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They also served : the women of Southwestern Virginia during the American Revolution

Rebecca A. Vaught

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THEY ALSO SERVED
THE WOMEN OF SOUTHWESTERN VIRGINIA DURING THE AMERICAN
REVOLUTION

By: Rebecca A. Vaught

M.A. University of Richmond

1992

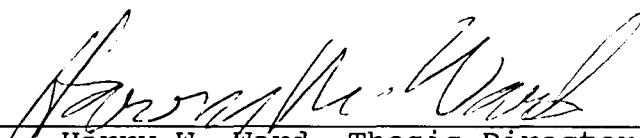
Dr. Harry W. Ward, Thesis Director

This thesis looks at the legal status and the daily lives of the women living on the Virginia frontier in the counties of Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington during the period of the American Revolution.


All ages and all levels of society are given consideration in developing the theme that the service performed by the women who survived the rigors of frontier life during this crucial period in American history was as valuable in its own way as was the service performed by their male contemporaries.

Court records give insight into the plight of servants and slaves. Court records also give some hint as to the moral choices faced by some women. Other sources have been used to look at the daily lives of women and their activities from meal preparation to Indian warfare.

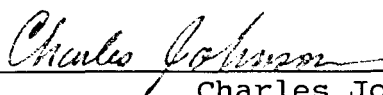
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REVOLUTION

By

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B. A., Brescia College, 1987

A Thesis

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty

of the University of Richmond

in Candidacy

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in

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It has been said that behind every great man there is a great woman. It has long been my belief that the pioneers of the Appalachian frontier were some of the greatest of those who created and founded this nation and behind each pioneer was the one person as great as he; his wife. The research that has gone into this thesis has strengthened my belief to certainty. I would like to dedicate this thesis to those brave women who gave their lives and hearts to the future.

I wish to extend my appreciation to my thesis panel consisting of Dr. Harry W. Ward, Thesis Director, Dr. W. Harrison Daniel and Dr. Charles Johnson. Dr. Ward has been wonderfully helpful in the preparation of this paper. His patience and understanding in dealing with thesis direction by telephone and the postal service is gratefully appreciated.

I would like to thank my family and many friends for the encouragement I received. Most of all, I want to express heart felt gratitude to my daughter and son-in-law, Mr. and Mrs. Howson W. Cole IV, for the physical, emotional and spiritual support without which there would have been no thesis.

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INTRODUCTION

The lives of women in Colonial America and the early Republic have received much attention in recent years. Most of this attention has been focused on the eastern seaboard and the upper classes. Colonial research often stops with the advent of the American Revolution while Republican research starts after the Revolution and an open, neglected period during the Revolution is left. In focusing on the seaboard, an interesting and important segment of early American society, the frontier, is omitted. The intent of this paper is to discuss the activities of some of the women living on the Virginia frontier in the counties of Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington from 1775 through 1785. Some records dated both earlier and later will be used when they have a direct bearing on the ten year period named. It is hoped that this will shed additional light on the lives of women on the frontier during the American Revolution. The women of the Appalachian frontier played an important role in western expansion. Who they were and what they were doing during the period of the Revolution is as important in many respects as what the militiamen they sent to places like King's Mountain and Guilford Courthouse did there.

I. LEGAL STATUS OF WOMEN ON THE FRONTIER

In Eighteenth Century America, the legal status of free, white women fell into one of two categories, femme sole or femme covert. On the frontier, as elsewhere, femme sole was either never married or widowed. The woman who enjoyed femme sole status was responsible for her own debts and could make contracts in her own name. Femme covert was the legal status of married women. Married women could not make contracts in their own name since everything in their possession ostensibly belonged to their husbands. They could not incur nor were they responsible for any debts. Many reasons have been given for the complete legal dependence of married women on their husbands. The reasons most generally accepted are those given by Marylynn Salmon. "Married women (femme covert) could not enter into any agreements that might result in court action against them, for if women could be imprisoned their husbands would be denied sexual and household services."¹

The Virginia frontier was not a classless society any more than was the Tidewater. Few wealthy families migrated to the southern reaches of the Great Valley of Virginia before 1800 and fewer still into the mountains west of the valley.

¹ Marylynn Salmon, Women and the Law of Property in Early America, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1986), p. 42. Hereafter referred to as Salmon, Women and the Law.

Great fortunes were neither brought in nor made there as a rule. Most of the people in southwestern Virginia at the time of the Revolution were first generation Scotch-Irish and Germans living as hunters and farmers at the subsistence level. There were no grand mansions on huge, well cultivated plantations like those located in the Tidewater. A few brick homes were beginning to appear but were not as large or as pretentious as Westover, Nomini, Shirley and others in the Tidewater and the Piedmont.² Most families lived in log cabins or modest clapboard homes. There were some families that were more affluent than others and possessed both bond servants and slaves. They enjoyed a marginally higher standard of living as well as a higher social and economic position.

Spinsters were a scarcity on the Virginia frontier before and during the Revolution. Most young women were married by the time they reached the age of twenty-one.³ Unmarried women

² Harold B. Gill, Jr., Apprentices of Virginia 1623-1800, (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Press, 1989). Only one youth was apprenticed as a bricklayer and only one as a mason/plasterer. The lack of apprenticeships reflects the lack of tradesmen necessary to construct more elaborate housing. See Appendix A.

³ "Ancestral Files", computer disc, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. The average age of a sampling of the wives of the men who served with the Washington County Militia at the Battle of King's Mountain was 19.5 years at the time of marriage. See Appendix B.

did not live independently of their families as a rule. It can be assumed from general evidence that few single women in rural areas acted independently of their families legally. It was legal for any single woman to act as femme sole though most chose to be dependant upon their families, or more specifically, dependance on male relatives.

A letter from John Lyth to William Preston written as Lyth left for military service illustrates how the single maiden was protected.

.....in consideration of the great and many favours I have received from your Worthy Sister Mrs. Lettia Breckinridge - It is my will and pleasure, that if ye promisory notes due to me from Dr. Walter Bennett I left in your hand to receive for me in my absence should be paid to Miss Betty Breckinridge.⁴

He goes on to explain how, should Betty remain single, Preston must invest the money and control the use of it by doling it out to her according to his (Preston's) assessment of her (Betty's) needs. If she marries, Preston is to turn the money over to her husband only if the marriage has been approved by her mother, Lettia (or Lettice). If Mrs. Breckinridge has not approved of the marriage, the money is to go to Preston's own daughter.

One who exercised her rights as femme sole was Apple

⁴ Quoted in: Lewis Preston Summers, Annals of Southwest Virginia 1769-1800, (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1970) 1:568. Botetourt County, April 3, 1777. Hereafter referred to as Summers, Annals.

Wall. She first appears in the Augusta County records in 1764 when she was named executrix for the estate of her bother, Adam, who had emigrated from the Palatinate in 1738. She was apparently a lady of mature years who had been under the protection of her brother until 1764. She was femme sole until her marriage to John Hill sometime in 1773. Hill disappeared from the records in 1777. She is femme sole again until her death in 1787 when her estate inventory lists, among other things, men's clothing.⁵ Women often appeared as estate administrators in all the western counties during this period. Usually the woman was a widow named to administer the estate of a deceased husband. Apple Wall was appointed to administer the estate of a deceased brother.

Apple was not the only widow in the Wall family who exercised her rights as a widow. A sister-in-law, Margaret Wall Sollas, also exercised her rights through a petition to the Montgomery County Court in 1781. She came into court stating that her late husband Nicholas Sollas, who had been administrator for her first husband's estate, had bound out their son, James Sollas, at age thirteen to Henry Hall and that the boy had run away. She stated that James would be better educated if bound to Adam Wall, a son of hers by

⁵ Mary B. Kegley, Early Adventures on the Western Waters, (2 vols.), (Orange: Green Publishers, Inc., 1980), 1: 277-8. The will was written March 20, 1787 and probated April 3, 1787. Hereafter referred to as Kegley, Early Adventures.

another (previous) husband, and with whom Margaret was then living. She won her case.⁶

Widowhood and the resulting femme sole position provided a great deal of freedom for women. Elizabeth and Lettice Breckinridge of Montgomery County engaged in what appears to have been land speculation. A Virginia statute passed in 1780 provided that anyone who had settled land in the area under discussion, or any where else on the Virginia frontier, before January 1, 1778, had made the necessary improvements and made a corn crop up to four hundred acres could claim previously unclaimed, unimproved land up to one thousand acres.⁷ From January 29, 1782, through January 28, 1783, Montgomery County surveys show that these two women entered, changed, withdrew and filed on a total of eight thousand five hundred acres.⁸

⁶ Ibid, September 6, 1781.

⁷ William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia From the First Session of the Legislature in the Year 1619, (13 vols.). (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1969), 10:35-50. Hereafter referred to as Hening, Statutes at Large.

⁸ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1: 29-89. The following transactions within the given time period for Elizabeth Breckinridge: January 29, 1782, 500 acres above and adjoining Preston Breckinridge's entry of 500 acres (withdrawn); September 9, 1782, withdraws her entry made 29 January last on Cole River and enters same, 500 acres on Muddy Fork an east branch of Guyandott, joining and above entry of Preston Breckinridge; January 28, 1783, withdraws her entry made the 9th of September last on Muddy Fork and enters same as follows: 250 acres on north branch of Guyandott called the Clear Fork beginning at the first good bottom land below the head of the creek; also 250 acres on Piney River a south branch of New River above where the

The activities of the two ladies continued beyond the time period under study. They were not alone in formulating land transactions although no other woman seemed to operate on quite as grand a scale. Most, like Rachel Scaggs who claimed four hundred acres⁹, were apparently trying to establish themselves with a 'home place'; the place they had settled and improved along with their late husbands. Some ladies, who

Indian War Path crosses the same, to include the first large meadow above the ford upon the headwaters of the first that empties into the river on south side of the said ford (both withdrawn). The following transactions within the given time period for Lettice Breckinridge: January 29, 1782, 500 acres about 13 miles above the mouth of Cole River, including the first good bottom and caine brake (withdrawn); September 7, 1782, withdraws 2500 acres of entries made by her 29 January last and enters same as follows: 1000 acres on Guyandott between mouth of Ducking Creek where J Breckinridge located 1000 acres on Mud River beginning at mouth of a branch (withdrawn), 500 acres on creek which empties into Sandy River, on east side about two miles from its junction with the Ohio and to join land surveyed by Crawford, 500 acres at the mouth of Middle Fork of the Three Forks of Guyandott (which is the east branch of same) to extend up said fork on both sides, also to include on Elk Lick on west side of said fork under the cliff of a rock (void), 500 acres on Guyandott opposite above entry including Buffaloe Lick about twenty poles below the mouth of Middle Fork of the Three Forks on opposite side of the river to include an encamping station made by John Love and Peter Huff in 1773 (void); withdraws her entry of 500 acres made 29 January 1782 and enters same on Guyandotte River to begin at the mouth of Beaver Creek nearly opposite the mouth of Mill Creek and to join Joseph Love's settlement and preemption on the east side of the river (withdrawn).

Most of this land lay within the present states of West Virginia or Kentucky. There is no indication that either of these ladies ever resided on the land in question. The transactions are included here because both ladies were residents of Montgomery County during this period of real estate activity.

⁹ Ibid, 1:311, September 13, 1782, Montgomery County

evidently did not qualify for free land under the law, had the ability and the wherewithal to purchase the place of their choice.¹⁰ A few others who were also possibly speculating in land did so in the company of male partners.¹¹

Femme sole activities of widows were not confined to land transactions. Lettice Breckinridge was granted a license to keep an ordinary at her house by the Botetourt County Court on April 14, 1780.¹² On September 9, 1778, Catharine Hance, the bastard child of Grace Thompson was bound, again by the Botetourt County Court, to Lettice Breckinridge.¹³ Lettice Breckinridge was one of the more active widows engaging in business in southwestern Virginia during the period of the

¹⁰ Ibid, 1:94. March 11, 1783, Montgomery County, Hannah Alder, assignee of William Foster, assignee of Robert Wallace, assignee of Robert Craven, 350 acres on headwaters of Walkers Creek and head of North Fork of Holston to join the line with George Irvine's land.

