

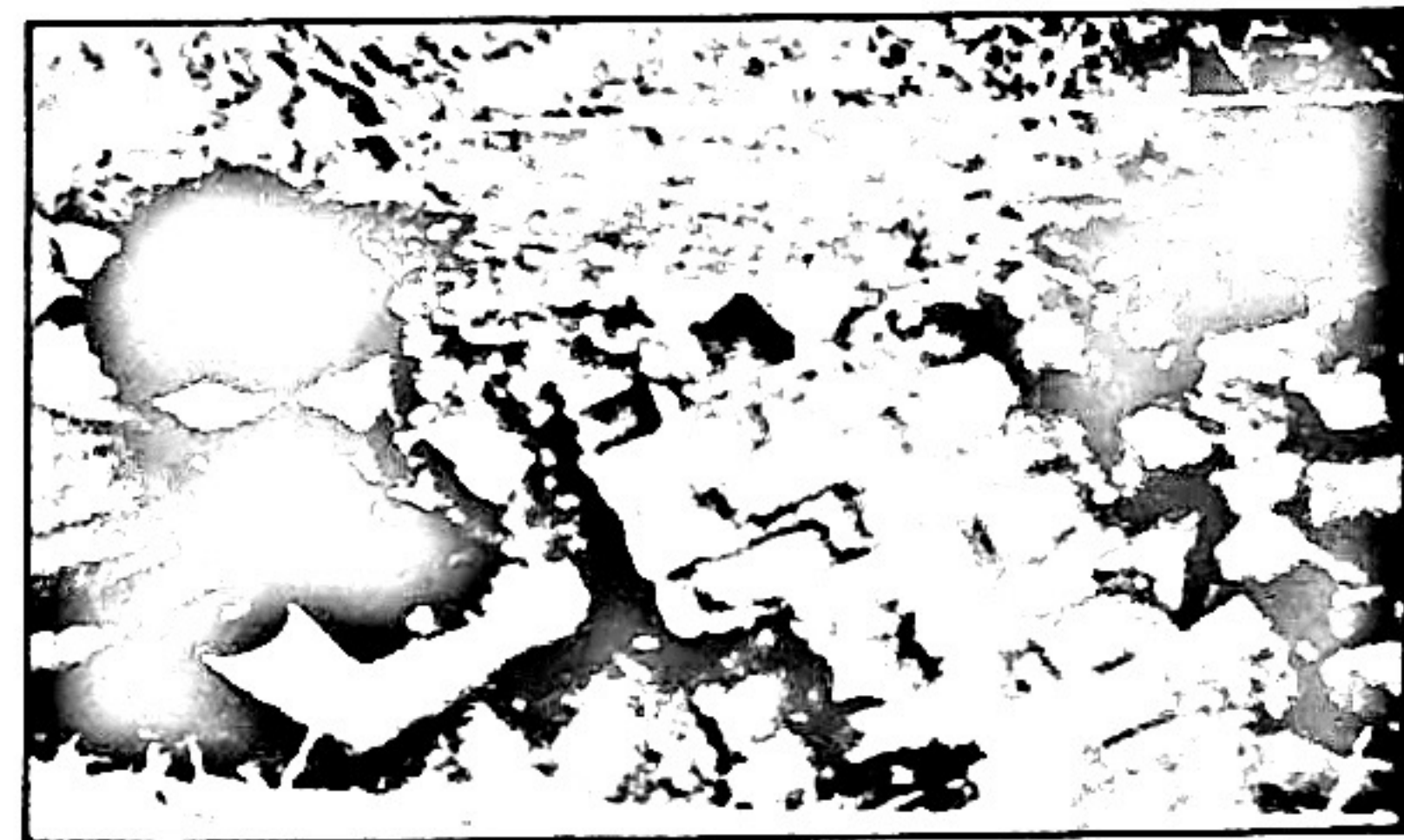
A Tale of Two Dwellings

Research has shed new light on two properties on Hanover's "Old Mountain Road" that have ties to Patrick Henry and to the 1781 Virginia Campaign: Mount Brilliant and Col. Dandridge's. The long-held view that these are the current dwellings known as The Retreat and Oldfield has been refuted by architectural and archaeological investigations, as well as by early maps and land records. Information is presented here to update accounts published by the Society in Old Homes of Hanover.

Mount Brilliant, located near Stone Horse Creek, was the home that John Henry (1704-1773) built about 1750 when he moved his family from Studley to western Hanover. Although Patrick Henry lived at Mount Brilliant for only a short time, his father established and conducted a classical school there until his death in 1773.¹

When the property was acquired by Robert Carter Nicholas in the late 1770s, it was renamed The Retreat as Hanover was considered to be safe from the paths of the British and American armies. Far from providing a peaceful refuge, however, the widow Nicholas was visited by British troops in June 1781. According to the June 5 journal entry of Dr. Robert Honyman:

The Main body of the Enemy took the road by Scotch town and over Ground



Archaeological dig at Mount Brilliant, 2001.

Squirrel Bridge, and encamped along the road that goes by Mrs. Nicholas's, Mr. Dandridge's and Boswell's old store: extending from Stone horse creek up to Boswell's. Their headquarters at Mrs. Nicholas's; Lord Cornwallis with his aids [sic] lodged in her house.² [See map pg. 4.]

The c1750 house in which Mrs. Nicholas lived has been described as a story-and-a-half frame structure with dormer windows, sturdily built with brick foundations and hand hewn oak framing with wooden pins instead of nails. The dwelling was said to stand on one of the highest points in Hanover.³

Although generally believed to be the brick house standing on the property today, local tradition has held that the c1750 house stood near the Henry family cemetery on a hill overlooking the South Anna River. When archaeologists commissioned by the Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation investigated the

pasture area where a large depression and brick rubble had been observed, the foundation of a brick-lined basement was located. The oyster shell mortar, intact brickwork, and hand wrought nails suggest the basement dates to the 18th century. Further, although the quantity of artifacts recovered was sparse, ceramic sherds indicate that the site was occupied during the mid to late 18th century. Several sherds of whiteware, which was not manufactured until c1830, were recovered from the uppermost layer of soil, implying that the house was razed some time after 1830. Numerous fragments of melted glass were also found which suggest that fire may have played a role in the demise of the structure.⁴ Otway Harris, a subsequent owner of the property, stated that the c1750 dwelling was “pulled down” in the 19th century.⁵



The Retreat, c1830
by Bettie Broyles Cole

Findings by an architectural historian with the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation indicate that the current brick residence appears to have been constructed during the second quarter of the 19th century, after the time of John Henry and his son Patrick. The Retreat, c1830, which retains many of its original features, is a good example of vernacular architecture that developed from the early Virginia hall and chamber plan houses of the 17th and 18th centuries.⁶

It appears from the evidence that two houses on the property have been called The Retreat: John Henry’s frame house, c1750, originally called Mount Brilliant, and the brick dwelling built c1830 currently known as The Retreat.

