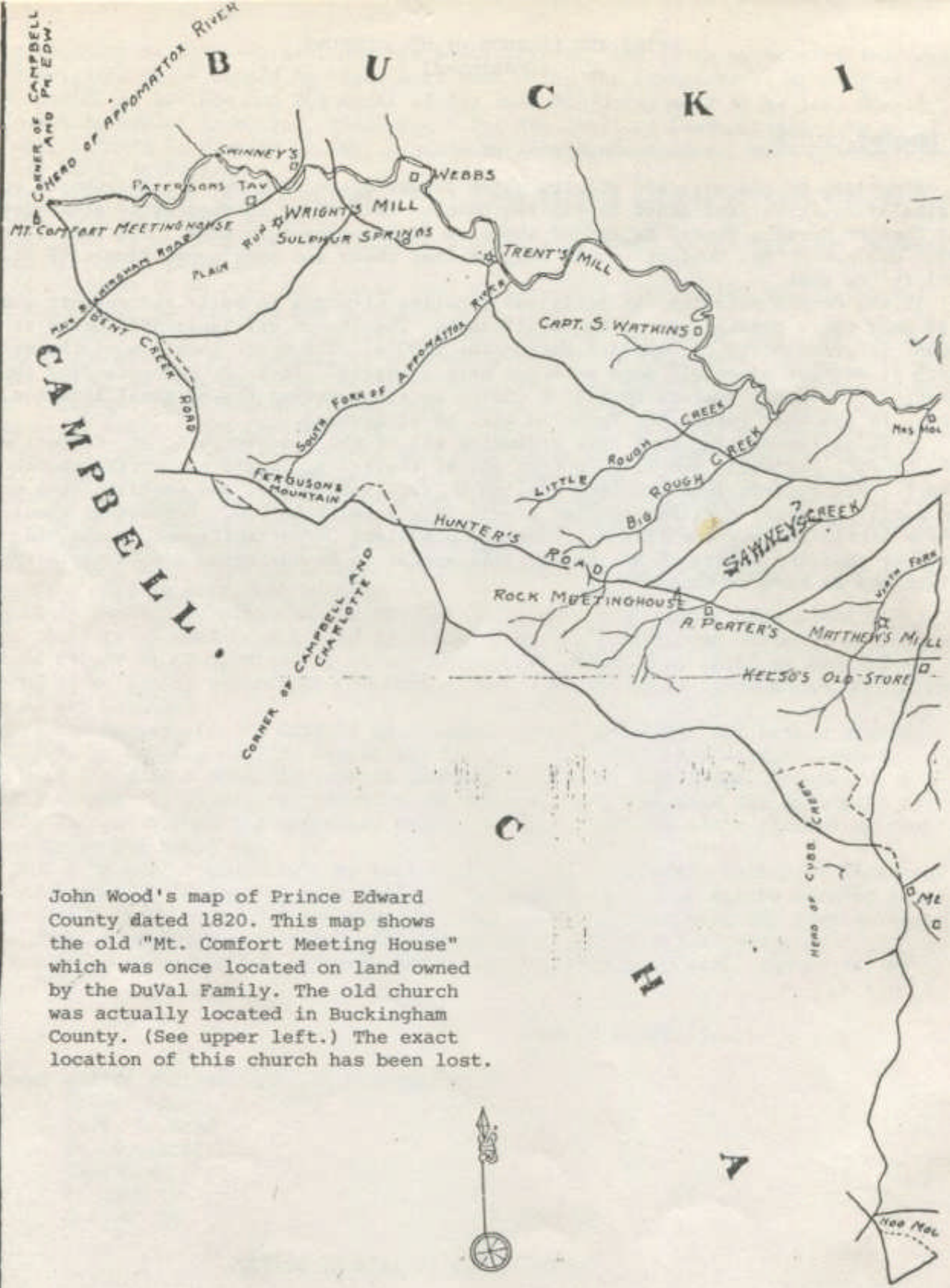
MYTHS AND LEGENDS OF MT. COMFORT  
(Continued)

MT. COMFORT CHURCH

According to old maps and stories which I have heard, the Mt. Comfort Church was originally built on land owned by William DuVal. This story is apparently true since a "Mt. Comfort Meeting House" is indeed shown on old maps of this area. The fact that the church was named "Mt. Comfort" would suggest that there was some connection with William DuVal in the past.

It was common practice for religious families of means to build and support a church on or near their plantations in Colonial times. The church was apparently moved to its present location north of Oakville during the 1800's. The exact location of the original church is unknown since old maps were not very accurate. It is my understanding that the historian of the Mt. Comfort Methodist Church is also seeking the original location. Perhaps in the near future the location will be discovered.

It is an interesting fact that virtually all of the old owners of Mt. Comfort were good, honest, Christian people. In fact all of the recent owners are active church members, as am I. Old records indicate that William DuVal, Isaac Adams, and Captain Johns were all very active in local churches and had a very strong faith in God. Perhaps we should all study a little history and find out just how prevalent Christianity was in the olden days! (The fact that the owners of Mt. Comfort all appear to be Christian people may also explain why we have no Ghosts!)



John Wood's map of Prince Edward County dated 1820. This map shows the old "Mt. Comfort Meeting House" which was once located on land owned by the DuVal Family. The old church was actually located in Buckingham County. (See upper left.) The exact location of this church has been lost.

John Wood's Map  
of  
**PRINCE EDWARD**  
**COUNTY**

## RESTORATION OF MT. COMFORT

When Mr. Weaver purchased Mt. Comfort in Sept. of 1972, the home had been vacant for several years and had previously been used to dry tobacco and for other "barn duties".

Although the roof and timbers were sound, the house was in poor condition and badly in need of repairs. Vandals had broken most of the windows and some of the original door knobs and locks been taken.

