The Upper Buffalo Valley
A Survey for Anthropology 377
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On my honor I have neither given nor received any unacknowledged aid on this paper.
southeast. Projectile points found in the valley have suggested that these indians were in fact big game hunters. (Diehl: 1951) The hunters included men of the Cherokee, Catawba, Delaware, and Shawnee tribes. The Shawnee in particular were to be a problem for the early Scotch-Irish pioneers.

The first white settlers to arrive in the Valley were the Scotch-Irish presbyterians. Much of the area to the north was settled in conjunction to the Borden Land grant of 1734. The Buffalo valley however lay just south of the grant and accordingly got a slower start. E.J. Wilhelm wrote:

Special Agricultural pursuits in Tidewater Virginia and Commonwealth Bureaucratic policies for holding back westward movement in Virginia were most responsible for settlers coming late to the Blue Ridge mountains. But when they came, they entered the Blue Ridge from every part of the compass. (Wilhelm: 1967)

Such was the story of Buffalo valley. It was slow getting started, but developed quickly.

Diehl wrote that by October of 1740, Rev. John Craig held services in the valley, but there were as yet no meeting houses set up for another five years. Settlement began in 1746 when Samuel and Joseph Long patented 400 acres of the best bottom land on the south fork of Buffalo creek.
locations of some sites, while others were simply mentioned in passing. The most valuable tools for locating sites have been old maps. It seems that if the existence of some structure has warranted a place in written and oral histories, it most likely appeared on a map at one time or another. (This is not to say that things not mapped are of no historical significance.) They are helpful in two ways. First, their more common use is to locate sites. Another valuable use can be in conjunction with oral histories to confirm or even date a site, say if the mapping dates were known.

An entire paper could be made concerning the mapping of the buffalo valley. Because the region developed so quickly and because of the flood plain nature of the region, the place names and topography have changed significantly since 1742. One need only compare the path of the Buffalo as depicted on an 1863 map to the path represented on a contemporary U.S.G.S. topo map.

The best old maps of the valley seem to begin around 1860. The Gillam map (1860) includes most of the names of the original settlers, is clear, and comprehensive. Another map that has proven valuable is the 1863 map drafted by the Confederate corps of engineers. The Diehl map (1971) and the Historical Map Showing Rockbridge County by the Roanoke Valley Historical Society lack accuracy, but record traditionally held locations of sites.

The catalysts for development in the valley included
"Snakefoot" is an ancient native American name for the area bounded by the North Mountains, the Short Hills and drained by the North and South forks of Buffalo Creek and Collier's Creek. The area is now referred to as the upper buffalo valley. The valley and the study of its settlement hold significant information concerning the development of Virginia frontier culture for the historian and anthropologist alike. The purpose of this paper is Twofold. First, the history of the Upper Buffalo valley is not only interesting, it reflects a cultural development that is similar to its neighboring areas, but it also reveals a region distinct in its identity. Second, The valley's settlement is valuable in relating the techniques the virginia pioneers mastered for life in the valley, and how some geographical situations dictated behavior. Topics of historical importance will include the first settlers, the expansion of Presbyterianism into the valley, and Buffalo's relation with the rest of the county. In conjunction with the historical information, we will investigate the settlement patterns of the valley, and the development of industry.

The History of the region is composed mainly of oral tradition. The premier historian of the area was George W. Diehl. Dr. Diehl was the Minister of Oxford Presbyterian Church from 1949 to 1968.

The Upper Buffalo valley was a corridor for wandering herds of buffalo in prehistoric times. Naturally such migratory route attracted Indian hunters from all over the
religious and economic motivation. The Presbyterian church entered the valley and erected meeting houses, churches, and schools. As the congregation grew, new sanctuaries were built and the old ones abandoned. Fortunately for the archaeologist, they rarely rebuilt in the same spot.