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Col. Nathaniel West Dandridge (1729-1786), owned two properties on the Old Mountain Road which span the pre-revolutionary period to the Virginia Campaign of 1781. One tract of land was located on Great Allen’s Creek on the south side of the South Anna, just west of Gold Mine [Creek], and in the general neighborhood of Rocky Mills and Mount Brilliant; the other was about five miles further west on Turkey Creek near the Louisa County border.⁷

It is well known that Patrick Henry first met Thomas Jefferson at Col. Dandridge’s in 1759. Jefferson recalled:

My acquaintance with Mr. Henry commenced in the winter of 1759-60. On my way to college, I passed the Christmas-holidays at Col Dandridge’s, in Hanover, to whom Mr. Henry was a near neighbour. During the festivity of the season, I met him in society every day, and we became well acquainted.⁸

The Dandridge home, Oldfield, standing today on Turkey Creek, has traditionally been considered the place where the Henry-Jefferson meeting took place. However, according to John Henry’s map [see pg. 4] and a deed of trust dated 6 Oct 1768, Col. Dandridge was residing on the Allen’s Creek tract at that time.⁹ The exact location of the Allen’s Creek house, presumably no longer standing, is not known at this time.

In addition, the Department of Historic Resources reports that the architecture of the original section of the Oldfield dwelling suggests a construction date no earlier than the

fourth quarter of the 18th century. The use of 3:1 common bond in the cellar, the plan of the house, and the shape and form of the chimneys were cited as features that support these findings. The absence of most of the original trim in the house and the introduction of salvaged trim from a late 18th-early 19th century house has clouded the architectural reading of the house; however, the presence of a brick marked 1777 should not be discounted. It is possible that the house was constructed that year, prior to Col. Dandridge's second marriage to Miss Jane Pollard in 1779. Additional research would be needed to accurately determine the original construction date.¹⁰

Although the current structure known as Oldfield may not be the house where the Henry-Jefferson meeting occurred, it was likely standing when Lafayette arrived in 1781. According to Dr. Honyman's June 19 journal entry:

Yesterday the Marquis's Army lay all day at Col: Nat: Dandridge's, one of the pickets being posted as low down as Mrs. Nicholas's gate. The light infantry under Gen: Muhlenburg went down towards Richmond along the road from Rocky Mill. The Marquis's head quarters at Col: Nat: Dandridge's.¹¹



Oldfield, c1777

Oldfield is a very well-maintained example of a late 18th to early 19th century country dwelling in western Hanover County and is important in its own right. Care has been taken in restoration efforts and additions to the original house. A brick side wing was added in the 1980s which features interior woodwork and structural beams from the c1780-1810 Thompson House in Beaverdam. A one-and-a-half story wood-frame rear ell connected to the brick side wing has also been added.¹²

The Old Mountain Road was the well-travelled road that connected the Henry and Dandridge homes and was a strategic route taken by both armies in 1781. Although the original dwellings of John Henry and Col. Dandridge may not be standing today, the events that took place there are significant in the history of our county and the birth of our country.

¹ Couvillion, Mark. *Patrick Henry's Virginia*, Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, 2001: 15-17.

² "News of the Yorktown Campaign: The Journal of Dr. Robert Honyman, April 17-Nov. 25, 1781," *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography*, Oct. 1971: 399-400.

³ Meade, Robert Douthat. *Patrick Henry: Patriot in the Making*, Lippincott, 1957: 41 & 358n.

⁴ "A Preliminary Archaeological Investigation of Mount Brilliant, Hanover County, Virginia" (DHR Archaeological Resources Inventory #44HN334), James River Institute for Archaeology Inc., 2001. [Note: An article by J. Glenn Rada based on this report appeared in *Tidewater Virginia Families*, v. 11, n. 2: 71-73.]

⁵ "Hanover May Lose Federal Memorial to Patrick Henry," *Herald-Progress*, Jan. 31, 1935.

⁶ Bourne, Michael. "A Report on The Retreat," Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 2000.

⁷ Glazebrook, E.G. & P.G. *Virginia Migrations: Hanover County*, v. I: viii.

⁸ Wirt, William. *The Life & Character of Patrick Henry*, Porter & Coates, n.d. (Alta Edition): 32.

⁹ Glazebrook: v. I: 54-55.

¹⁰ "Oldfield/Dandridge House Reconnaissance Level Survey," (DHR ID# 042-0387), Va. Dept. of Historic Resources, 2012.

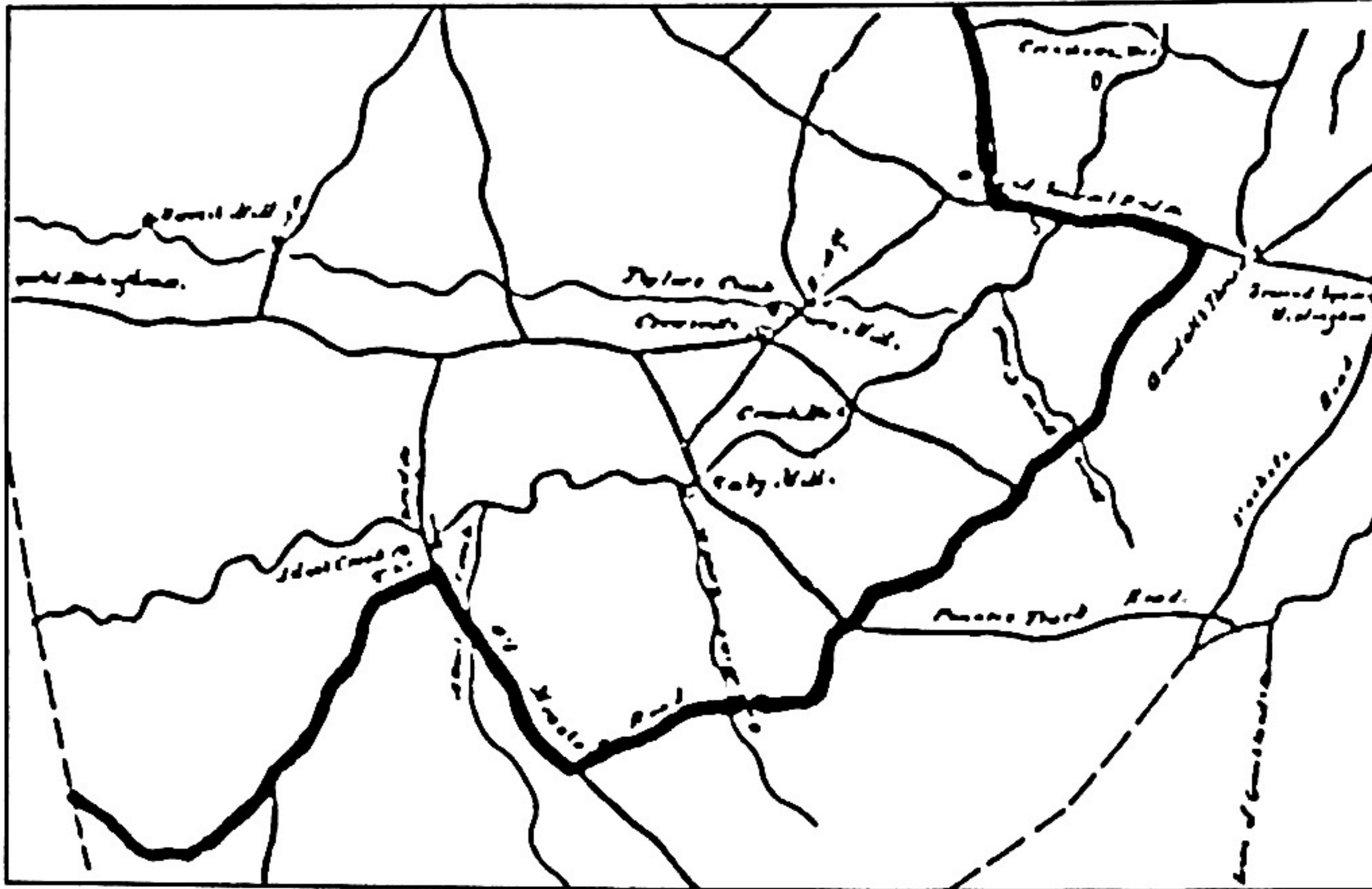
¹¹ "News of the Yorktown Campaign:" 404.