¹¹ Ibid, 2:96. March 24, 1783, Montgomery County, Elizabeth Madison and James Breckinridge, assignees of Walter Crockett, attorney for James Clark, state warrant of 500 acres enter same as follows: 120 acres on east side of Little River, a branch of same known by the name of Big Branch about a mile and half from the mouth; also 200 acres on west side of Walkers Creek a branch of same known by the name of No Business about three miles above mouth to begin at lower end of flat land and to run up same on both sides; 180 acres on west side of Sinking Creek on waters of New River on north side of Gravelly Ridge to begin with Snidow's line on south side of sd. ridge entered across north side.

¹² Summers, Annals, 1:318. Botetourt County, April 14, 1780.

¹³ Ibid, 1:275, Botetourt County September 9, 1778. 1:344, June 1, 1781, Order set aside by court.

Revolution but she was definitely not the only one doing so. Other businesswomen found other outlets for their energies. Just before the Revolutionary War, Barbara Smith of Augusta County was already farming on a rather large scale when she produced eight hundred thirty-eight weight of hemp.¹⁴ Given the labor intensiveness of eighteenth century farming practices, it is highly unlikely that Barbara Smith farmed alone. It would be safe to assume that she had the aid of sons, hired help, slaves or bond servants or of any combination of those sources of labor. Her agricultural activities would have been even more crucial to the American economy when hostilities broke out and the need for rope, and therefore hemp, increased. Many widows who did not remarry were often well able to care for themselves and their households. Femme sole status allowed many of them to prove themselves as astute in business matters as their male contemporaries.

Femme sole also brought the right to sue in a court of law. Of course, it also brought the responsibility of being sued. More suits are on record that were brought by women than vice versa. Suits usually involved monetary debts that

¹⁴ Augusta County Virginia Court Order Books 1743-1867, Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, Order Book 16, 1774-1779, Reel 30379, p.15. August 20, 1774. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia. Hereafter referred to as Augusta Order Book 16.

were not paid promptly. Only one woman in the counties under study appears to have brought more than one lawsuit. Easter Rafferty of Washington County must have been the most unpopular termagant on the frontier. She sued John Patterson, Robert Porterfield, Samuel Rickhart, William Long and Robert Edmondson each and all between 1780 and 1784 and all for debt. She won each suit.¹⁵ It is difficult to understand why men continued to allow themselves to become indebted to her.

Her first legal complaint against a man was in 1777 for assault and threatening behavior. Debt may or may not have been involved. The following court record is dated February 25, 1777.

On the complaint of Easter Rafferty against Thomas Edmondson for assaulting & threatening her it is the opinion of the Court that the said Thomas Edmondson be bound to his good behavior. Whereupon the said Thomas Edmondson acknowledged himself Indebted to the Commonwealth of Virginia in the Sum of one Hundred pounds & William Beaty & Joseph Black in the Sum of Fifty pounds each with condition that the said Thomas Edmondson will be of good behavior to all the good people of this Commonwealth and particularly to the said Easter Rafferty for the space of One Year.¹⁶

¹⁵ Summers, Annals, 2:1116, September 17, 1782, debt dated October 1, 1781. 2:1167, November 20, 1783. 2:1170, May 18, 1784, debt dated October 30, 1781. 2:1177, October 9, 1781. 2:1177, October 30, 1781.

¹⁶ Washington County, Virginia, County Court Minutes, Book 1 1777-1787. Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, August 24, 1953, Reel 23, unnumbered pages. February 25, 1777. Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia. Hereafter referred to as Washington County Book 1.

This is rather a large peace bond. The court must have felt Edmondson was a real threat to Easter Rafferty. The source of Edmondson's anger is open to speculation. Whatever it was, the court thought that his assaulting Rafferty was taking things a bit too far.

Women who enjoyed femme sole status not only sued men. They could sue other women who were also femme sole. On March 19, 1777 in Augusta County, Catherine Gratton and her father, John, sued Bridget Simpson for slander. The Grattons won. Bridget had her choice of punishments. She could either apologize to Catherine publicly or pay her one hundred pounds.¹⁷

In civil proceedings, a woman who claimed femme sole status definitely had an advantage over her married sister. The advantage disappeared if she became embroiled in criminal court proceedings. The courts tried to be fair in all criminal cases. Unfortunately, eighteenth century society also tried to police public morals through the criminal courts. The onus of the crime of adultery was often shared by both parties, but often punishment for fornication fell only on the woman. All too often, she had living, breathing proof of her guilt. The courts seldom made an attempt to find from

¹⁷ Augusta Order Book 16, pp. 171-2, March 19, 1777. Apparently both Catherine and John had been slandered. The suit was not brought by John on behalf of Catherine but by both of them.

whom she had gotten the evidence in the form of a bastard child. They simply took the child from her and bound it to someone they considered more fit to raise it. In other words, the mother was punished for fornication by the loss of her child and the child was punished for being a bastard by becoming a bond servant throughout its childhood. This form of 'caring' for these unfortunate children provided the potential for several generations of female servants and continued up almost until the turn of the twentieth century when orphanages began to appear in the southeastern United States.¹⁸

The Washington County Court spent a great deal of time in the years 1777-1779 dealing with what they considered crimes against society; fornication, adultery and bastardy. Twenty-five separate crimes on these three morals charges and one civil case are recorded in the period. Of the twenty-five, eight are against women for bastardy and in none of them is the father's name mentioned. Of the remaining sixteen cases,

¹⁸ Perry Leavers, Ph. D., The Children's Home; The First 75 Years, (Winston-Salem: Hunter Publishing Co., 1983) p. 3. This is an history of a North Carolina orphanage that gives dates of the founding of orphanages over three states, North Carolina, South Carolina, and Virginia. While the first orphanage in the southeast was in Bethesda, GA, in 1745, they were very uncommon until after the Civil War.

Anne Trice Thompson Akers, "On the Outside Looking In: Orphans Waifs and Wards of Montgomery County 1776-1800", unpublished thesis for the degree of Master of Arts, May 25, 1977.

seven were women and nine were men. Two men were tried a second time without the corresponding women being named.¹⁹ ²⁰

The civil case was not one of punishment for a moral crime, but rather a settlement of medical expenses. The Washington County Court recorded an earlier order of the Botetourt County Court that Amelia Onslow serve extra time on her indenture to "reimburse her Master Arthur Campbell his Expenses in geting her cured of the Venereal disorder".²¹ While this is clearly an example of settlement of medical expenses, there are two interesting points to be made.

¹⁹ Washington County Book 1, February 25, 1777, Eleanor Pomphrey, bastardy; August 27, 1777, Nancy Newman, bastardy, two counts; November 26, 1777, Grand Jury returns against William Crabtree and Katherine Starns for living unlawfully together and against Samuel Dennis and Ann Dollarhide wife to Cornelius Dollarhide for living in adultery; May 19, 1778, Grand Jury returns against Edward Stephenson for adultery and Sarah Crawford for fornication; May 21, 1778, Mary Daily, bastardy; November 18, 1778, Grand Jury returns against Martha McMahon for bearing a base born child, against Jeffrey Mopey and Rachel Arbuckle she for leaving her husband without consent and he the said Mopey for living with her; against Isaac Anderson and Margaret Crow for fornication; against John Montgomery and Jean Mathews for living in fornication; May 18, 1779, Grand Jury returns against John Montgomery for adultery; against Rebecca Davitt for adultery; against Dianana Jones for having a bastard child; against Elizabeth Hughes for bastardy; against Elizabeth Knott for bastardy.

²⁰ Ibid. Bastardy continued to be a leading cause for prosecution of women. The following five women were so charged on May 21, 1782: Elizabeth Blackburn, Susanna Burriss, Elizabeth Cochran, Mary Oliver and Susanna Saxton.

²¹ Ibid, February 25, 1777. It would also be interest to know how the cure was affected without the Twentieth Century development of penicillin.

Firstly, this and natal confinement apparently were the only two medical conditions that called for expense sufficient to warrant additional time being added to a woman's indenture to cover that expense. Secondly, it is interesting that no male servant in the area had the same disorder or, if one did, he was not charged similarly for medical expense. Amelia Onslow, however, was not the only woman so charged.²²

Bastardy was not a charge any young woman wanted to face in court. She would have to face not only the stigma attached but also the loss of her child. This was not a problem exclusively of the servant class and other women of the lower classes. The attendant stigma was all the worse for a daughter of one of the more prominent families and in her desperation, a young woman might look for another way out of her dilemma. The Washington County Court ordered the examination of Nancy Montgomery in June, 1778, on suspicion of murdering a male bastard child and acquitted her of the charges.²³ Court records do not tell why she was acquitted.

²² Augusta Order Book 16, January 17, 1775, Sarah Bowman a Servant of Joseph Weir Came into Court and agreed to serve her Master two years after her time of Conviction in Consideration of his Curing her of the Veneral disease and for her absent time and Expenses in taking her up when runaway.

²³ Washington County Book 1. At a Court held at the Court House of Washington County the 2d day of June 1778 for the examination of Nancy Montgomery on suspicion of her feloniously murdering a Male Bastard Child.

Present James Montgomery, Isaac Shelby, Robert Craig, & John Duncan Gent. The prisoner being set at the Bar and it being

Was there such a child? Was it still alive? Was it born dead? Did it die of natural causes soon after birth? Any of these could apply, but the most interesting item in the actual court record is the signature of the justice who signed the order to acquit. He was James Montgomery, a possible kinsman of Nancy's.²⁴

The stigma of an illegitimate child could traumatize an entire family. Shortly before the Revolution, the Botetourt County Court was faced with a case that involved not only the mother, but the grandparents as well. The Grand Jury made the following presented against "Elizabeth Allen for being suffered to be with child and with her parents for destroying it as is supposed, contrary to law."²⁵

Women were tried on other, more conventional criminal charges as well. Petty larceny seemed to be a favorite pastime for many in the lower classes, both servant and free. Justice, when convicted, was fast, sure and painful. The most

demand of her whether she was guilty of the felony aforesaid answered she was in no wise guilty & the Court examining her touching the aforesaid felony it is the opinion of the Court that she be acquitted of the charge aforesaid. (signed) John Montgomery.

²⁴ Ancestral Files. Only one Nancy Montgomery could be found in Washington County where both age and time corresponded. She had kinsmen named James Montgomery. This does not constitute concrete proof of the identities of the two people in question, but does raise the likelihood that they were related.

²⁵ Summers, Annals, 1:141. Botetourt County, November 12, 1771.

usual punishment was flogging. The number of lashes and the conditions under which they were laid on varied from court to court and case to case. Both the number of lashes and the conditions served as punishment. It would not matter much to a man whether the lashes were laid on his bare back or through his shirt but it certainly would matter to a woman. It would have been much more humiliating for a woman to have been stripped to the waist before receiving lashes on her bare back. The Botetourt County Court sentenced Elizabeth McCorkle on September 26, 1779, to ten lashes laid on her bare back for stealing "a percell of wooling yarn & a pair of wooll cards" from Joseph Bailey.²⁶

Augusta County sentenced Catharine Bartley on January 30, 1775, to fifty-nine lashes on her bare back for "stealing sundry Goods and Money" from her master, Daniel Kidd.²⁷ Was it worse to steal money or was it worse to steal from your master or both? Another possibility is that the court may have thought they were dealing with a ring of thieves. Catherine had been convicted along with Martin Whitesale on the same charge. On the same day, separate charges were brought against Mary Whitsel who only received a prison

²⁶ Summers, Annals, 1:296, September 26, 1779, Botetourt County. Bailey was sent to jail the same day to await trial in General Court for stealing a horse.

²⁷ Augusta Order Book 16, p. 49-50. Daniel Kidd furnished the bond for this servant who had been caught stealing from him.

sentence of indeterminate length.

Mary Whitsel who stands Committed to the Gaol of this County for receiving one Trunk and papers of Catharine Barkley knowing them to have been stolen and for Burning the Papers in order to secrete the matter.²⁸

Washington County also tried a husband and wife, along with a slave, on charges that would seem to indicate they thought they were dealing with a ring of thieves.

At a Court held at the Courthouse of Washington County the first Day of September 1781 for the Examination of Tob a Negro man slave the property of James Thompson on Suspicion of his feloniously Breaking Joseph Vances house and Takeing from thence Sundry Goods the Property of the Said Vance.....At a Court held at the Courthouse of Washington County the first Day of September 1781 for the Examination of Margaret Anderson and John Anderson on Suspicion of their receiving Sundry Goods the property of Joseph Vance from Tob a Negro Slave the property of James Thompson knowing them to be Stolen.....the prisoners Being Set at the Bar and Divers witnesses Sworn and Examined and heard in their defence it is the oppinion of the Court that they be bound to the next Grand Jury court and they not Giving Security is remanded to Jail untill they find Sufficient Security.²⁹

On February 14, 1777, the Augusta County Court tried Mary Smith for stealing the leather pocketbook of Thomas Hinds with over twenty pounds in paper and silver in it. They convicted her of stealing the pocketbook but were doubtful about the

²⁸ Ibid, pp. 50-51.