Oxford Church went through several stages of development. Howard McKnight Wilson wrote:

The original building was a log structure, probably erected in 1763, and sections were added giving it the shape of a cross. It was replaced in 1811 by a stone building at the site of the present church. A brick sanctuary was dedicated in August 1868 and an education building was added in 1961. (Wilson: 1971)

Collierstown Presbyterian Church, a product of Oxford, has a similar history of movement. Worship began for the Collierstown congregation at the "Ship Rock Meeting House," named for a nearby rock outcropping. This structure was used until 1856 when the present structure was built. (Wilson: 1971)

Hamilton's Schoolhouse lies 1 mile from Rapp's church on the south fork of Buffalo creek. The log structure has been standing since the summer of 1823 and served as both School and place of worship. The land was donated by Robert Hamilton and his wife with the express purpose of building a place of public worship. (Deed Book "N", p. 136) It falls into a
 Known as "old field schools," or, as Diehl describes them, "those early educational plants constructed by the cooperative effort of neighbors in some abandoned field, on land unwanted for farming because of un tillable terrain." (Diehl: 1956) The cabin is the oldest standing log school in the country, and in its history served several functions. It served as a church, school, and civic center for the purpose of voting. The Confederate militia trained in the school yard during the war and, before the war, it was used as a gravesite for "Freedmen" or free negroes. The Buffalo community League undertook the preservation of the structure in 1956, but no archaeological study has been conducted.

Economic factors encouraged development in the valley from the very beginning. Industry of the valley was centered around the operation of mills since the founding of Long's mill circa 1753. The primary agricultural products of the valley, corn and lumber, relate directly to the operation of the mills. (It should be noted that at this time tobacco was produced in this area as well.) since the foundation of Joseph Long's mill, twelve mills were established. The following table gives more data.
Historic Valley Mills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mill</th>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Current Status or Comments</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Wade's</td>
<td>1746-</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>Presently a residence</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collier's Creek</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Long's</td>
<td>pre 1743</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>Buffalo Cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rapp's</td>
<td>1836-1932</td>
<td>grist &amp; saw</td>
<td>Turbine feature</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>South Buffalo Cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Painter's c.</td>
<td>1790</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>2 overshot wheels</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Colliers Cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deacon's</td>
<td>pre 1825</td>
<td>grist &amp; planing</td>
<td>North Fork Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Morrison's</td>
<td>1856-1950</td>
<td>saw</td>
<td>Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tribbet's</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>Collier's Cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bolivar's</td>
<td>1828-?</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>Brick, Collier's Cr.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hamilton's</td>
<td>1877</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>South Buffalo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Van Zandt's</td>
<td>pre 1803</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>&quot;west end of pike across short hill&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Huffman's</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>1863 map as Armentout's</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Collier's Cr..</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knick's</td>
<td>?</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>washed away</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Zollman's</td>
<td>1816-1739</td>
<td>grist</td>
<td>William Zollman was a gunsmith and distiller.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Buffalo creek.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(RHS: 1955)
Several of the Buffalo valley's historic mills are particularly interesting. There are some extant remains, others have been razed completely.

Rapp's Mill was founded in 1836 and served as both a grist and saw mill. Mathias Rapp came to the valley November 25, 1834. He was well loved in the community and had already earned a reputation as an exceptional millwright. (Diehl: 1951) Rapp patented a turbine wheel that channeled water from the sluice into a hollow tube before hitting the turbine wheel. The constricted channel increased the velocity of the water, causing the turbine to turn with more power. (Diehl: 1951)

Mr. Rapp helped many of the residents of Rockbridge during the Civil war by hiding their family silver and valuables from the Federal soldiers in the caves of Short Hill. The village of Rapp's mill, as well as Rapp's Church continue to bear his name.

Painter's mill, designated as Agner's mill on both the 1860 and 1863 maps, is presently the property of Clemmer's store in Effinger. The mill stones are presently yard ornaments and the race wall is extant about 60 yards upstream. An Interesting note is that the owner, J. B. Clemmer, has a brother, J.D. Clemmer, who owns part of the property on which Morrison's mill sits on the Buffalo. The mill was first built by James Wilson, who bought the property for the purpose of "erecting a chopping and saw mill." (Deed Book EE, 479) Since that time the mill was
owned by Mr. R.G. Cambell, a confederate officer who served in the 25th Virginia Infantry and who donated the building materials for Oxford Church. (Diehl: 1971) When Cambell bought the land, included in the deal was a family of five negroes; Rachel, Joe, Magdaline, Gilbert, George and Larry. (Deed Book HH, 248)

Tribbett's mill on Collier's Creek served also as a blacksmith shop by a Mr. H.A. Dunlap. Mr. Kenneth Bane who owns a property across the road from the site has collected many of the old smith's tool and products.

At the mouth of the Buffalo valley is the site of Zollman's mill, where William Zollman worked as a distiller and gunsmith. Two of the original Zollman rifles are still in the possession of the family, as well as some of the liquor. (Interview with Waynlee Zollman).