¹² Oldfield/Dandridge House Reconnaissance Level Survey.

Old Mountain Road

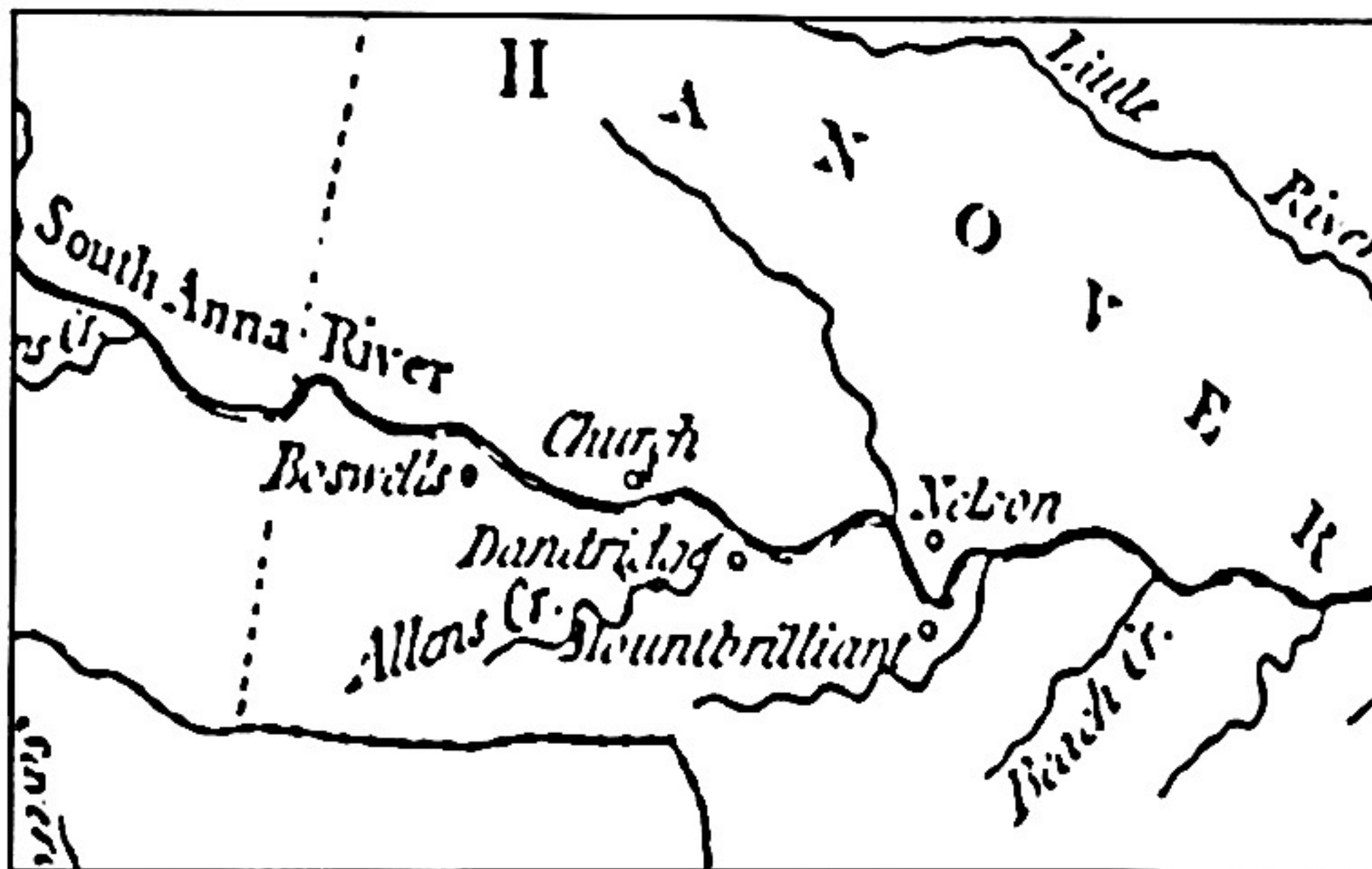
“ the road that goes by Mrs. Nicholas’s, Dandridge’s, and Boswell’s old store.”

The John Woods Map, 1820 (Library of Virginia)



The Woods map shows roads that would have been familiar to the Henrys and the Dandridges. According to Dr. Honyman, Cornwallis marched down the Scotch-town Road, crossed the South Anna River at the Ground Squirrel Bridge (on Rt. 33), and made his headquarters at Mrs. Nicholas’s. The encampment on Old Mountain Road stretched along present-day

Stone Horse Creek Road, crossed Howard’s Mill Road, and continued west on Pouncey Tract-Vontay Road towards the Louisa line, a distance of over ten miles. [Emphasis added to indicate the route taken by Cornwallis.]