²⁹ Washington County Book 1, September 1, 1781. Final disposition of this case was not found.

money so ordered her stripped to her shift to receive five lashes.³⁰

Women appeared in criminal court for reasons other than to be tried as criminals. Crimes of violence against women were not unknown on the frontier in the eighteenth century. On October 31, 1775, John Askins was bound over to Oyer and Terminer for the attempted rape of Elizabeth (Mrs. John) Patterson and for stealing her petticoat³¹, bonnet and wool cards.³² The Oyer and Terminer records are not available so the disposition of the case is unknown.

Mary Greenlee had both men's and women's clothing stolen from her by Paul Cash. Cash pled innocent and the Augusta County Court ordered him held and transported to Williamsburg for trial in General Court there. Mary Greenlee and her daughter Margaret were both bonded witnesses against Cash. It appeared that the ladies were going to get an almost unheard

³⁰ Augusta Order Book 16, p. 52, February 14, 1777.. Where did the money go?

³¹ Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., Costume Dept., Research files. Petticoat is the Eighteenth Century name for the article of clothing referred to today as a skirt. It was not necessarily an undergarment. Undergarments, as such, virtually did not exist. All or part of any garment could be seen in daily wear. In cold weather, a woman might wear all her petticoats at once, rotating them as they soiled. In warm weather, she might wear only one petticoat over her shift. Given the date of this trial, she might have been stripped to her shift by her attacker. Part of the shift could and did show above the petticoat in public but the bottom showed more of the legs than was considered polite.

³² Augusta Order Book 16, p. 87, October 31, 1775.

of dividend for a woman on the frontier, a trip to Williamsburg, in order to testify. Unfortunately for them, Cash decided that the General Court might be even less sympathetic than the County Court. Later on the same day, in the same court session, he threw himself on the mercy of the court and received thirty lashes. The ladies did not get to visit the capital, at least not that time.³³

The married woman whose legal status was *femme covert* did not have the legal freedom open to her unmarried sister. Marylynn Salmon was quoted earlier as to the reasons why this legal freedom was denied to married women. It might be possible to also theorize that a married woman did not need those freedoms since she enjoyed the protection of a husband. In some cases involving very happily married couples who never faced separation for reasons other than incompatibility, that might have been true. A woman's desire for protection might have even brought about some of the quick remarriages where widows were the brides. Many of the quickest of the remarriages involved widows left with or left in charge of a rather large estate. Quick remarriage resulted in the loss of *femme sole* status, the right to administer the deceased husband's estate and possibly the guardianship of her children.

³³ Ibid, March 20, 1775.

Sarah Herbert Day of Fincastle County (later Washington County) experienced all these losses. William Herbert wrote his will May 28, 1776. In it he left his plantation to his wife, Sarah, and named her as administrator of his estate. He also mentioned his four underage children, Martha, Joanna, William and Thomas. The will was probated September 3, 1776, by Sarah Herbert Day, relict of William Herbert and her new husband, Francis Day.³⁴ Everything that had been hers now belonged, for all practical purposes, to Francis Day. She had gained and lost the entire estate, as well as her personal legal freedom, in a maximum of three months by marrying so quickly. Then on May 5, 1779, with consent and approbation of the court, James Byrn and Joseph Cloyd were appointed guardians of Joanna and Thomas Herbert, orphans of Captain William Herbert.³⁵ She had now lost the guardianship of her children also.

Dower rights gave women some property rights, but not the final control over their property. Beginning in 1674, English bargain and sale procedures on femme covert conveyances in Virginia provided for private examination of a wife and her consent to a real property sale in order for the sale to be

³⁴ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:99, September 3, 1776, Montgomery County.

³⁵ *Ibid*, 1:111, May 5, 1779.

finalized.³⁶ Private examination of the woman and her consent to the sale was supposed to protect her dower rights through the prevention of coercion. Private examination simply meant that the court would question her in her husband's absence³⁷ as to her willingness to sell land held in both her and her husband's names or land held in her name alone, usually land left to her from her father's estate either before marriage or independently of her husband. Even property held in a woman's name alone could be sold by the husband at his discretion if she consented in private examination. On the surface, this sounds like an excellent idea. It did finalize sales for femme covert with an honorable husband, but what of the woman with a cruel or unscrupulous husband; the very woman the law, which was similar in all the southern colonies, was designed to protect? The poor woman who might have denied her husband the right to dispose of her dower rights had to go home with him after the examination by the justices. In the Tidewater, she might seek protection in the safety of her family³⁸, but

³⁶ Salmon, Women and the Law, p. 18.

³⁷ Botetourt County Deed Book #3, p. 293. October 11, 1784, Pursuant to order of Court of Washington County, Ann Bowen, wife to Henry Bowen, was privily examd. by Arthur Campbell and Aaron Lewis, whereupon she relinquished her right of dower.....

³⁸ Charles Carter, Last Will and Testament, Shirley Collection, C. Hill Carter, Jr. owner, Shirley Plantation, Charles City County, Virginia. Charles Carter left the portion of his estate that would have gone to his daughter, Ann Carter Lee, to his son, Robert Carter, with very explicit instructions

in isolated mountain valleys, there was a greater likelihood that she had to live with her husband and bear his recriminations if she had opposed him. There was no place to flee when the nearest neighbor or relative was miles away over very rough terrain.

The following excerpt from the diary of an eighteenth century North Carolina woman describing the marital conversation concerning the sale by her fourth husband of the home left to her by her second husband could apply to a woman on the Virginia frontier or almost anywhere else where the femme covert laws were based on the old English Common Law. She had hoped to have the little two room house as a home in her declining years.

I am sorry you do not like it (the sale), but I gave my consent and it is all arranged.....
It was a hard blow.....as my husband he had a legal right to dispose of the house.³⁹

Divorce in the eighteenth century was very difficult to obtain. In Virginia, the state legislature retained the sole authority to grant absolute divorce until 1848. The Circuit

on how Ann was to be cared for without giving her husband, "Lighthorse Harry" Lee, an opportunity to touch the Carter money. Ann Carter Lee and her son, Robert Edward (later to become General Robert E. Lee), were protected after Lighthorse Harry Lee had sacrificed most of his considerable estate to gambling debts.

³⁹ Adelaide L. Fries, The Road to Salem, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1944) p. 280. This is the translation of the diary of Anna Catharina Antes Kalberlahn Reuter Heinzman Ernst of Salem, North Carolina.

Superior Court of Chancery could grant an annulment or legal separation on the grounds of cruelty or adultery as early as 1827.⁴⁰ Before the Revolution, the General Court on very rare occasions awarded support and separation to a woman consistent with the English 'a mensa et thoro'⁴¹. It could be appealed to England because this form of separation was supposed to be awarded by the Ecclesiastical Courts only. The grounds for this separation were desertion, cruelty, homosexuality, bigamy and sometimes adultery.⁴² Adultery was a charge more commonly brought against women in divorce proceedings and not one usually brought by women as is seen in the first absolute divorce granted in the Commonwealth of Virginia in 1803. Divorce was granted and adultery proven when the wife gave birth to a mulatto child.⁴³

The expense involved and the travel necessary to obtain a divorce put it outside the realm of possibility for the poor

⁴⁰ Salmon, Women and the Law, p.64.

⁴¹ Henry Campbell Black, Black's Law Dictionary, Definitions of the Terms and Phrases of American and English Jurisprudence, Ancient and Modern, 5th Edition, (St. Paul: West Publishing Co., 1979) p. 75. From table and bed, but more commonly translated, from bed and board. A kind of divorce, which is rather a separation of the parties by law, than a dissolution of the marriage.

⁴² Salmon, Women and the Law, p. 62.

⁴³ Acts Passed at a General Assembly of the Commonwealth of Virginia, (Richmond; 1803), Quoted in Salmon, Women and the Law, p. 211.

and for most of the middle class. For the frontier wife, often living at the subsistence level, divorce was so difficult to obtain it could be considered virtually impossible.

There were no laws against domestic violence as long as that violence did not result in death. If a woman was battered badly enough and could get to court before the marks faded, she might get separation on the grounds of cruelty. She was to live with an occasional beating. Marylynn Salmon states the situation quite well.

Under the laws of the colonies and states (inclusive), cruelty had to be severe enough so that a woman feared bodily harm or death in order to win her a separate maintenance. Occasional slight acts of physical violence were not enough to gain judicial support for a separation nor was what today we would call incompatibility or mental anguish.⁴⁴

When a woman did bring charges against her husband, the court might decide to dismiss those charges. In Augusta County, Elizabeth Law brought charges of cruelty against her husband, Robert, on June 20, 1775. The court dismissed her case.⁴⁵

As restrictive as femme covert was in most matters, it could be of benefit to the woman facing criminal charges. On December 18, 1776, the Augusta County Court convicted Mary

⁴⁴ Salmon, Women and the Law, p. 77.

⁴⁵ Augusta Order Book 16, p. 75, June 20, 1775.

Wolfinger of a felony. She was asked if she would take corporal punishment and she agreed. At this point, her husband stepped onto the scene. He said he was more guilty than she and that he wanted to take her punishment for her. The court agreed because "we think the most guilty ought to suffer".⁴⁶ It is highly unlikely that many, if any, other husbands were disposed to take the punishment meted out to their wives by the courts even though husbands were considered responsible for the conduct of their wives.

Most husbands were as sensible as James Brown was on March 18, 1777. His wife, Hester, was found guilty of stealing a pewter basin from William Fleming. She was sentenced to get ten lashes on her bare back. Mister Brown did not interfere with the sentence of the court.⁴⁷

By 1778, the General Assembly and the county courts were aware of the needs of the families of soldiers on active duty. Each case was reviewed on its own merits and the woman involved was awarded assistance according to law and the court's assessment of the family's need. It was also left up to the court to decide who would see that those needs were fulfilled. Assistance did not necessarily go directly to the

⁴⁶ Augusta Order Book 16, p. 136, December 18, 1776. An inkblot unfortunately covers the name of the crime committed by either Mr. or Mrs. Wolfinger or both.

⁴⁷ Ibid, p. 166, March 18, 1777.

military wife in need. Even in the patriotic absence of their husbands, military wives were handicapped by the femme covert status.

Botetourt County, for instance, handled assistance in several ways. On April 15, 1778, Joseph Carrol was authorized to purchase a cow and grain valued up to fifteen pounds for the support of Mary Allsop and her two children. Her husband, Thomas, was "engaged in the Continental service".⁴⁸ Patrick Lockhart was to be reimbursed the same day the ten pounds eleven shillings six pence that he had already expended in the support of Mary Smith and her three children as well as the nine pounds ten shillings he had paid in the support of Margaret Laird and her children. Lockhart was also given another fifteen pounds for Mary Smith and five pounds for Mary Laird to purchase a cow and other things both families might need. James Smith and David Laird were soldiers, also serving in the Continental Line.⁴⁹ On August 11, 1778, Captain Alexander Hanley was to be allowed up to twenty pounds to be used to support Elizabeth Ralston who was also the wife of a Continental soldier.⁵⁰ When Mary Price and her child were given aid on May 11, 1780, no money came to her. She was to

⁴⁸ Summers, Annals, 1:271, April 15, 1778, Botetourt County.

⁴⁹ Ibid, April 15, 1778, Botetourt County.

⁵⁰ Ibid, 1:271-2, August 11, 1778, Botetourt County.

have a barrel of corn and twenty-five pounds of bacon or fifty pounds of pork purchased by William Bilbro with the money he drew from the Treasurer of the Commonwealth for that purpose. She was the wife of a soldier in the State Army (militia).⁵¹

Occasionally a rather dubious claim would be honored as in the confusing case of Rachel Gaunt who applied for aid on April 14, 1780.

Ordered that it be certified that Rachel Gaunt, widow and relict of James Gaunt, decd. made it appear by satisfactory proof that her said husband, decd., kept an infant male child of Thomas Welsh some time before he departed this life, the said Welsh being at that time a soldier in the Continental Army but is supposed to be dead at this time and since her said husband died that she kept the said infant ten years at her own expence and that she never received any reward for that trouble & expence from this court agreeable to an Act of Assembly made and proved, and that this court doth recommend it to the Assembly to make some allowance for the same.⁵²

She was keeping the child of a soldier in the Continental Army for several years before there was a Continental Army. It would be interesting to know what the satisfactory proof was.