Seahorn Inn

I discovered the Seahorn Inn quite by chance. After weeks of research about the Upper Buffalo valley, There had been no mention of such a place. I needed directions to the ruins of the remains of the ship rock meeting house where Collierstown Presbyterian Church had been organized. There was an old woman across the street from the church, standing in her yard, very curious about my activities, so I decided to introduce myself, explain my project and get directions. Her name was Mrs. Martin (she did not give me her first name because she said it would be improper), and once she found out why I had been snooping around the Church, became very
receptive. Mrs. Martin answered several questions that I asked her, but volunteered the most interesting information she gave.

According to Mrs. Martin, approximately half a mile from her house were the remains of an old house/inn. She said it was "up in a clump of trees" up from a garbage disposal area. Apparently it was an old stage coach inn for the toll road that was there (the old road Mrs. Martin was referring to was the Lexington-Covington Turnpike). She also said that at one time it had overlooked a pond. An interview with a Mr. Kenneth Bane, a neighbor of Mrs. Martin, supported her story. According to both Martin and Bane, the structure was still standing when they were children, but has since been razed. (Both individuals were between the ages of 60-65)

I travelled to the site by bicycle and after being chased by dogs, found the site in an oak grove in a cow pasture. A preliminary pedestrian survey revealed a structure, in which were found five L-shaped machine cut, handmade head nails. The Nelson pamphlet on nail Chronology dated them between c.1790 and 1805. (Nelson)

The next day, a pedestrian survey was conducted, as well as shovel tests, mapping and photographing. Eight features were mapped. They were:

Feature 1- Mound of red brick and cut limestone, some burned brick.

Feature 2- Larger pile of red brick, cut limestone and
burned wooden beams. Nails date the beams c. 1790- 1865.

Feature 3- Two parallel walls. The southern wall is 1' higher in elevation and 25'-30' long. The more northern wall sits 12'-15' to the north west and is about 20' long. A shovel test at the base of the southern wall revealed more L-shaped nails and some T-shaped nails of the same period.

Feature 4- Cut stone structure, crumbled on one side, in tact on the northern side. Some red bricks in the debris.

Feature 5- 50'-55 foot wall running NW to SE perpendicular to the walls of Feature 3.

Feature 6- possible landscaped terrace. Runs N to S, to the west of the others.

Feature 7- 3'x3' square stone structure. cut and uncut debris on top.

Feature 8- Least exposed of the structures. Wall parallel to feature 5.

A cow path to the north east leading down to a spring (possibly an old pond bed) has exposed many pieces of pottery and ceramic shards. The slope of the site has also exposed many pieces through the erosion process. Artifacts found were:

1. Nails- 3 -3' and 1 -1.5' hand wrought nails.
   T-head.
   3-3'and 2-3' fragments, machine cut, handmade head, c. mid 1790's-1805
1-3' fragment, "Modern" machine cut, c.1830 to the present.
1-1.5' lath nail, handmade heads, machine cut, c.1740-1810
3-3' hand wrought finish nails

2. Glassware- 1 Mason Jar base with maker's mark.
6 pieces of aqua bottle class.
3 glass bottle necks.
4 pieces of clear bottle glass.
1 piece of clear bottle glass with maker's mark.

3. Ceramics- 7 pieces of whiteware.
2 large pearlware bowl fragments.
11 pieces of pearlware.
1 Whiteware with maker's mark.

1 piece scratch blue stoneware. (?)
2 pieces of glazed earthenware.
1 coarse earthenware.

Many of the artifacts found are similar to those found at the Bobby Moore's Barn (44RB65, op.3) site.

A Seahorn property appears on both the Gillam and 1863 maps in the location examined. The maps both place the site on a road cutting across North Mountain to the Alleghany mountains. The oral histories given by Mrs. Martin and Kenneth Bane identify the structure as an old "stage coach" inn on a toll road. If this is true, excavation of the site would prove valuable.
Valley Settlement: Conclusion

"The early arrivals were able to patent the choice bottom lands and the settlers, who arrived late or were lacking in financial ability, were forced to accept the vacant lands in the hollows of the mountain sides." (Diehl: 1971)

The settlement of the Upper Buffalo valley does not follow one pattern, but several. Patricia E. Rubertone suggests that landscape and inhabitants adjustment to its features tells us something about the values of the people who live there. (Rubertone: 1989) The valley seems to show some evidence in favor of this theory.