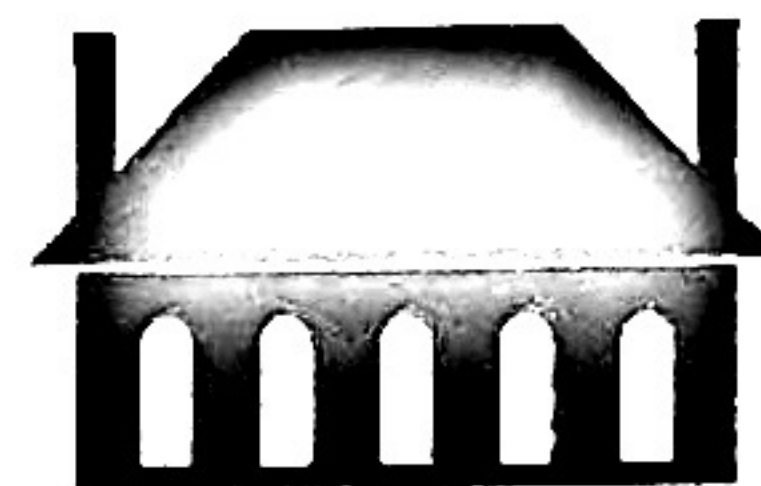


John Henry's *New and Accurate Map of Virginia*, 1770
(Virginia Historical Society)

John Henry's map, the first to delineate county boundaries, indicates principal landowners along the South Anna River. While the map traces waterways but not roads of the day, Dandridge's is clearly shown on the east side of Allen's Creek.* Dandridge's other property, Oldfield is located on Turkey Creek, about five miles further west towards Boswell's and the Louisa County line (shown as a vertical dotted line).

*Note on Allen's Creek: Although it is clear that Col. Dandridge owned property on Allen's Creek, no creek in western Hanover County is known by that name today. It is unclear whether Allen's Creek refers to the current Mill Creek or Shop Creek which enter the South Anna River very near each other below the bridge on Dunn's Chapel Road. Mill Creek has a large branch which may have been called Little Allen's Creek; additional research is needed to make this determination.

Hanover County Historical Society BULLETIN



No. 96

"I know of no way of judging of the future but by the past." ~ Patrick Henry

Summer 2017

"...on the road to ...Dandridge's..."

Robert J. Szabo

My interest in locating the house site of Nathaniel West Dandridge began when I learned that Lafayette made his headquarters there in June 1781, and that it was the first meeting place of Thomas Jefferson and Patrick Henry in 1759. While "Dandridge's" is shown as a landmark on John Henry's map of 1770, finding the house site on his vast holdings would prove to be challenging. How could such a prominent figure disappear into history with no record of his dwelling site or of his burial place?

Nathaniel West Dandridge (1729-1786) was the son of Capt. William Dandridge of the Royal Navy and his wife Unity West of Elsing Green in King William County. In 1747, he married Dorothea Spotswood (1733-1773), daughter of Gov. Alexander Spotswood, and they had five sons who would serve in the Revolution and five daughters:

William Alexander	Dorothea
Robert Ambler	Elizabeth
John	Anna Catharina
Alexander Spotswood	Mary Claiborne
Nathaniel West	Martha

After Dorothea's death in 1773, Dandridge married Jane Pollard, daughter of Joseph Pollard, Clerk of Goochland County and sister of William Pollard, Clerk of Hanover County; they had no issue. Jane survived him and was named executrix of Dandridge's will along with his eldest son William.



Capt. William Dandridge (1689-1744),
father of Nathaniel West Dandridge.

The will, dated 24 Sep 1782, states:

"I give my beloved wife Jane Dandridge the use of the tract of land I live on containing about seventeen hundred acres, being what I reserved for myself when I laid off the several tracts for my sons ... during her [Jane's] natural life and after her death I give the said land to my son William Dandridge and his heirs, and the personals [are] to be sold and the money equally divided between my four daughters, Dorothea Henry, Elizabeth Dandridge, Anna Catharina Dandridge and Mary Claiborne Dandridge."¹

The land mentioned in his will was part of nearly 5,500 acres in western Hanover that

Nathaniel West Dandridge inherited through his maternal line. A deed of trust drawn up when he mortgaged this property gives a general idea of its location. "On 6 Oct 1768, he executed a deed of trust ... [which] covered the tract on which Dandridge lived, lying on Allen's Creek containing by estimation four thousand acres and another tract on Turkey Creek containing fourteen hundred and sixty-six acres, more or less"² By the time of the Revolution, some trustees had died and others had moved away, and payments ceased. Creditors later filed suits against his estate.

In a deposition filed 29 Sep 1804, Jane and her second husband, Thomas Underwood, stated that they were "... not in possession of any part of the lands mentioned in the deed which are described as situated on the waters of Turkey Creek whereas the lands of which these Defendants are in possession ... are situated on Allen's Creek property."³ Upon their marriage, Underwood joined her at the Dandridge place on Allen's Creek and lived there until his death in 1815; Jane would live until 1821.

John Henry's map (shown at right) shows "Dandridge's" below the South Anna River and west of Gold Mine Creek on Allen's Creek. While no creek in the area today is called Allen's, overlays of 19th-century plats on current maps show that both Shop and Mill Creeks were known as Allen's Creek. On early maps these two creeks entered the South Anna at the mouth of today's Mill Creek. The mouth of today's Shop Creek is downstream and no longer connects with Mill Creek. On a late 19th-century plat, a dry creek bed that once connected to Mill Creek is labeled "old bed of Allen's Creek."

Determining that Dandridge's was east of today's Shop Creek does not pinpoint the site of the house, but it does rule out the Turkey Creek property which is about five miles further west near the Louisa line.⁴

Judge Leon M. Bazile was keenly interested in Nathaniel West Dandridge and multiple entries outlining the family genealogy and their land holdings are found in his papers at the Virginia Historical Society. One entry gave the basis for his conclusion that the house and

cemetery were south and a little east of the Rockville School. After poring over the tax records and conducting field visits in about 1940, he found evidence of old bricks in a field adjacent to the Rockville School property as well as signs of a cellar sink that he estimated to be 50x25 feet.

Judge Bazile also stated that the presumed home site contained flower bulbs and other evidence of a garden, and that on the northeast edge of the woods he saw signs of what he believed to be a cemetery. A topographical map from the 1940s indicates that the tree line has not changed substantially since the time of Bazile's visit, and there a cemetery with approximately eight grave depressions marked by enormous trees can still be seen.



In a letter written to Miss Elizabeth Cochran in 1941, Judge Bazile said that the "... house which you have recently bought from Mr. Bowles was as far as I have been able to ascertain not the home seat of Col. Nathaniel West Dandridge." He went on to say that her house was "... unquestionably located on part of the grant made to Col. Nathaniel West, who was the grandfather of Nathaniel West Dandridge."⁵

The house that Miss Cochran lived in is today known as Oldfield. Some people have thought this Colonial brick house was the home of Nathaniel West Dandridge. Bazile said in his letter that he believed Oldfield to be the home of Nathaniel West Dandridge's son John.