The Botetourt County Court apparently felt that some women could be trusted to take care of their own needs if the money was available so on August 12, 1778, Sarah Chambers was

⁵¹ Ibid, 1:320, May 11, 1780, Botetourt County. Bacon refers to all fresh pork. The term pork refers to salt pork.

⁵² Ibid, 1:319, April 14, 1780, Botetourt County.

allowed to draw twenty pounds directly from the Treasurer of Virginia. Her husband was also in the Continental Army.⁵³

The Botetourt County Court also took generous care of military widows, at least during the war years. On December 10, 1779, the court ordered that Mary Ralston and Mary Weir were to receive sixty pounds and forty pounds respectively as widows of Continental soldiers for their support for the year.⁵⁴

Most cases were handled with what was apparently the court's assessment of the need of the family involved. The Washington County Court seemed to use the same guidelines, but moved rather slowly as can be seen from the following court order of May 18, 1779:

Ordered that Jean Scott wife and relict of John Scott, a soldier who enlisted in Capt. Rowland Madison's Company in the Continental Army who died in the service in May 1778 be allowed Twenty pounds from May 1778 untill May 1779 and Twenty pounds for the ensuing year.⁵⁵

Washington County gave what was possibly the most generous of all aids to the wives of David Evans and Moses Kenady, both of whom were serving with the Continental Army. On April 9, 1780, these ladies were given one hundred fifty

⁵³ Ibid, 1:272-3, August 12, 1778, Botetourt County.

⁵⁴ Ibid, 1:301, December 10, 1779, Botetourt County.

⁵⁵ Washington County Book 1, May 18, 1779.

pounds support for the year 1780.⁵⁶

Montgomery County paid strictly as proscribed by law and not according to need, as one wife discovered when the court "Ordered that when the grain tax is collected the Commissioners do give to Margaret Cruse and her two children, a soldier's wife, provisions according to the law."⁵⁷

Margaret Cruse had asked for help on April 3, 1782. The grain tax was probably not collected until after the harvest in the late summer. That would be a long time to wait for provisions.

In Montgomery County, a military family needed to suffer a little before the Court could help, or so it seems from their own records of November 9, 1780.

It appearing to the Court that the Wives and Families of John Beard and Richard Gullock two Soldiers in the Service of this State are suffering for want of Provisions, Therefore it is ordered that Captain Jesse Evans purchase fifty pounds of Pork for Each person in sd. Families also to draw a Barrel of Corn from Fort Chisewell of the Corn Tax to each person in the families of sd. Soldiers.⁵⁸

Jane Alley was not asking for public assistance, but only for what was rightly hers when she approached the Court on

⁵⁶ Ibid, April 9, 1780.

⁵⁷ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:126, April 3, 1782, Montgomery County.

⁵⁸ Summers, Annals, 1:745-6, November 9, 1780, Montgomery County.

April 5, 1787. The Court asked for satisfactory proof that she was entitled to the pay of her husband, Thomas Alley, who had died of his wounds received at Buford's Defeat.⁵⁹ She was not asked for proof that she was his widow but for proof that she was entitled to his pay. The court may have had doubts concerning her entitlement because it had taken her so long to apply for assistance. It is also possible that she had difficulty proving to the satisfaction of the court that Thomas Alley was at the battle.⁶⁰ Buford's Defeat is also known as the Battle of Waxhaws or Buford's Massacre and took place March 29, 1780. Six and a half years is a considerable length of time to go without assistance. The entitlement was not based on need but on loss and Jane Alley was asking for what she was entitled to based on the loss of her husband.

Montgomery County remained legally fair to military wives and made no difference between the militia and the Continental Army. Neither did they make a difference regarding where the soldier served. Pay for soldiers serving in the west was a problem for everyone from George Rogers Clark, who never received complete settlement for his service, on down the western army roster. The Montgomery County wives and children

⁵⁹ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:128, April 5, 1787, Montgomery County.

⁶⁰ Thomas Alley does not appear on existing rosters of the men under Buford's command.

of these men were cared for with the same legal exactness as were the wives and children of the men in the Continental Army.

Ordered that the wife of Noah Crease, a soldier in Illinois service and her two children be allowed provision according to law.⁶¹

When the state awarded funds for military recompense, Montgomery County responded quickly. Widows, as well as disabled soldiers, would have appreciated the following order of February 6, 1781:

Ordered that the sum of one thousand pounds allowed by the assembly of Virginia to be distributed amongst the representatives of the Slain and amongst the wounded officers and Soldiers of this County who fought at the Yadkin on the fourteenth of October last be divided in Equal Shares among such as think proper to receive it, and that the Clerk of this Court give Publick Notice thereof and if any should refuse to take any part of the sd. sum that then the sd. money be given those who will receive the same.⁶²

Some women not only got along perfectly well without their husbands during the Revolutionary War, but also found a way to profit from the unpleasantness. Every woman knew how to feed people, even large groups of people. This culinary expertise could be lucrative. Elizabeth Harrison of Augusta

⁶¹ Ibid, 1:123, November 7, 1780, Montgomery County.

⁶² Summers, Annals, 1:747, February 6, 1781, Montgomery County.

County understood this before the war started when she produced claims for "militia diets" on January 18, 1775.⁶³ She may not have realized the full economic potential available as a supply contractor for the militia. On the same day, Catherine Moore, Ann Skidmore, Elizabeth Stewart and the 'Widdow' (sic) Shafer all presented their claims. These latter bills were not only for militia diets, but also for 'sundry' items, whatever they were.⁶⁴

Femme covert was neither designed nor implemented for the sole purpose of keeping women subservient even though it did usually serve that purpose. In fact, women were often as strong and as independently resourceful as their men.

II. SERVANTS AND SLAVES

Not many families on the Virginia frontier during the Revolutionary War had servants or slaves. Not many wanted, needed or could afford them. There were a few of the old Tidewater aristocratic families beginning to make their appearances on the frontier. Along with these people came their ideas of servitude and social status with the ownership of human property as a contributing factor to social status.

⁶³ Augusta Order Book 16, p. 37, January 18, 1775.

⁶⁴ Ibid, pp. 42-48, January 18, 1775.

Slavery was never to become as popular an institution in southwestern Virginia as it was in the Tidewater and Piedmont, but slaves were owned by some of these frontier families.

At the time of the first United States census, the entire population of Virginia was 747,610 with a slave population of 292,627 or 39% of the total. In Augusta County, there was a total population of 9,319, 1,567 or 17% of whom were slaves. Botetourt County had a total population of 10,524 with 1,259 slaves or 12% of the population. The population of Montgomery County was 12,394 with 828 slaves or 6% of the total and Washington County had a total population of only 5,167 with 450 slaves or 8%. In contrast, the Tidewater counties of Charles City, James City and York had slave populations of 56%, 61% and 53% of the total populations of those counties respectively.⁶⁵

While no accurate census of indentured and/or convict servants is available, studies have shown that the colonies, particularly Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania, were flooded with both willing and unwilling white servants for sale in the decade preceding the Revolutionary War. Abbott Emerson Smith

⁶⁵ First census of the United States, 1790: Virginia, (Baltimore: The Genealogical Publishing Co., 1970). There is little reason to believe that there would have been a large shift in demographics between 1785 and the time of the first census in 1790, therefore the first United States Census is used here for population figures.

said as a result of his study,

During the twenty-five years from 1750 to 1775, about 25,000 servants and convicts entered Maryland, mainly from the British Isles. Before 1765.....there were decidedly less than 1,000 a year; after 1765, decidedly more. Immigration to Virginia was not greater, and probably it was less.

During the same period at least twice as many servants and redemptioners entered Pennsylvania, and probably more. Not over a third were Germans; nearly two-thirds were from Ireland.⁶⁶

A Frenchman traveling through the colonies in the decade before the Revolution showed his amazement in the following comments:

.....the number of Convicts and Indentured servants imported to virginia (is) amazing, besides the numbers of Dutch and Germans which is also Considerable.....It is computed that there are at least ten thousand convicts and passengers, or indentured Servants, imported yearly into the Different colonies, the first are Sent to Virginia and Maryland only, and likewise Indented servants.....there has come to philadel'a alone, 5,000 in one year, 3/4 of which were from Ireland, great numbers of Dutch and Germans.....⁶⁷

Indentured servants arriving in any of the three colonies, Pennsylvania, Maryland and Virginia would have been

⁶⁶ Abbot Emerson Smith, Colonists in Bondage, White Servitude and Convict Labor in America 1607-1776, Published for the Institute of Early American History and Culture at Williamsburg, Virginia, (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1947) p. 337. Hereafter referred to as Smith, Colonists in Bondage.

⁶⁷ "Journal of a French Traveller in the Colonies, 1765", American Historical Review, XXVII, pp. 744 and 84. Quoted in Smith, Colonists in Bondage, p. 330 and 337.

among those in the Virginia counties under study. Land transportation to and from Philadelphia was as easy as it was from Williamsburg or Yorktown. Only one instance was found of actual sale of white servants on the frontier. Stephen Trigg and James McCorkle, New River merchants, offered thirty white servants in October, 1773.⁶⁸ Some servants arriving after 1765 could still be serving under indentured contract at the time of the Revolution, depending on the servant's age at the time of arrival.

On the frontier, bond servants were apparently more popular than slaves. The services of a fellow Scotch-Irishman⁶⁹ or German⁷⁰ with all those highly valued characteristics of hard work, stubbornness, and fighting spirit, troublesome though they might be, could be obtained

⁶⁸ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:161.

⁶⁹ Basel Cottle, Penguin Dictionary of Surnames, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1967). A sampling of the names of known bond servants as taken from court records was checked for place of origin. A large majority were revealed to be either Scottish or Irish in origin. The names are as follows: Barkley, Bartley, Bond, Bowman, Bradshaw, Bredy, Bryan, Clair, Collins, Davis, Dobson, Edgars, Foster, Green, Griffin, Gunn, Hall, Hamilton, Handsale, Handson, Hudson, Hughes, Hunley, Jones, Kerr, Knott, Lamb, Mahon, McDowell, McMahan, Neal, Newman, Porter, Rance, Rankin, Redman, Regan, Roark, Ryan, Ryon, Stewart, Thomas and Wilson.

⁷⁰ Smith, Colonists in Bondage, p. 38. "Scottish servants were esteemed the best and Irish Catholics the worst. Scotch-Irish were much more highly esteemed (than Irish Catholics)". Smith's endnote 35, "Of many testimonies to this effect, some are collected in Analecta Hibernica, no. 4, pp. 265-70.

for the price of his or her transportation, augmented by the price of his or her talents.⁷¹ Many bond servants arrived on the Virginia frontier already in bondage. A few, but very few, of these were convicts. About one fourth of the convicts sent to the American colonies were female.⁷² Some of the foreign born female servants had exercised femme sole status earlier and had exchanged freedom for transportation.⁷³

The very characteristics that made all these people desirable servants in the first place could also serve inadvertently to keep them servants longer than the originally intended time of servitude. They had a tendency to run away. When caught, they had time added to their indentured contract⁷⁴ for the inconvenience, and sometimes cost, to the master in bringing them back. If cost was involved, they might have to work that off as well as the additional time added to their term of service as punishment for trying to run

⁷¹ Jack Kaminkow and Marion Kaminkow, A List of Emigrants from England to America 1718-1759, (Baltimore: Magna Charta Book Company, 1964) p. xi. All females were listed as spinsters or widows. Hereafter referred to as Kaminkow and Kaminkow, Emigrants from England.

⁷² Smith, Colonists in Bondage, p. 366, endnote 48.

⁷³ Kaminkow and Kaminkow, Emigrants from England, p. xii. These authors give a ratio of 2,959 male indentured servants to 163 female. Most were in their late teens or early twenties.

⁷⁴ See Appendix III

away.⁷⁵

In addition to the imported adult servants, indigent children could and did become bond servants until they reached their majority. The children bound as servants on the frontier were usually poor orphans, illegitimate children, or

⁷⁵ Augusta County Court Order Book 16, p. 13. August 17, 1774, John Walker Produced an account against his servant woman Agnes Jones for fifteen shillings his expenses in taking her up when runaway and five Days Lost time it is therefore ordered that She serve according to Law.