Mr. Weaver began his restoration with the idea that Mt. Comfort would be restored to be "historically correct." With that in mind he cleaned and stripped the house, reinforcing any beams or flooring which were weak and then insulating the outside walls. The house was furnished with all-new plumbing, a new electrical system including all-new wiring, a new septic system, and a new well. All original woodwork was restored and any missing hardware was replaced with the correct period hardware. Outside locks were replaced with Williamsburg style, solid brass reproduction locks. He purchased and installed three beautiful Williamsburg style chandeliers, as well as installing other colonial style light fixtures. The foundation and all brick work was re-pointed and all fireplaces were restored to working order. The heart pine flooring was sanded and refinished. The long side porch which was not original with the house was made into a galley kitchen and two bathrooms were installed in the house.

The basement dirt floor was dug down about two feet and a concrete slab floor was poured, then floor covering added. The original unfinished basement was then finished with old antique brick work and old pine panelling.

The original basement had no staircase from the first floor to the basement and not wishing to take up valuable space, Mr. Weaver installed an antique circular staircase which he obtained from an old English ship. The finishing of the basement and addition of the staircase, although not original to the house, is so tastefully done most visitors believe it is the original colonial design.

The exterior of the house was painted and shutters were added. The entire inside of the house was then painted in authentic Williamsburg colors.

Outside, the collapsed wooden steps were replaced with colonial style brick steps. Colonial railings, lamp post, dinner bell, and hitching post were added to enhance the old colonial effect. Landscaping was done using English Boxwood as well as adding an old split rail fence surrounding the yard.

The result of all this extensive restoration is a beautiful colonial home, which has been restored to its original character and appearance. The quality and amount of restoration which went into this home will insure that it will stand for at least another one hundred years.



BEFORE RESTORATION - Photo taken in June of 1972. Although roof and timbers were sound the house was in a bad state of repair.



Looking towards the front



A view of the yard from the  
side porch.

## MT. COMFORT TODAY

Mt. Comfort, as it stands today, consists of 45.6 acres of rolling fields situated high atop a hill with a picturesque view of the Peaks of Otter and the Blue Ridge Mountains. The house itself is a beautiful, three story, white frame country manor with green shutters and roof. The dwelling has 14 rooms and 7 usable fireplaces. All of the woodwork inside is original including the doors, mantels, pine panel wainscoating, picture rails, hand hewn exposed beams, and wide heart pine flooring. Much of the original construction was with pegs, and where nails were used, they are the old square blacksmith made style.

One unique feature of the house is that separate staircases ascend to each of the five upstairs bedrooms. This feature is possibly due to the fact that in colonial days it was common to board travellers in private homes, thus this design provides privacy for each bedroom.

All of the bricks used in the construction of Mt. Comfort were hand made in colonial times and some of the bricks contain animal tracks which are clearly visible in several places. The yard is beautifully landscaped with English Boxwoods around the outside of the house and down the old brick walk.

A split rail fence enclosing nearly 2½ acres of lawn adds to the charming setting. Just inside the yard and behind the house, the old meat house still stands. It was in this meat house that Captain Thomas Johns lodged Dr. Ellzey's horse "Minnie Gray" in April of 1865.

Also on the property are two very old log tobacco barns, although much in need of repair. These barns are constructed in the old style, each log being hand hewn and notched, before being set into place.



Just inside the yard the old meat house still stands. It was here that Captain Johns lodged Dr. Ellzey's horse "Minnie Gray" in April of 1865.



A view of the front yard  
from the porch at Mt. Comfort



The parlor at Mt. Comfort



A side view of the house



A view of one of the old log tobacco barns showing construction detail. Tobacco barns have not yet been restored.



One of the large bedrooms. Three of the five bedrooms contain working fireplaces. All of the mantels are original.



The front entrance hall, looking upstairs.



The old DuVal - Adams cemetery at Mt. Comfort. Broken grave stones were restored in the 1970's by the Adams' family. Only four graves are marked.



Author, Richard L. Guild in colonial dress, showing visitors through the home during a special tour. Mt. Comfort is open to the public on special occasions and may be toured year-round by appointment.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many thanks to the members of the Appomattox County Historical Society who helped me obtain information and who encouraged me during this project. To Miss Claudine O'Brien and others of Miss Deane Johns' students for their recollections of Miss Johns. To the members of the Lucado family for helping me obtain information on the murder of Becky Amos. To Mr. Ronald Wilson, National Park Service Historian, who brought to my attention the Civil War article by Dr. Mason Ellzey. To the descendants of the Isaac Adams' family who let me use their old photographs and provided me with information about their family. To J.L.Gordon, Jr. and H.H.Caldwell for helping me identify and locate "Poplar Spring." And to anyone else I pestered for information including the many librarians and clerks at various locations who took the time to help me. To Claudine O'Brien and Minerva Kepler for proof reading the original manuscript. To Mrs. Sandra Anders of the Business Department of Appomattox High School, and to Stephanie Elder for typing the final manuscript. And especially to my wife, who put up with my many trips to dusty old libraries and who never complained when I spent her grocery money on old out of print books.

### TOUR INFORMATION

Tours of Mt. Comfort Plantation are available by appointment. Please call Richard or Hope Guild, the current owners of the home, at 804-352-7950 for reservations. To find the home from Appomattox, travel 3½ miles north on route 26, turn right on route 711, and go straight through the brick entrance 1 mile to the house. The home is listed in "Old Virginia Houses-The Piedmont" by Emmie Ferguson Farrar & Emilee Hines.

Thank you for your purchase of this little book. Profits are used for restoration and maintenance of Mt. Comfort Plantation. Your purchase helps preserve an authentic piece of colonial history!