In 1943, Bazile wrote a lengthy introduction to *Virginia Migrations: Hanover County, Volume I*, which presents Dandridge's will and transcripts of law suits filed against his estate. Bazile states: "After his marriage to Mrs. [Jane]

Dandridge, he [Thomas Underwood] moved to the Dandridge place on Allen's Creek adjoining the present Rockville School property, which was part of this place..."⁶

The earliest plats available were studied to identify neighboring properties in an effort to determine the boundaries of Dandridge's Allen's Creek property. In Murdoch & Co. vs. N. W. Dandridge [estate] the dwelling house is described as being near the end of the Allen's Creek tract that contained 700 acres.⁷ Plats showing that the estate extended south to Dogwood Trail presented the possibility that the house may have been nearer to the Goochland line, but that was ruled out. Further research of plats, deeds, letters, personal papers and site visits make a convincing case that the house was on property adjacent to today's Rockville School Park. In addition to Judge Bazile's research, several other sources supporting this location were found.

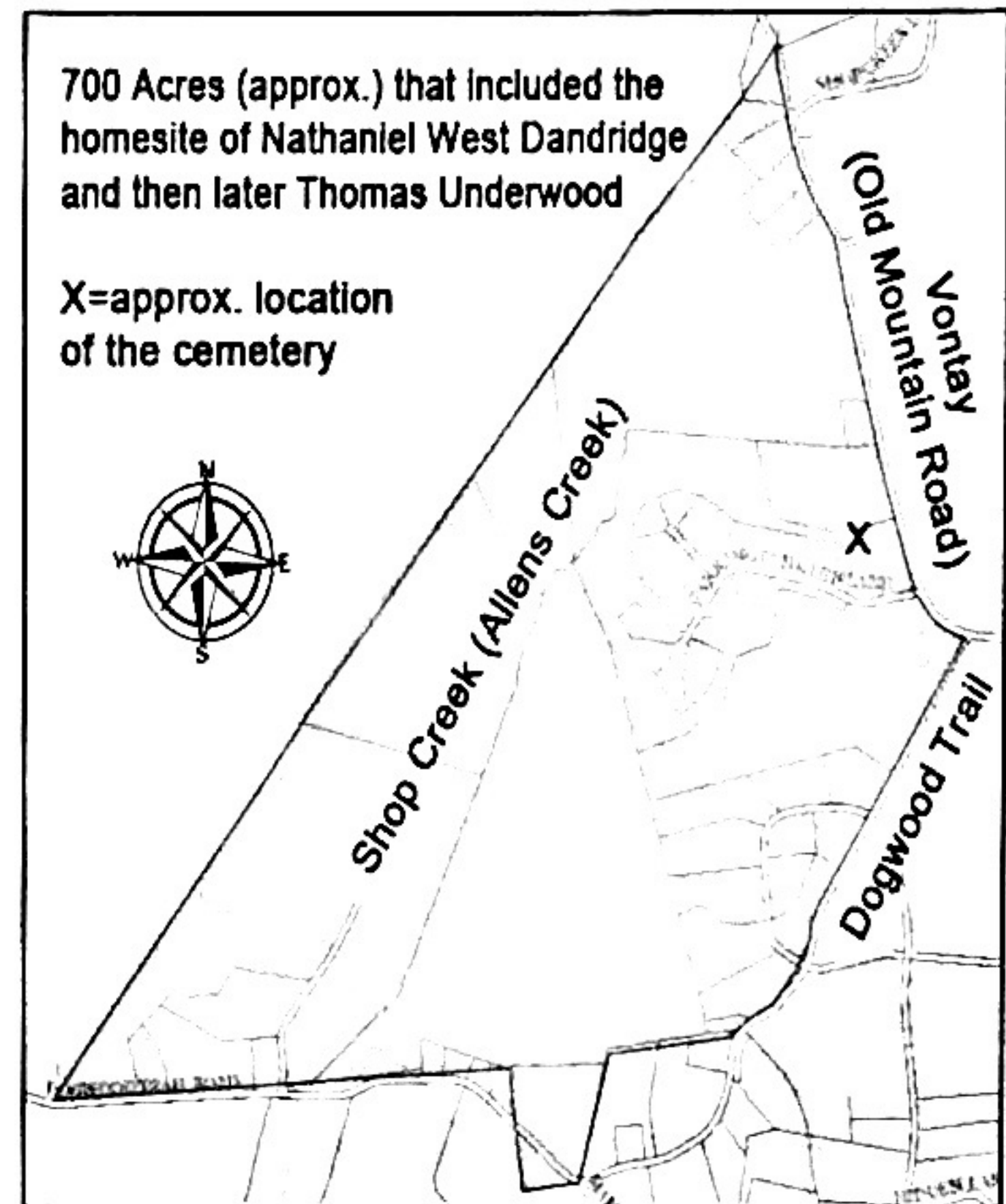
A description of the house site was given by Daniel Trabue, a Revolutionary War soldier who, in 1781, "... went to the back side of Col. Dandridge's on a high hill in the woods and saw them [British troops]. They appeared to be several thousand."⁸ These were Cornwallis's troops which passed "...along the road that goes by Mrs. Nicholas's, Mr. Dandridge's and Boswell's old store..." as noted in the 5 Jun 1781 diary entry of Dr. Robert Honyman.⁹

The road to which Honyman refers was known as the Old Mountain Road; the section that goes past the Dandridge/Underwood home site is now called Pouncey Tract. Other descriptions noted that the house was on a knoll, so these topographical features ruled out many places and fit the area adjacent to the Rockville School property.

Warner Lewis Underwood was the grandson of Thomas Underwood and lived in the Dandridge house with his step-grandmother Jane until her death. His biography states that he went to school and took dancing lessons in Johnson's Springs, which is on Manakin Road, just down Dogwood Trail from the house site.¹⁰

Another clue was found in a diary entry for 24 Oct 1837 by Joseph Rogers Underwood, grandson of Thomas Underwood, stating:

"I staid Sunday night at my Uncle Jas. Underwoods where my grandfather [Thomas] Underwood lived, died and was buried. I visited his grave. He and his last wife [Jane] are buried side by side. East of the garden. No stone tells where they lie. The sunken earth designates the spot where they are buried."¹¹



Jane Pollard Dandridge Underwood had life rights to the dwelling house and a 700-acre tract which had been intended for Dandridge's eldest son William; however, he preceded her in death. When the dower tract was auctioned as the result of a law suit against the estate, Jane's second husband, Thomas Underwood, purchased it. They continued to live there, and about 1816, after Thomas died, Jane transferred the house and property to her stepson James Underwood.