Ibid, p.28. November 16, 1775, Mary Green to serve according to law for the one pound 3 shillings and five days she owes her master John Graham for being a runaway.

Ibid. January 17, 1775, Sarah Bowman a Servant of Joseph Weir Came into Court and agreed to serve her Master two years after her time of Conviction in consideration of his curing her of the Veneral disease and for her absent time and Expenses in taking her up when runaway.

Ibid, p. 85. August 15, 1775, Andrew Scott Produced an amount of four Pounds ten shillings his expenses in taking up his Servant Barbara Wilson and for ten Days absent time Ordered that she serve her Master according to Law.

Ibid, pp. 155-6. March 18, 1777, Sarah Dobson to serve master Francis Alexander for the four days she was a runaway.

Summers, Annals, 1:247-8. Botetourt County, November 14, 1775, Mary Bryan to serve her master William McClenachen one additional year for having a bastard and seven and a half months extra for his time, trouble and expense in getting her when she ran away.

Ibid, p. 258. Botetourt County, February 11, 1777, Mary Edgars to serve her master John Robinson eight extra months for running away.

Ibid, p. 274. Botetourt County, September 8, 1778, Charles and Anne Stewart were to serve an additional eighteen months each for running away. When they paid twelve pounds and five shillings fine to their master George Hutcheson, they had to finish their contract but were released from any additional service imposed for running.

Ibid, p. 297. Botetourt County, November 11, 1779, Mary Rance to serve George Rutledge five extra months according to the law for running away.

Many more entries from all counties are available.

children perceived by the court as neglected. Mothers were more likely to be called upon to show cause why their children should not be bound out than were fathers. Children with a living mother and a deceased father were considered orphans and children with a living father and a deceased mother were not orphans. Very rarely were children with a living father bound out, but it did happen on occasion as with John, William, James and Mary Brown, the children of James Brown who were bound by the Washington County Court on March 18, 1777.⁷⁶

Guardianship of poor orphans was awarded to friends and relatives if friends or relatives were available, willing and able to take them. Often friends were unable or unwilling to stand as guardians and relatives either did not exist or were unavailable. When a penniless orphan was left in the care of some one equally poverty stricken, public assistance could be provided.

On motion of Hannah Coon setting forth, that she has an Orphan Child in her care and praying an allowance for keeping and cloathing the same, Ordered that she be allowed, the sum of Twenty pounds a year for keeping and clothing sd. Child to be paid when the Levy is collected.⁷⁷

The lack of friends or relatives able and willing to assist may have been the problem faced by Mary McNeel and

⁷⁶ Washington County Book 1, March 18, 1777.

⁷⁷ Summers, Annals, p. 686. Montgomery County, January 7, 1778.

Martha Clark in Botetourt County. On February 14, 1775, Mary McNeel was called to court to show cause why her children should not be bound out and taken from her.⁷⁸ Evidently she was not successful in retaining custody because at the next court session on March 14, 1775, Rebekah, Nancy and Mary McNeel, were bound as orphans to three different masters.⁷⁹ Similarly, Martha Clark was called upon by the court on May 14, 1778 to show why her child should not be bound agreeable to law.⁸⁰

Terms binding an orphan girl to a master could be rather generous and resemble closely contracts signed by legal adults. Barbara Mallow was bound May 20, 1777, by the Augusta County Court to Jacob Lavener with a contract closely resembling a guardianship agreement although the court said she was bound as an orphan. Lavener agreed to "give her four pounds ten shillings a year until she comes of age and also to educate her".⁸¹ Barbara was a bond servant in the strictest interpretation of the term because the court had decreed that she would work exclusively for Lavener. She was to be paid generously annually, not at the end of the contract, and

⁷⁸ Summers, Annals, 1:240, February 14, 1775, Botetourt County.

⁷⁹ Ibid, 1:241, March 14, 1775, Botetourt County.

⁸⁰ Ibid, 1:256, May 14, 1778.

⁸¹ Augusta County Order Book 16, p. 188, May 20, 1777.

educated, both of which were unusual in a more conventional bond servant contract involving an orphan female child.

The following case recorded in Augusta County, on January 20, 1777.

Ordered that the Church Wardens of Augusta Parish bind out Francis Davis an Orphan Child to Robert Wilson according to Law, and upon these Conditions viz That the said Wilson give her over and above her common freedom dues the value of ten Pounds to consist in a Milch Cow & Calf and such clothing as she may chuse that can be reasonably produced to be valued by two of the neighbors each party chusing one & if they cannot agree thereto, chuse a third and the value set by any two of the three to be final.⁸²

This was an unusually generous contract binding an orphan child, particularly considering that she was a child who had been bound as a bastard two years and more previously⁸³. The freedom dues to be given to Francis Davis resemble the freedom dues expected by an adult entering into an indentured contract more nearly than they resemble the usual contract binding a destitute orphan. A few girls, like Elizabeth McMahon who was bound the following day by the same court to Joseph Bell, were "to receive good freedom dues" and nothing more.⁸⁴ More often, the court records show that the girls were simply bound

⁸² Ibid, p.145, January 20, 1777.

⁸³ Ibid, p. 77, June 20, 1775. Ordered that Francis Davis a Bastard Child formerly bound to John Cawley be by the Churchwardens bound to Margaret Cawley.

⁸⁴ Ibid, p. 196. January 21, 1777.

out. These children simply became servants of the few more well to do families in the area until they reached their majority.

There was a difference in the view toward the welfare of the child based on gender.⁸⁵ Girls, even when legally bound as apprentices rather than as servants, were seldom taught a trade. Only two out of sixty-eight, or three per cent, from all four counties under study were to learn a trade. Boys were usually bound to a craftsman as apprentices in order to be educated toward being a self supporting citizen able to care for a family sometime in the future. Of the two hundred six legally apprenticed males from the counties of Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington, one hundred ninety-five, or seventy-six per cent were apprenticed to learn a specific trade.

The court orders that placed male children often called for the boy to also be taught to read and write, and to be given some education in mathematics, often to be taught the multiplication tables through the 'rule of twelve'. The orders could also specify that he be given tools of his trade, clothing and/or a certain sum of money. His life as an apprentice would be as hard and as restrictive as that of most servants, but the reward was greater in education.

⁸⁵ Harold B. Gill, Jr., Apprentices of Virginia 1623-1800, (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Press, 1989) See Appendix 1.

Girls were not so fortunate, generally. Barbara Mallow was to be educated but the type and scope of that education was left to Jacob Lavener. The money given her by Lavener could assure her independence as an adult or make her a more attractive bride. Francis Davis' future was also insured by the court's generous terms. No court order gives the age of either of these young ladies. It would probably be safe to draw the conclusion that they were of sufficient age and character for the court to see clearly that there would be distinct economic advantage for the household in which they were lodged. It would also seem logical to draw the same conclusion involving girls who were to be paid freedom dues since the vast majority of indigent and orphan female children are entered on court records simply as bound.

Few girls are listed as apprentices. Those who had that status were usually those orphans who had a mother who tried to provide for her child's welfare and education in the way that she felt was most beneficial to the child. In order for the mother to legally bind her child as an apprentice, she had to be the guardian of that child, which meant that the father was almost certainly deceased. She was probably also economically disadvantaged.

Ann Sharp may have been hard pressed to care for her six year old daughter, Sarah, when she bound her to learn "the art and mystery of a spinster and seamstress" in Washington County

on March 19, 1782. The contract was well written in the same manner as apprenticeship contracts for males were written. Ann may have been hard pressed, but she certainly kept her wits about her. Sarah was not only to learn her trade, she was to be educated and sent forth into the world with all the economic advantages a male had upon completing an apprenticeship; trade and education.⁸⁶ In a case such as this, a trained seamstress probably was able to complete elaborate needle tasks over and above common household sewing. Economic opportunities would never be as great for a woman earning her own living in the eighteenth century as those for a man, but the two girls with a trade would be marginally better off than those without a trade.

Mary Viney was not quite as astute as Ann Sharp when she was faced with having to find care for her two daughters, four year old Druzilla and two year old Sarah on August 17, 1784. Perhaps she could not make a similar contract due to the younger age of her children. She did get to choose their masters and was assured that they would be taught to read the Bible. Even though no trade is mentioned in this contract, the children are to be considered apprentices.⁸⁷

⁸⁶ Washington County, Virginia, Will Book No. 1 1777-1792, pp. 32-33. Filmed by the Genealogical Society of Utah, August 10, 1953, Reel 15, Virginia State Library, Richmond, Virginia.

⁸⁷ Ibid, pp. 101-2.

Barbara Mallow and Frances Davis were bound as servants. Sarah Sharp and the Viney children were bound as apprentices. They probably had fair and just masters due to the care that had been taken by someone, whether they were county justices, friends or mothers, in arranging their servitude or apprenticeships. These cases may have been more nearly foster care than servitude. Other friendless, destitute orphan girls were not so fortunate. Females were not generally apprenticed since they were not officially allowed into any craft. Seamstress and spinster were considered more women's work or housewifery skills than an official craft. Servitude, no matter how harsh, was the only way of survival for the indigent, dependant female child. These children of poor or irresponsible, but free, parents, either living or dead, lost their freedom during their formative years and existed as servants.

Undoubtedly there were indigent physically or mentally disabled orphans in some, if not all, of the four counties under study. The care of a blind, deaf, physically impaired, or otherwise obviously defective poverty-stricken child is unclear as is the care of indigent children suffering from profound mental deficiency. Perhaps some of those bound as servants fell into these categories, but it does not seem likely. Few people would have seriously considered having an obviously handicapped child bound to them since the handicap

would prevent them from the toil of a servant. The child with a less obvious but progressive disability could find her way into the servant system to the chagrin of both the court and the prospective masters. The sad case of Katharine Young began in Washington County, August 27, 1777, when she was bound as a poor child to George Blackburn according to law.⁸⁸ By May 22, 1782, she had been transferred to the home of John Yancey. The nature of her disability was obvious by then as shown in the following:

Ordered that John Yancey agree with a Doctor to Cure Katharine Young of the Convulsion fits provided his Charge do not Exceed 20 pounds he to make the agreement as cheap as he can.⁸⁹

Eighteenth century law did not proscribe public funds for medical care for the indigent. Katharine Young's case is an example of the guidelines used in obtaining medical services for the poor, "as cheap as he can". In this case, it really made little difference. There was no cure or control for epilepsy, or convulsion fits as they were known. The lack of a cure was evident thirteen months later when the court had given up on the prospect of Katharine earning her way as a servant. First, "Andrew Kincannon came into Court and delivered up Kathn. Young agreeable to a former Order of

⁸⁸ Washington County Book 1, August 27, 1777.

⁸⁹ Ibid, May 22, 1782.

Court". The same day, the court simply "Ordered that Katharine Young be put to some persons to take care of her."⁹⁰ Either no one could or would care for her because five months later she was back in court.

On motion of John Campbell Overseer of the poor against Katharine Young vagrant the Court Ordereth her to prison, who is to be set (at) liberty by the said Campbell.⁹¹

The men who comprised the Washington County Court were not completely without compassion. They did try one more time to find adequate care for Katherine. By now her dependant state was obvious, so the court

Ordered that ten pounds be allowed any person who will Cloath and Maintain Kathaerine (sic) Young a poor person for one year.⁹²

Perhaps some one would take her in if they were paid to do so.

Frontier life was hard. A handicapped child would be cared for as well as possible by its family, but no one was willing to take on the liability of a destitute handicapped child or adolescent. If the child could not be a servant, even as a drudge, then the options were prison or ambiguous vagrancy.

Able bodied female servants led a difficult life. They

⁹⁰ Ibid, June, 1783.

⁹¹ Ibid, November, 1783.

⁹² Ibid, June 5, 1784.

were expected to work much as skilled slaves were expected to work. As young girls, they were not given the moral training and affection needed to develop the moral values expected by society nor did they enjoy the protection of a family. Bond servants transported to Virginia in the decade preceding the Revolutionary War were not usually children and were of the lower echelons of Scottish, Irish, English and German society as a rule. The moral values they brought with them were not the best as is intimated in the cases of Amelia Onslow⁹³ and Mary Daily⁹⁴. In households where there were both foreign and domestic bond servants, impoverished children were mixed with the transported servants indiscriminately. It is not surprising that those children developed the same sort of character as that of the transported servants.