First, the Upper Buffalo valley was not included in the Borden Grant, therefore, the land was not free to the settlers. For this reason, other factors must have attracted them. Two of these factors were 1) available fertile bottom land due to the creek activity and 2) the abundance of potential water power evidenced by the number streams.

Buffalo creek and Collier's creek, the two largest creeks in the valley, both have wide flood plains of rich, deposited topsoil, and springs in the surrounding hills complement the larger tributaries to provide an adequate water supply. The potential water power of the area was utilized with mills to complement the farm economy. The development of mill industry suggests economic independence from the larger settlements in the county.

As the valley was filled, it began to develop it's own identity. Of E.J. Wilhelm's five settlement models, only two
two are prominent in the valley. It is possible that settlers came to this valley because the land under the Borden grant had reached its agricultural threshold. Wilhelm, it seems, would suggest that people moved into the valley for isolation. I would suggest rather that the degree of isolation was a result of the communities of the valley forging an independence for themselves. Evidence for my theory is the expansion of Presbyterianism into the area. The congregation of Oxford separated from other Presbyterian churches in the county to build a more convenient and homogeneous church body. The schism was a result of the settlement, not the reverse. The same pattern can be seen in the formation of both Collierstown Presbyterian and Rapp's Church, with Oxford being the starting point. Just as the churches found themselves, townships like Murat, Collierstown, Effinger, Buffalo and Rapp's Mill organized. Each of these places at one time substantiated its own political unit, complete with a town hall, post office and polling place.

To say that these settlements became isolated is incorrect. The word distinct seems much more appropriate. For this reason, the two of Wilhelm's settlement patterns which do seem appropriate are then the two which he rates lowest on his isolation continuum. These are the "Gap and Notch" and the "Hollow" patterns. (Wilhelm: 1967)

Wilhelm defines isolation as cultural rather than geographic. It is apparent that as the communities of the
valley became more self-sufficient, they became more introverted; however, the ties to the Lexington Presbytery kept this from going to far.

Collierstown comes very close to Wilhelm's description of a Gap and Notch Settlement pattern. The community, homes and even out buildings follow the road way and Colliers creek. The Roadway, now 251, was once the Lexington -Covington Turnpike. The town meets all of the class's criteria (mill, church, blacksmith shop, ) except for an inn or ordinary. If the oral histories of Mrs. Martin and Kenneth Bane are proven about a possible inn at the Seahorn site, then Collierstown will fit the requirements. Hollow type settlements can be found in the valley, particularly on the South Fork of Buffalo Creek and up Colliers Creek from Collierstown. These communities see much less traffic, and a census of names would demonstrate homogeneity.

The upper Buffalo valley is worth continued study. As Mr. Bane said, "My family, her family, all of 'ems been here a while, longer 'en most people think." Because the Buffalo valley has not been rebuilt by modern society, but rather grown into it's own identity, much has been preserved for study.

Bob:

A nice overview of the general area. I think you've identified some interesting sites worth of additional study. Consider pursuing this in the Fall evening course.

A-
Works Cited


Diehl, George West. "Mathias Rapp and His Times" a paper presented at Rapp's Church September 1, 1951.


Niko Lorentzatos Provided information concerning the Zollman rifles.

Scale
1 INCH = 10 POLES

References:
DB 209 NW 348
East 144 P 47E
Also DB 394 A 47B

Note: Due to omissions in original description and the absence of known landmarks, existing fences were accepted as correct on both north and south boundaries and surveyed accordingly: Lines 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 8. Dotted lines 5, 6, 10 were probably near the correct location. Old W.O. 27(1) was a corner to the Lusk survey of the section wars land survey and file 149. This tract should have been listed as an exception.

May 6, 1889
J. B. Johnston, C.S.

Plat of
Hamilton School House Lot
Buffalo District
Rockbridge County, Va.
Feature 4 (above) and 7 (below)
Top: Glassware from Seahorn site.

Bottom: Pottery found at Seahorn site.
Nails found at the Deir el-Medina site.
Piece of glass and ceramic from the Seahorn site, both with maker's marks.
Top wall of Feature 3 (above)

Both walls of Feature 3 (Feature 5 in the Foreground)
Top: Artifacts recovered from Dunlap's (Tribbett's) mill and blacksmith shop by Kenneth Bane.

Bottom: Millstone from Zollman's mill.