The house was likely gone by 1839 when James Underwood sold the entire 700 acres to Joseph Nuckols who lived in Goochland. In the 1860s, Nuckols divided the property and his son Jacob bought approximately 350 acres which contained the house, the cemetery and the Rockville School site; Frederick Dabney purchased the other 350 acres. A few years later, Jacob sold 130 acres to his brother Henry D. Nuckols, and the remaining 220 acres containing the house site and cemetery were

acquired by Frederick Dabney. The house site was later acquired by the Lairds and then J. C. Beard who called it Sleepy Hollow Farm.

Shirley Beard Cooke raised her children on the property and walked across the field many times taking her children to and from the Rockville School. She remembers seeing old brick in the field and flowers growing in the woods where Bazile found evidence of a garden.

In 2004, the Carrington Glen subdivision was created, and fortunately, the site believed to be the cemetery was not greatly disturbed. It is located within the common space near the entrance to the walking trail where grave depressions can be seen on both sides of the trail. It is likely that Nathaniel West Dandridge, Dorothea Spotswood Dandridge and other family members are buried there along with Jane Pollard Dandridge Underwood and her second husband Thomas Underwood.

Endnotes:

1. Eugenia G. & Preston G. Glazebrook, *Virginia Migrations: Hanover Co., Vol. 1, 1723-1850*, (Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 2000), 37-38.
2. Ibid., Introduction by Bazile, viii.
3. Ibid., 61.
4. Hanover County Historical Society *Bulletin*, No. 87, Winter 2013, 3-4.
5. Leon Maurice Bazile Papers, Virginia Historical Society.
6. Glazebrook, *Virginia Migrations*, Bazile, x-xii.
7. Glazebrook, *Virginia Migrations*, 48-50.
8. *Westward into Kentucky: A Narrative of Daniel Trabue*, (University Press of Kentucky, 2010), 106.
9. Richard K. MacMaster, "News of the Yorktown Campaign: The Journal of Dr. Robert Honyman, Apr. 17-Nov. 25, 1781," *Virginia Magazine of History & Biography*, Oct. 1971, 399-400.
10. *W. L. Underwood Diary*, Manuscripts & Folklore Archive, Library Special Collections, Western Kentucky University, 18. Thank you to Dick Helm for making me aware of this Underwood collection; his Underwood page can be found at: <http://wc.rootsweb.ancestry.com/cgi-bin/igm.cgi?op=GET&db=richhelm&id=1745>.
11. *Jos. R. Underwood Diary*, Manuscripts & Folklore Archive, Library Special Collections, Western Kentucky University.

The Dandridge/Underwood home site and the cemetery are on private property; therefore, permission must be obtained to visit the site.

The Dandridges

Capt. William Dandridge (1689-1744) was the husband of (2) Unity, dau. of John West of King William County. He served in the British Navy, was a member of the Governor's Council and accompanied William Byrd II to survey the Dividing Line between Virginia and North Carolina.

Col. Nathaniel West Dandridge (1729-1786) was the son of Col. William Dandridge and Unity West of King William; husband of (1) Dorothea, dau. of Gov. Alexander Spotswood, and (2) Jane, dau. of Joseph Pollard, Clerk of Goochland County. He was first cousin of Martha Dandridge Custis Washington, the father-in-law of Patrick Henry, member of the County Court of Hanover and he served in the House of Burgesses from 1758 until 1764.

The Underwoods

Thomas Underwood (1740-1815) was the son of Thomas Underwood of Bear Castle; the husband of (1) Ann Taylor and (2) Jane Pollard Dandridge. He was Colonel in the Goochland County Militia, and he represented Goochland in the House of Delegates for most of the Sessions from 1777-1790.

James Underwood (1776-1847) son of Thomas, captain of a troop of cavalry of the 4th Regiment, Virginia Militia in the War of 1812, member of the County Court for many years and Sheriff of Hanover in 1829.

John Underwood (1767-1837) brother of James Underwood and father of Joseph Rogers & Warner Lewis Underwood. He represented Goochland in the House of Delegates for most of the sessions between 1807-1815.

Warner Lewis Underwood (1808-1872) grandson of Thomas, was a member of the Kentucky Legislature in 1848-49 and member of Congress from 1853-1859.

Joseph Rogers Underwood (1791-1876) grandson of Thomas Underwood, was an officer in the War of 1812, a member of the Kentucky Legislature for a time, judge of the Kentucky Court of Appeals from 1828-1835, member of Congress from 1835-1843 and U.S. Senator from 1847-1853.

**Legislative Petition of
Nathaniel West Dandridge
Decem'r. 6th 1780**

This legislative petition concerns Dandridge's grist mill located on Mill Creek and the financial injuries incurred when another mill was built just a mile upstream.¹ Though appearing to advance a solid argument, his petition is marked "rejected."

To the Hon'ble Speaker of House of Delegates

The petition of Nathaniel West Dandridge Esq. humbly sheweth

That he is possessed of an ancient water grist mill built nearly sixty years ago across a water course called Mill Creek in the County of Hanover, very profitable to your Petitioner and in consequence of very considerable sums of money expended in erecting and keeping in repair, is fully sufficient for a constant and regular supply of meal to all the neighbourhood.

That some years ago, John Boswell Gent. whose land was separated from that of your Pet'r. by the said run, applied to the County Court of Hanover for leave to build a mill thereon about a mile above that of y. Petitioner and to have ___ acres of land laid off for the purpose of building such mill, which notwithstanding y. Pet'rs. reasonable opposition thereto on the amount of probably injury it would occasion to him, as granted; people being divided in opinion as to the consequences of building such mill, being then a matter of speculation only.

That the mill being accordingly built, your Petitioner found realised all the evils he had feared. In very dry seasons the water was kept from his mill and discharged from the other in such small quantities as to be absorbed in the mud before it reached his; on the other hand in harty rains the dam above being broke, carried in a torrent that of your Petitioner before it, which frequently happening, your Petitioner naturally incurred the expenses of a thousand[?] pounds in consequence of building the said new mill, besides the loss of several acres of valuable meadow grounds which were overflowed by the Pond, and, yet the whole he received for his damages and the value of the acres of land, was no more than fourteen pounds, ten shillings.