Bastardy, a crime which involved a great deal of the county court's time in all the counties under study, was a charge brought more often against servants than against free women. It was also a two party crime a woman was quite likely

⁹³ See page 10, footnote 22.

⁹⁴ Washington County Will Book 1, p. 116. September 14, 1780, John Cope left his entire estate to Mary Daily and Hannah Thompson, "said Mary Daily and Hannah Thompson being fellow servants from England". Will written September 14, 1780 and probated August 15, 1786. Establishes status as transported servant.

Washington County Book 1, May 21, 1778. False accusations of misuse against mistress and birth of illegitimate child establish character.

to face alone. If the father admitted paternity, or if paternity could be proven, he was obliged to pay the parish or churchwardens for the maintenance of the child. Paternity, if denied, was very hard to prove. When the charge of bastardy was lodged against a free woman, she lost her child to servitude, as a rule. The servant woman not only lost the child to servitude but also had time, one year, added to her own time of indenture. The sentence of one year per bastard, although not legally imposed, was faithfully used⁹⁵. One year was actually lenient in view of the two year sentence mandated by the legislature.

Poor Nancy Newman either had twins in 1777 or she had a master slow to act on bastardy. In one Washington County Court order dated August 27, 1777, she had two years for two bastards added to her indentured time of contractual servitude.⁹⁶ Mary Gunn of Botetourt County was even more unfortunate in a similar situation. She had two years for two bastards and one more additional year for a doctor's fee added

⁹⁵ Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:115. The following statute was enacted in 1661 and never altered or rescinded.And if it happen a bastard child to be gotten in such fornication, then the woman, if a servant, in regard of the loss and trouble her master doth sustain by her having a bastard, shall serve two years after her time by indenture is expired, or pay two thousand pounds of tobacco to her master, besides the fine or punishment for committing the offence; and the reputed father to put in security to keep the child and save the parish harmless.

⁹⁶ Washington County Book, August 27, 1777.

to her time of servitude.⁹⁷

The worst possible scenario for the 'dissolute' master was that he 'keep the child and save the parish harmless' (support the child) and that he get the services of his servant only for the length of her contract. The best possible resolution for a 'dissolute' master was that he could impregnate a servant with or without her consent and if he denied the allegation, was more likely to be believed than was the servant. In that case, he got her services for the full time of indenture, plus one or two years added for producing a base born child, and had the child itself bound to him as a servant. It was probably no more likely that a master on the frontier would father his servant's child than it was anywhere else. If it did happen, the distance between neighbors could mean a paucity of witnesses and the added likelihood that the court would believe him instead of the female servant.⁹⁸

⁹⁷ Summers, Annals, 1:241.

⁹⁸ Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:167-8. Whereas by act of Assembly every woman servant having a bastard is to serve two years, and late experience show(s) that some dissolute masters have gotten their maids with child and yet claim the benefit of their service, and on the contrary, if a woman got with child by her master should be freed from that service it might probably induce such loose persons to lay all their bastards to their masters. It is therefore thought fit and accordingly enacted, and be it enacted henceforward, that each woman servant got with child by her master shall, after her time by indenture or custom is expired, be by the churchwardens of the parish where she lived when she was brought to bed of such a bastard, sold for two years, and the tobacco to be employed by the vestry

Slave mothers and their children were servants for life. Mulatto bond servants were the offspring of white mothers and black fathers who were bound by the courts as bastards.⁹⁹ Children retained the same condition of servitude as the mother. The Virginia House of Burgesses passed the following statute in 1723. It was still in effect at the time of the Revolution.

Where any female mullatto, or indian, by law obliged to serve 'till the age of thirty or thirty-

for the use of the parish....Whereas by the present law of this country the punishment of a reputed father of a bastard child is the keeping the child and saving the parish harmless, and if it should happen the reputed father to be a servant who can no way accomplish the penalty of that act; be it enacted by the authority aforesaid that where any bastard child is gotten by a servant, the parish shall take care to keep the child during the time of the reputed father's service by indenture or custom, and that after he is free, the said reputed father shall make satisfaction to the parish.

⁹⁹ Ibid, 3:453. The following statute passed in 1705 had not been altered or rescinded: If any woman servant shal have a bastard child by a negro, or mulatto, over and above the years service due to her master or owner, she shall immediately, upon the expiration of her time to her then present master or owner, pay down to the church-wardens of the parish wherein such child shall be born, for the use of the said parish, fifteen pounds current money of Virginia, or be by them sld for five years, to the use aforesaid: And if a free Christian white woman shall have such bastard child, by a negro, or mulatto, for every such offence, she shall, within one month after her delivery of such bastard child, pay to the church-wardens for the time being of the parish wherein such child shall be born, for the use of the said parish fifteen pounds current money of Virginia, or be by them sold for five years to the use aforesaid: And in both the said cases, the church-wardens shall bind the said child to be a servant, until it shall be of thirty-one years of age.

one years, shall during the time of her servitude, have any child born of her body, every such child shall serve the master or mistress of such mullatto or indian, until it shall attain the same age the mother of such child was obliged by law to serve unto.¹⁰⁰

The mulatto or Indian servant was no more likely to produce a child out of wedlock than was the white servant. The treatment of the illegitimate child probably contributed more than any other factor to the lack of moral values and the continuance of illegitimacy within the servant population. The indigent and/or orphan child bound as a servant, regardless of race or circumstances of birth, was at high risk of becoming an unwed mother. Hannah, the misbegotten child of Margaret Campbell, was bound to William Madison on February 11, 1789.¹⁰¹ After Madison's death, she was bound to Elizabeth Madison¹⁰² who evidently took Hannah along when she moved to Montgomery County sometime before 1790. On June 4, 1799, Hannah's son, Will, was bound to John Kent by the Montgomery County Court.¹⁰³ One month later, her daughter, Ginny, was bound to Mrs. June Quirk.¹⁰⁴ Margaret Campbell was

¹⁰⁰ Ibid, 4:433.

¹⁰¹ Summers, Annals, 1:279. Botetourt County, February 11, 1789.

¹⁰² Ibid, 1:389. Botetourt County, March 10, 1784.

¹⁰³ Ibid, 1:874. Montgomery County, June 4, 1799.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid, 1:875. Montgomery County, July 3, 1799.

white but her daughter Hannah was mulatto.

The end of an indenture and freedom dues, if any, were prescribed by law in the original contract. A few cases were recorded where a woman went to court and relinquished her freedom dues in exchange for a shorter period of service. Catharine Barkley and George Smith appeared before the Augusta County Court on August 2, 1776 and agreed that she would only serve him until January 19, 1777, ten months short of her allotted time, in exchange for the freedom dues he would have owed her otherwise.¹⁰⁵ Mary Griffin also agreed to acquit her master, Roger North, of her freedom dues in consideration of his acquitting her the remainder of her time.¹⁰⁶

The Augusta County Court was busy at that session with cases concerning the release of servants. Most of those cases were not like the peaceable contracts between Barkley and Smith and between Griffin and North but were of the prevalent, opposite nature. Sarah Redman Downan had evidently been patient with her former master, John Gum, when she filed a complaint against him in August, 1776 in an attempt to obtain her freedom dues. She had married since the end of her indenture but still had not received her freedom dues (indentured servants were not allowed to marry).

¹⁰⁵ Augusta County Order Book 16, p. 115. August 2, 1776.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid, p. 26, November 16, 1775.

Ordered that John Gum be summoned to the next court to Shew cause why he has not Payed Sarah Downan Late Sarah Redman her freedom dues.¹⁰⁷

The next court session was held in November. On the petition of Sarah Redman alias Downan versus John Gum, the court found in favor of the plaintiff. John Gum was to pay Sarah Redman the sum of forty shillings plus her expenses involved in bringing suit against him .¹⁰⁸

Mary Handsale or Handson not only had difficulty in collecting her freedom dues but in collecting her freedom. She had taken matters into her own hands.

On the motion of John McClung alledging that he had Lost time by the absence of his servant Mary Handson the Court Examining the records of her agreement with her former master James Langley & hearing of Witnesses respecting such agreement it is the opinion of the Court that the said Mary Handson was free at the time She runaway and therefore she is released from further confinement.¹⁰⁹

Neither Mary nor the court was finished with the antagonist, McClung. He was ordered to show at the next court why he had not paid Mary her freedom dues.¹¹⁰

The court was not quite finished with Mary, either. They

¹⁰⁷ Ibid, p. 114. August 2, 1776.

¹⁰⁸ Ibid, p. 132, November 20, 1776.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid, p. 114, August 2, 1776.

¹¹⁰ Ibid, p. 115, August 2, 1776.

certainly were not satisfied with her life style because at the next session in November, they bound her bastard son, Thomas, to Robert Allen, Jr., who had already maintained him for three years.¹¹¹ Other women who were former bond servants had a similar complaint of either refusal of freedom or refusal of freedom dues against their former masters.¹¹²

Servants brought charges of misusage against their masters or mistresses. Some won and some lost. Mary Daily, an indentured servant from England, lost.¹¹³

Upon the complaint of Mary Daily against her Mistress Katherine Shelby for misusage this day came the said Mary Daily in her proper person and the complaint aforesaid being fully heard on consideration whereof it is the oppinion of the Court the complaint is groundless & it is ordered that she serve her Master one year after the time of her indenture is expired for having a Bastard Child.¹¹⁴

¹¹¹ Ibid, p. 131, November 20, 1776.

¹¹² Ibid, p. 118, August 2, 1776, James Stevenson to show why he does not pay Jane McDowell her freedom dues.

Ibid, p. 59, March 21, 1775, On the Petition of Elizabeth Lamb seting forth that she is detained as a servant by George Taylor Contrary to Law it is ordered that he appear to answer the Complaint.

Summers, Annals, 1:304, February 10, 1780, Botetourt County, Mary Hunley vs. Thomas Read for unlawful retention.

Ibid, 1:310, March 10, 1780, Botetourt County, Mary Hanley (sic) wins her case and is freed.

¹¹³ See page 29, footnote 96.

¹¹⁴ Washington County Book 1, May 21, 1778.

When a woman finished her service, she could find her situation worse than servitude unless she could marry quickly as Sarah Downan did. With very little capital at her disposal and with very little training that would enable her to support herself, her options for economic and physical survival were very limited. She could hire herself out as a servant if she could find an employer. If she found an employer, it might necessitate her signing herself back into bondage in order to be hired. That was the experience of Elizabeth Collier.

Elizabeth Collier, servant to James Green, with the consent of the court, agrees to serve her said Master one year over and above the term of her present indenture, provided he shall employ her as a house servant.¹¹⁵

She at least had a choice of what type of servant she would be.

The competition with unpaid bond servants and slaves and the scarcity of families on the frontier able to afford a servant, paid or unpaid, made finding a paid position very difficult. The servant girl might find herself in the position that shocked the Washington County Court and probably Washington County society as well in March of 1778.

On complaint of Ephraim Dunlop attorney for the Commonwealth of Virginia against Philip Hanson he is fined fifty pounds for forcibly keeping Elizabeth Knott as a Concubine pretending that she

¹¹⁵ Summers, Annals, 1:173. Botetourt County, February 9, 1773.

is (still) his servant whereas it is the oppinion of the Court that she is free.¹¹⁶

Neither society nor the court approved of the Hanson/Knott living arrangements and tried to give Elizabeth the benefit of the doubt. By May of 1779, their patience had worn thin and they heartily disapproved of what was former servant Elizabeth Knott's means of livelihood. The grand jury indicted her for fornication and for having a bastard child.¹¹⁷ Her case was sent to trial the following month where it was continued indefinitely.¹¹⁸ She had no family, no friends, no money, and no training that would enable her to support herself in any manner approved by law and society. She took the only course she saw.

The life of an indentured servant was not desirable. The life of a female indentured servant was even less desirable than that of her male counterpart. After attaining freedom, life could be as degrading, or perhaps more degrading in a moral sense, than that of the black servant for life. Slavery, and many of the attendant moral choices of slaves, was forced upon the slave from above. The newly freed bond servant, in theory, had complete freedom to make moral choices

¹¹⁶ Washington County Minute Book 1, March 17, 1778.

¹¹⁷ Ibid, May 18, 1779.

¹¹⁸ Ibid, June 19, 1779.

accepted by society. Economic circumstances could and did alter the ability for a woman to make the acceptable choice.

The black servant for life or slave was not unknown on the Virginia Appalachian frontier but was not as common as the white indentured servant. Apparently, most of the slaves on the frontier at the beginning of the Revolutionary War had been brought in by the few wealthy families and kept in those families.¹¹⁹ Available information indicates that the slaves mixed rather freely with the indentured white servants and with some of the lower class free whites. The courts were called upon to act on the evidence of integration in the form of miscegenation.

Ordered that the church wardens bind out Tom, a mulatto male child of a servant woman of Richard Morris; to Michael Sharkey untill he arrives to the age of 21 years, it appearing to the court that the said child was born during the term of his mother's servitude with said Morris and purchased by the said Shirley(sic).¹²⁰

Tom was at least not destined to be a slave as his possible paternal half siblings would have been. In fact, by law, Tom was getting off quite lightly. The court could have

¹¹⁹ Washington County Record of Deeds No. 1, p. 270. The only recorded eighteenth century sale of a slave found was when Henry Dickerson sold a slave to his grandson, John Dickerson, for five shillings, love and affection on August 21, 1792. Undoubtedly there were other sales of slaves in the area prior to this, but not in great quantity.

¹²⁰ Summers, Annals, 1:257. Botetourt County, August 13, 1776.

legally bound him until age thirty-one rather than age twenty-one¹²¹. Neither the original lawmakers nor the county courts had the overt intention of punishing Tom and others in his position for any crime; they had committed none. The effect was the same, however. They were penalized for being born out of wedlock and furthermore for having racially mixed parentage. A child had the same condition of servitude as that of its mother. Tom's mother was indentured and therefore he was also indentured. Both of them would eventually be free.

The mulatto child of a white female servant would not be a slave but the mulatto child of a free white woman could become an indentured servant as an indigent child because in the eyes of the court and in the eyes of society, the mother was an obviously unfit mother. On February 11, 1779, the Botetourt County Court bound out Hannah and Jane, the bastard mulatto children of Margaret Campbell and Charles the base born mulatto son of Jane Ryon.¹²² Peggy Lynem not only had her mulatto child, Agness, bound to James Curry but also had her other three, white and previously free, children, Rose, Susannah and Thomas, bound to John Withers at the same court

¹²¹ See footnote 100.

¹²² Summers, Annals, 1:279. Botetourt County, February 11, 1779.

session.¹²³

Many of the court records involving slaves in the four counties of Virginia here studied reflect the social turmoil during the Revolution created by a partisan war although very little military action took place in the immediate vicinity. Runaways, refugees and human contraband from areas where battles were fought all seemed to find their way to southwestern Virginia by the same routes. Most often the displaced came from South Carolina. Lone blacks and white men attempting to sell blacks with doubtful ownership papers could find themselves explaining to the county courts how and why they came to be in that palace at that time without adequate proof of freedom or ownership.

Human contraband could talk. It should have been relatively simple to establish ownership but blacks could not testify against whites, therefore the white man's word was supreme. A black person could claim to have been abducted or to have been a free person but if abduction was denied by the white individual in whose possession the black person currently happened to find himself or herself, only an investigation and trial could establish ownership or freedom and that would be done without black testimony. Unscrupulous sellers believed implicitly in caveat emptor. Unscrupulous

¹²³ Ibid, p. 295, Botetourt County, September 9, 1779.

buyers thought, then as now, that they could 'get away with' buying stolen property, even if that property was human and might have been protesting vehemently every step of the way.

The establishment of ownership of human chattel was difficult at best. The best solution seemed to be that if ownership was in question, then the slave would be held by an impartial party while an attempt was made to locate a legal owner. If an owner was suggested, possibly by the slave, it was relatively easy to hold them during the process of locating and notifying the owner in question. Washington County had two of these people in custody in 1782.¹²⁴ William Dryden and Robert Craig would have been allowed to use the labor of the two slaves during the time they held them pending investigation of proprietorship.

In Botetourt County, the sheriff held suspected runaways. When Hannah Jackson first appeared there some time before July 13, 1780, the court thought she was a runaway.

Ord. that Captain Lockhart take into his custody a Negro woman named Hannah Jackson who was taken up

¹²⁴ Washington Book 1, March 20, 1782. Ordered that Suse a Negro Wench supposed to be the property of Joseph Barnett of South Carolina remain in the care of William Dryden for 12 months.....(cash bond).....upon this condition that the said Wm. Dryden or John Yancey produce the said Negro Wench Suse to the Order of this Court. Ibid, November 20, 1782. Ordered that the Sheriff take Immediately a Negro Woman named Lucy now in Close possession of Arthur Cobb supposed to be the property of John Griffin of the state of South Carolina into Custody and remove her unto Capt. Robt. Craigs until she is legally proven.

some time ago and delivered to this court as a run away, untill he can obtain certain accounts whether she be free or not, but is not to be anserable for her in case she should make her escape.¹²⁵

She then seems to have been forgotten by the court for four years. Finally in May of 1784, of activity on her case occurred.

Ordered that the sheriff hire out Hannah Jackson, a Negro women, in custody for one year to the highest bidder, and advertise her immediately in the "Virginia Gazette" together with her child.¹²⁶

and the next day:

Hannah Jackson declared to be a free woman, having been in the custody of the Sheriff several years as a slave.¹²⁷

It almost appears that the Botetourt County Court had forgotten that they had her in custody. When they remembered, they seemed to want to start the entire identification procedure over again. The next day they reversed themselves and set her free, but not until after she had spent four years of her life in freedom as a slave.

Poll, a young female slave, was "plundered" in South Carolina sometime during the Revolution. By April, 1781, she was in Montgomery County, Virginia and had been sold through

¹²⁵ Summers, Annals, 1:325. Botetourt County, July 13, 1780.

¹²⁶ Ibid, 1:392-3. Botetourt County, May 12, 1784.

¹²⁷ Ibid, 1:393. Botetourt County, May 13, 1784.

several hands. Her legal owner, William McKinley of South Carolina, found her there. He proved his loyalty to the cause and the illegality of his loss to the satisfaction of the court on April 3, 1781 and was told to take his property.¹²⁸

A member of one of the county's leading families, Michael Montgomery, had bought Poll in the last illegal sale. Montgomery hired Ephraim Dunlop, the Commonwealth Attorney, to represent him in court. Dunlop objected that the judgment was irregular but the court was not swayed even by the arguments of so influential personages as Dunlop and Montgomery. They refused to reverse their earlier decision and McKinley took his "plundered" slave home.¹²⁹

As unpleasant as the life of an indentured servant was, the life of a slave was worse.

III. FRONTIER GIRLHOOD

Most families on the Virginia frontier lived on the subsistence level and only survived by the efforts of their own labors. Childhood was short for both sexes. The low life expectancy in the eighteenth century all too often meant that the early, untimely death of a parent would shorten childhood

¹²⁸ Summers, Annals, 2:750-1.

¹²⁹ *Ibid*, p. 753.

still further. There was too much to do, too much to learn in order to survive to leave much time for childish occupations.

Formal education was limited in availability by economics, distance and gender.¹³⁰ If a frontier family could afford to educate a child, it would be a son. The mother might encourage the education of sons even more than the fathers did. Arthur and William Campbell owed their education and their ambition to their mothers. Arthur's son, David, describes his grandparents, particularly his grandmother:

My grandfather.....was a farmer in moderate circumstances, living well, but having at his command but small pecuniary means and without ambition to make his sons more than farmers like himself. Not so, however with his wife, whom I well recollect when eighty years of age, sitting her horse and side saddle as straight as a girl of eighteen, and riding miles into the country among her neighbors. She was an intelligent and ambitious little black eyed Irish woman and would have her sons educated and what her husband lack'd of means she supplied from the savings of her dairy. They all received good english and mathematical education.....One son David was sent to College and liberally educated after the Irish

¹³⁰ Frances Griffin, Less Time for Meddling, A History of Salem Academy and College 1772-1866, (Winston-Salem: John F. Blair, Publisher, 1979). Salem Academy was one of the first schools for girls in the country, disregarding the early, private dame schools. It was also probably the nearest school for girls to the southwestern Virginia counties of concern here. It was and still is located in Winston-Salem, NC, approximately one hundred and twenty miles from Abingdon, the county seat of Washington County. The first student from the Commonwealth of Virginia was admitted in 1804.

fashion.....¹³¹

Most families could not afford to formally educate their sons, much less their daughters. If a girl did have the rudiments of an education, it was received at her mother's knee. A great many women signed all legal documents with an "X" which indicates a high rate of illiteracy. Since many mothers were illiterate, so were their daughters.¹³²

Due to the high rate of illiteracy among women, there are few existing diaries and letters to give insight into the daily lives of the women and girl who lived in the isolated cabins and remote valleys of the Virginia mountain frontier. A limited number of artifacts still exist that when examined give some idea of what life was like for female children. Those artifacts consist of clothing, needle craft and educational toys. Because a girl's education was usually limited to housewifery skills and child care, wooden dishes, remnants of dolls and doll cradles can hardly be called

¹³¹ Draper, Lyman, Compiler, The Draper Manuscripts, Microfilm edition, State Historical Society of Wisconsin, Letter to L. Draper from David Campbell, Dec. 17, 1840. Vol. 12, Series ZZ, Virginia Papers. Hereafter referred to as Draper MSS.

¹³² Montgomery County Deed Book F, quoted in Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:278. The earliest school in Montgomery County may have been the one that was located on a piece of land bought by Adam Wall in 1797 and built some time before that date. Both the curriculum and whether or not it was co-educational is unknown.

anything other than educational toys.¹³³

Educational toys, whether they were called that or not, have always served a double purpose; to entertain the child while beginning preparation for his or her role in adult life. It was only a short step from making mud pies and caring for a corn cob doll to assistance with the actual cooking and assistance in caring for a younger sibling. Children as young as five or six were expected to devote a great deal of their time to chores and little girls began at this time to perform rather than to play at "woman's work". Several excellent authors, from diarist Philip Fithian in the eighteenth century¹³⁴ to Catherine Clinton in the twentieth¹³⁵, have

¹³³ Although limited in number, several museums throughout the southeast do have some artifacts depicting southeastern frontier childhood in their collections. It is hard to establish the origin of highly portable objects such as toys or clothing, but it is felt that these artifacts would be as indicative of the counties under study as of any other locale on the southeastern frontier. Among these museums are the Abby Aldridge Rockefeller Folk Art Museum, Williamsburg, Virginia and the Museum of Early Southern Decorative Arts (MESDA), Winston-Salem, North Carolina.

¹³⁴ Philip Vickers Fithian, Journal and Letters of Philip Vickers Fithian, 1773-1774; a Plantation Tutor of the Old Dominion, Edited, with an Introduction by Hunter Dickinson Farish, (Williamsburg: Colonial Williamsburg, Inc., 1957). Fithian worked for and wrote about the Carter family of the Tidewater region. His excellent first hand descriptions of little girls at play can be applied to play activities of little girls anywhere in Virginia at the time. For instance, his description of little girls pretending to spin would describe the way they began to practice the spinning process on the frontier as well. Verification of little girls working with textiles, but without the rich detail in Fithian's journal, can be found in: Luther F.

commented on the play activities of little girls among the gentry as well as the tender age at which little girls began to share household and child care responsibilities.

The orphan child, as seen earlier, was considered a servant when bound to a family who could afford them. No traceable female child bound either as a poor child or as an orphan was able to sign a marriage license with other than her mark.¹³⁶ One simply did not educate female servants. Girls who had a guardian named and were born into a higher socio-economic class were as well educated as orphans as were the daughters of their guardians. Some could sign their marriage license and some could not.

Many of the women who were raising families on the Virginia frontier during the Revolution had experienced

Addington and Emory L. Hamilton, Indian Raids and Massacres of Southwest Virginia, (Kingsport: Kingsport Press, publication date unknown), p.48.

¹³⁵ Catherine Clinton, The Plantation Mistress, (New York: Pantheon Books, 1982), p. 210. See correlation between the activities of children on plantations and children on the frontier as explained in footnote 134.