That Mr. Boswell having sold the mill and his land adjoining to one Standly who sold to George Potty, Charles Thomson and John Thompson, in the month of October 1778 the mill was carried away, and your Pet'r. finding no appearance of rebuilding the same when the year from its distruction had expired, was in hopes he had thus got rid of this great evil and was determined to use every endeavor to prevent a mill being again built at his place; but is lately informed that the said Potty and others had within the year caused to be cut a few small pieces of timber, called by them parts of a mill frame, which they alladge is a beginning to rebuild the mill within the year as such intitles them to three years to finish such mill according to the Act of Assembly, altho' your Pet'r. conceived the same to be ___ fraud in order to extract from him a large sum of money for purchasing out this great injury and which in equity and justice he ought never to have been subject to.

Your Pet'r. therefore submits his cause which may probably be that of many others, to the consideration of the House and prays such relief, by explaining or amending the Act of Assembly or otherwise as to this House in their wisdom shall deem just and proper.

And he will pray etc.

Mr. Dandridge

We being neighbours do hereby certify that in our opinion Mr. Dandridge's mill is fully sufficient to supply the neighbourhood with meal and that the building of Mr. Boswell's mill hath been very injurious to Mr. Dandridge and rather prejudicial than beneficial to the neighbours.

John Richardson	Lewis Atkinson	Wm Hawes
Richd Richardson	Wm Bullock	Wm Hughes
Jno Anderson	David Haris	
John Mayo	Jno Gentry	
Joseph Watson	Gorge Harris	
John Bullock	James Turner	
David Henderson	John Hix	
John Bowles	Austin Meeks	
Nathan Sims		

¹ Digital images of the hand-written petition can be found at the Library of Virginia website by searching Legislative Petitions in Hanover County: Dandridge.

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This petition was abstracted by Jean Pickett Hall and published in the *Magazine of Virginia Genealogy*, Vol. 31, No. 1, as "Legislative Petitions from Virginia Counties with Significant Record Loss: Hanover County."

From Dandridge to Gouldin: 200 Years on Mill Creek

As early as the 1720s, Mill Creek in western Hanover was employed to supply water power to a grist mill on land granted to Nathaniel West in 1723. This land was inherited by his daughter Unity West Dandridge, wife of William Dandridge, and in 1753, a portion of the property including a grist mill was transferred to their son Nathaniel West Dandridge. In May 1780, his eldest son William received the mill and over seven hundred acres.

In a petition to the House of Delegates in December 1780, Dandridge stated that his family's mill, built nearly sixty years earlier, had been damaged by the mill of John Boswell just a mile upstream. (See Petition on page 5.) The location of Boswell's old mill dam on the western border of Dandridge's property is shown on a plat surveyed in 1803.¹ Today Boswell's dam is covered by a much larger modern dam on the lower end of Springfield Lake.

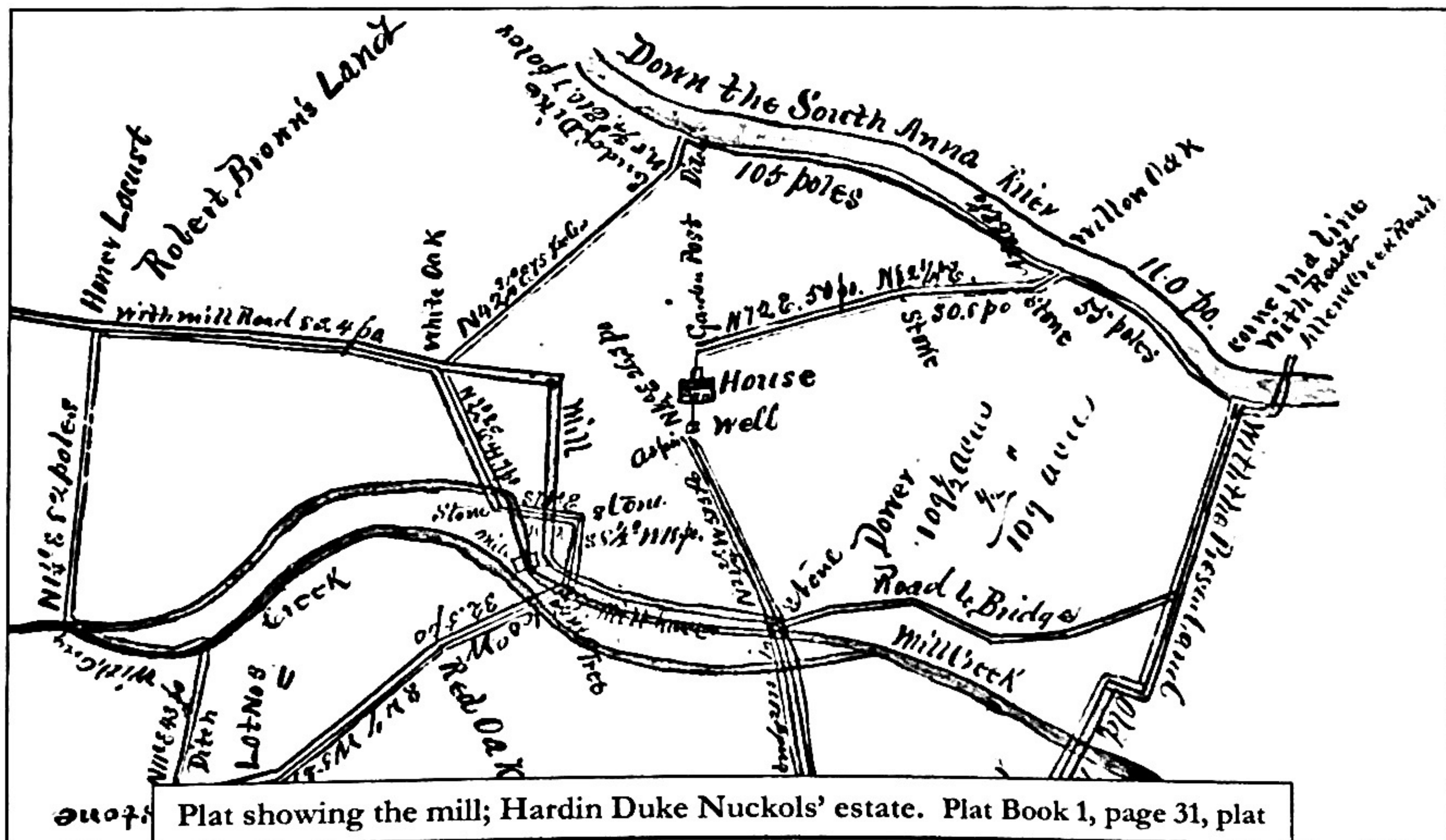
Tracing property ownership for much of the 19th century can be difficult in a burned county;

however, it is known that Hardin Duke Nuckols acquired and operated the mill for some time before his death in 1879. His son Herbert Oswald Nuckols purchased "sixty acres together with the mill and improvements thereon" as part of the settlement of the estate. In the 1880s, the property was sold to William L. Gouldin, trustee for Ida L, his wife. Gouldin's mill was in operation until the late 1930s.

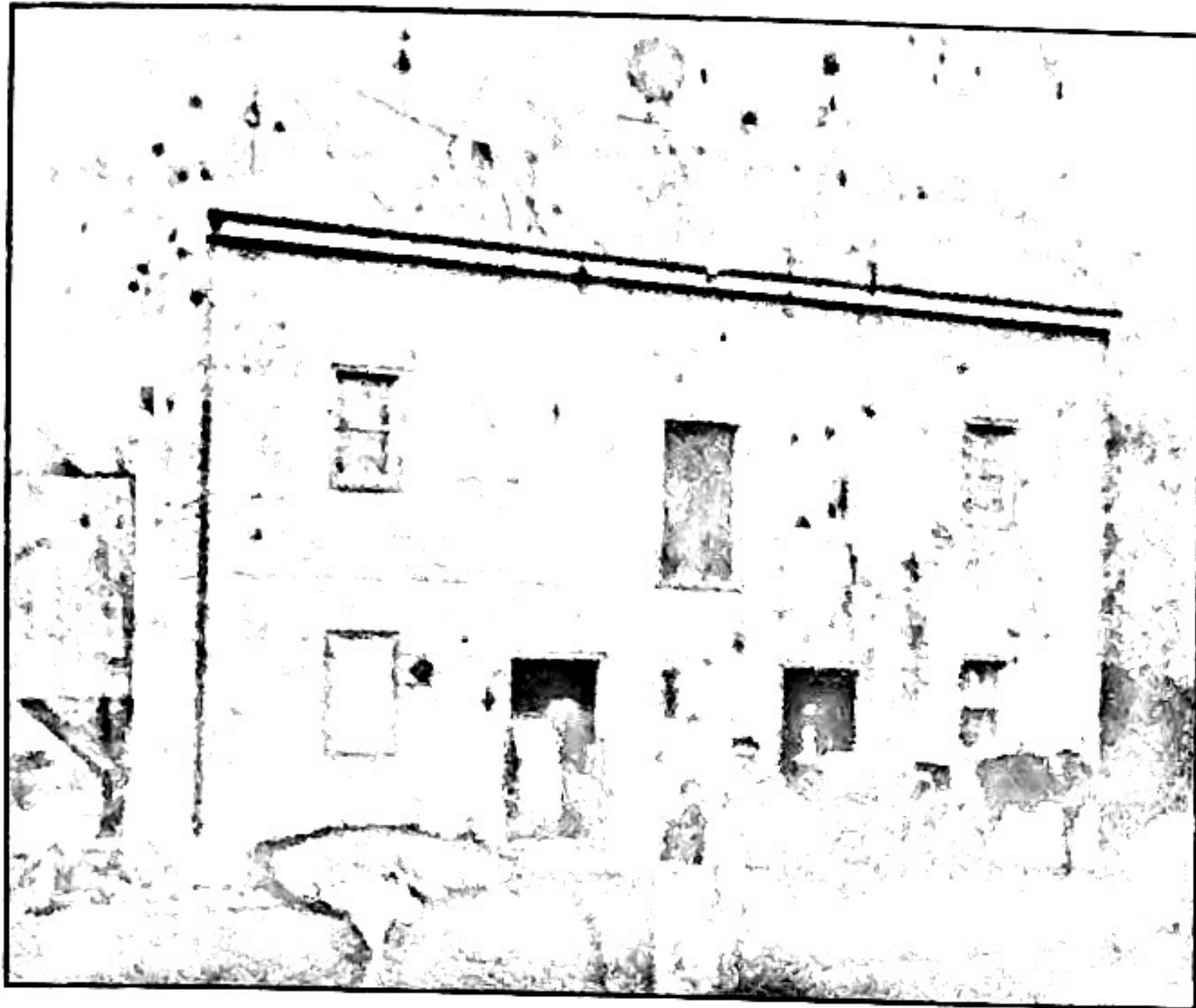
In 1943, while John S. Davis owned the mill property, a notice appeared in the *Herald-Progress* newspaper stating that the community had requested that Gouldin's mill be reopened and that state maintenance of the road leading to it be provided. Though an effort was made to rebuild the dam, the mill was not put back into service.

As late as 1975, the property was described as "all that tract of land on the south side of Virginia state route No. 611 together with all the water rights and improvements thereon or thereto appertaining containing sixty acres more or less known as Gouldin's mill or Allen's Creek mill." [Deed Book 383, page 49.]

¹ Glazebrook, Eugenia G. & Preston G. *Virginia Migrations: Hanover County, 1723-1850*, Vol. 1, (Baltimore: Clearfield Co., 2000), 34.



Plat showing the mill; Hardin Duke Nuckols' estate. Plat Book 1, page 31, plat



Gouldin's mill, previously Nuckols' mill, was in operation from at least the mid-19th to the late 1930s. Mill Creek supported water-powered grist mills on or near this site as early as the 1720s. Remnants of a very old dry-laid stone dam and a lengthy earthen mill race are all that remain of this commercial enterprise.



Chimney of the miller's house on Mill Creek in western Hanover; this site is on private property.

~ ~ ADVERTISEMENT ~ ~

HANOVER, October 1, 1772
Virginia Gazette

COLONEL Nathaniel West Dandridge, of this County, who maintains a Tutor in his Family, is willing to accommodate ten Pupils with Diet and Washing, at the Rate of fifteen Pounds a Year, provided his Design appears to meet Encouragements by the Number of Applications made him before the first of December. Colonel Dandridge and his Lady are so well known that more needs not be said concerning their Part of the Undertaking. Their House is large and commodious, and in as healthy a Situation as any in the County.

The Branches of Learning which the present Tutor chiefly professes to teach are Reading, Writing, English, Latin, and Greek Grammar, Arithmetick, Book-Keeping, ancient and modern Geography, Chronology, History, Greek and Roman Antiquities, Mythology, Etc....

His Design will not prove abortive if he succeeds in kindling the Spark of Genius, in inflaming the Ardour of Curiosity, in improving the Taste, in inspiring the Sentiments of genuine Freedom. He would humbly hope to be useful in preparing his Pupils for more learned Seminaries, or qualifying them to enjoy, with greater Comfort, the common Walks of Private Life. In this Pursuit, the Classics must necessarily engage a great Part of his Attention....

Whereas several Scholars were kept back for some Months past, because the Tutor would not engage for any Time, this Advertisement may be considered as an Earnest of his Intention to continue here, and of his Resolution to prosecute his Business with unremitted Applicants. His price for teaching is five Pounds a Year for each Scholar.

CHARLES MAC IVER

For more on the Dandridge land holdings, home site and cemetery, see *Bulletin* No. 96, Summer 2017.