¹³⁶ Some female children who were bound either as servants or as a rare apprentice were given the rudiments of an education or at least the court had ordered that they be given such. (See Barbara Mallow, p. 25, Sarah Sharp and the Viney sisters, p. 27) In a partial cross check of marriage records against the apprentice list in Appendix I, none of the girls located were able to sign their names. Few names were available for scrutiny. None of those whose masters were ordered by the courts to furnish them with an education apparently applied for marriage licenses in the county in which they were bound.

childhood, adolescence and marriage in the more populated areas of Pennsylvania and the upper reaches of the Great Valley of Virginia. Their daughters spent their childhood and adolescence in the less populated mountainous frontier area of the lower valley and west of the valley on the frontier. Adolescent brides in both groups, mothers and daughters, were not unknown. The mothers, the women who were actually raising families in southwestern Virginia at the time of the Revolution, were more likely to have been a teenage bride averaging 19.5 years at the time of marriage than were the daughters, who were children and adolescents during the Revolution. Some of the daughters actually married during the war years. Their average age at the time of marriage was 21.3 years.¹³⁷

The lower population and the isolation of mountain families on the frontier undoubtedly contributed to the later age of marriage. Fewer potential bridegrooms would certainly have had an affect, but was only one contributing factor in the more advanced age of the brides. More importantly, the

¹³⁷ This figure, as cited earlier, is based on a study of the vital statistics of the families of the Washington County, Virginia Militia at the Battle of King's Mountain and obtained through the "Ancestral Files" of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. All of the statistics in this section and the following section are based on the same compilation. These families represent a cross section of southwestern Virginia society during the period of the American Revolution. See Appendix B.

isolated interdependence of families meant that every available pair of hands was necessary to the welfare of the family for as long as that pair of hands could be kept in the family.

A child of five or six could and did rock a cradle, wash dishes, churn, spin and perform many other light household tasks. She was learning to sew and to cook. By ten or twelve, she could prepare a meal of whatever was available, milk and tend the cow, raise a garden, make the family clothing and take her place at the loom or quilting frame. She also assisted in all aspects of raising younger siblings. In addition to "women's work", girls were expected to help with farm chores, particularly at seedtime and harvest. Survival on the frontier demanded that children learn their roles very young. Little time was left for play except for very young children. Life was not all drudgery but the older the child, the less play time was available.

A ten or twelve year old girl that lost her mother could find herself the woman of the house. If the mother had died in childbirth, she might, in addition to assorted other siblings, find herself with a motherless newborn to tend. By this time, she had the skills to step into the role, if not the maturity. Until her father could remarry, there might not be any other help available. As she became older, and if no stepmother was introduced into the household, she in turn

trained younger sisters to assist in all her tasks.

Whether with or without a mother or stepmother in the house, the responsibilities of the eldest daughter lessened as subsequent sisters became old enough to assume some of those responsibilities. The youngest daughter in any given family would have had fewer of those responsibilities to face. Both the youngest and the oldest married, on an average, earlier than did their sisters. The oldest daughter in a family averaged 20.7 years of age at marriage and the youngest, 20.5.¹³⁸

Families often settled near each other and made more of an effort to visit than did other neighbors. In choosing a mate, availability was usually limited by proximity for both first and subsequent marriages. Courtship for the young began in childhood with who was known by whom. It continued through those limited social occasions. Even church services were held irregularly and were considered an 'occasion'. Usually a young man did not go far to find a bride and chose her from a limited circle of acquaintances and kin. The young ladies traveled less and their circle would have been even more limited. Often, even among the wealthier settlers, first or second cousins married. Colonel Arthur Campbell married his first cousin, Margaret Campbell. There were exceptions,

¹³⁸ See footnote 137.

usually occasioned by unusual circumstances. In the period of political unrest shortly before the Revolutionary War, General (then Colonel) William Campbell, also Arthur's first cousin, spent a great deal of time in Williamsburg. There he met, courted and married the sister of Patrick Henry.¹³⁹ The Henry family was a Piedmont family with ties to both the Tidewater and to the frontier. After the early death of William Campbell, Elizabeth Henry Campbell married widower Colonel William Russell, also a frontier farmer, politician and soldier as had been her first husband. As Madame Russell, she was almost revered by her family and neighbors as a great lady both socially and personally, partially due to the high esteem given to her brother by the people of the Holston Valley.¹⁴⁰

Neighbors did visit back and forth but not casually and not without reason. There was sometimes shared labor at harvest time and help in building new cabins and barns. In order to raise a log barn or cabin, it took four strong 'corner men' or one in each corner of the building to raise the notched logs into place. These were infrequent events, at best annual occasion. Labor sharing events would have been

¹³⁹ Malgee, David George, "A Frontier Biography: William Campbell of King's Mountain", M.A. thesis, University of Richmond, August, 1984.

¹⁴⁰ Aspinvale, the home of William Campbell was near the Holston River in Washington County, Virginia.

attended by men and rarely by women other than those of the host family. If an unmarried man took the opportunity of assisting a neighbor in raising a barn in order to visit the neighbor's attractive young daughter, that was understandable. It also gave her an opportunity to see what a hard worker and therefore good provider he was. There was too much work to do in order to survive, it was too dangerous to travel and the distances involved were too great to allow for much in the way of recreational social contact.

Social diversions were few and far between for both young and old. Social occasions that made it possible to meet the opposite sex were basically limited to weddings, funerals and church attendance. Weddings were by far the most exciting and enjoyable of these events. Young people were the center of attention. This was the most likely time and place to attract the eye of one of the opposite sex. The groom and his attendants left his home early in the morning to ride to the bride's home where the wedding was to be held. As they neared her residence, the last short distance was given over to the 'ride for the bottle or jug'. This was a loud, no fouls charged horse race with the winner grabbing the prize, a jug or bottle of liquor setting where it could be grabbed by a man on horseback. The bride and her attendants were all at her home to watch the approaching riders and to cheer them on.

The wedding ceremony would be held usually in the

afternoon. The ceremony itself was only part of the celebration, usually the quietest. After the ceremony, food was served that the women of the family and their guests had worked hard to prepare. The bride had assisted in the preparation as well as her friends. This was a wonderful opportunity for the bride to let the groom's family and friends know that he would always be well fed. The bride's unmarried friends also saw this as an opportunity to display their own culinary skills to the young man of their choice. To wash the meal down, there was quantities of homemade brandy, beer and cider.

Dancing usually followed the meal. During the meal, friends tried to steal the bride's shoe. If they succeeded, she could not dance until the shoe was recovered. The party finally ended when the attendants put the young couple to bed; first the bride and then the groom. After they were tucked in, the bride's attendants took turns in throwing a rolled stocking over their shoulders in an attempt to hit her on the head. The one who succeeded first would be the next to marry. Then the groom's attendants took their turn at the same activity. This type of desirable frontier wedding was contingent upon the food and time available as well as conditions of safety in traveling and in the advisability of

relaxation of vigilance for even one day.¹⁴¹

IV. THE FRONTIER WIFE AND MOTHER

The necessities of food, shelter and clothing were often the only needs that could be met by many frontier families. In meeting these necessities, a great deal of the work fell on the shoulders of the wife and mother. The men, with a great deal of assistance from their wives, farmed and raised the grain, usually Indian corn, needed by the family. Some, but not all, of them supplemented the dietary protein needs of the family through hunting and also furnished some of the raw materials for clothing needs in that manner. As the Revolution began, it is possible that only about one half of the frontier families included a gun of any kind among their possessions even with the ever present danger of Indian attack.¹⁴² The men cleared land and built the cabins. All

¹⁴¹ Lewis Preston Summers, History of Southwest Virginia 1746-1786, Washington County 1777-1787, (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Co., 1971), p. 125-7.

¹⁴² Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:156 and 168. Kegley's figures are based on estate inventories. It is possible that an old or an ill man would pass his gun on to the one he thought of as the family protector before his death. During the Revolution, rosters show that Captain Israel Lorton's Company mustered sixty men and officers with sixteen guns and no powder or lead between them. Captain Jonathan Isom's Company began with eight-six men with thirty-nine guns and no powder or lead.

other needs were met by the women.

The main crop of most of the mountain frontier farms was corn. Men, sometimes with the help of neighbors, cleared the land and raised the crop. Women did a great deal of the work involved in raising this crop. During the spring and early summer, they also had their kitchen gardens to tend, which might be as large as the corn crop, was strictly 'women's work'.

Women seem to have borne the brunt of labor on the frontier mountain farm. While no direct reference is found concerning the industry or lack thereof among the men of Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington Counties between the years 1775 and 1785, or the amount of work, proportionate or disproportionate, done by the women, evidence is available that back country men in the south from 1728 until as late as 1900 were generally lazy and left most of the work to their wives.

On the eve of the Revolution, Charles Woodmason was traveling through the Carolina back country and observed:

They are very poor - owing to their extreme Indolence for they possess the finest Country in America, and could raise but ev'ry thing. They delight in their present low, lazy, sluttish, heathenish, hellish Life, and seem not desirous of changing it.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ Richard J. Hooker, editor, Carolina Backcountry on the Eve of the Revolution; The Journal and Other Writings of Charles Woodmason, Anglican Itinerant, (Chapel Hill: The

Mountain men were still very much the same in 1900.

(The women) plant, hoes corn, gathers fodder sometimes even plows or splits rails.....When her man leaves home on a journey he is not likely to have laid in wood.¹⁴⁴

There is no reason to believe that those men living in the less hospitable areas of the four counties under study would have been any more industrious than men any where else in the southern highland back country.

In the valleys, the wealthy among the frontiersmen built their estates. The middling sort also chose the valleys for their neat farms. These families worked together as a unit to build and maintain homes under difficult circumstances.

As was seen earlier, women whose husbands were engaged in military service, received aid in the form of corn. Corn was the staple of the frontier diet but was supplemented by a variety of vegetables and fruits, which were raised by the women in the kitchen garden or gathered in the wild. Legumes

University of North Carolina Press, 1953), p. 52. The Reverend Woodmason is speaking of the people of frontier Carolina. He apparently did not like the people he found there. They probably were lazy by his standards, but the extreme acidity is probably overstated and is that of the writer.

¹⁴⁴ Horace Kephart, Our Southern Highlanders: A Narrative of Adventure in the Southern Appalachians and a Study of Life Among the Mountaineers, (Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press, 1976), p. 330. Kephart is speaking generally of mountain farmers he studied over a four state area (Virginia, North Carolina, Kentucky and Tennessee).

such as beans and peas were enjoyed fresh and preserved for the off season by drying and storing in canvas bags or wooden kegs until needed. Snap beans, known as leather breeches, were strung and hung in ropes to dry. Pumpkin, squash and all types of fruit were also dried and stored for the winter months. Root vegetable; turnips, potatoes, carrots, parsnips, etc., were easy to raise and the easiest to store. They kept well buried in the ground, under a pile of straw, in a lean-to shed, or in a root cellar.

Few fruits and vegetables were consumed raw. Spring and summer diets were augmented by "salat greens" such as turnip and beet tops and mustard raised in the garden and by poke, creasy and dandelions, among others, picked in the fields and woods. For most of the year, green leafy vegetables were unknown.

Frontier women, most of whom could not read¹⁴⁵, had little use for recipe, or as they were known then, receipt books.¹⁴⁶ Their seasonings were the herbs that grew wild or that they grew in their own kitchen gardens and salt, often

¹⁴⁵ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:169. Based on a study of signatures and marks applied to legal documents, Kegley found only six signatures of women.

¹⁴⁶ Jean McKibbin, editor, The Frugal Colonial Housewife, (New York: 1976). Originally published as: Susannah Carter, The Frugal Housewife or Complete Woman Cook, (Boston: 1772). This was the only recipe book printed in North America between 1742 and 1795.

impure, often boiled from licks, but most important of all, grease.¹⁴⁷ A limited amount of imported spices were available but were expensive and used sparingly for pickling, etc. They cooked whatever was available at the time, often preparing the same meal several days in a row. When the garden was 'in', or when fresh meat was available, the food was better. The palate was not catered to as much as was the stomach. If food was available and it was filling, serve it, whatever it was. Often the frontier diet was less than tasty but Reverend Mr. Woodmason seems to have been overly critical in his assessment of the frontier diet.

.....Fat rusty bacon, and fair Water, with Indian Corn Bread.....Nothing but Indian Corn Meal to be had Bacon and Eggs in some Places - No Butter, Rice, or Milk - As for Tea and Coffee they know it not. These people are all from Ireland, and live wholly on Butter, Milk, Clabber and what in England is given to the Hogs and Dogs.....Where I am, is neither Beef or Mutton - Nor Beer, Cyder, or anything better than Water - These people eat twice a day, only. Their Bread, of Indian Corn, Pork in Winter and Bacon in Summer - If any Beef, they jerk it and dry it in the Sun - So that You may as well eat a Deal Table.¹⁴⁸

¹⁴⁷ Harriette Simpson Arnow, Seedtime on the Cumberland, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1960) p. 404. This is only one source of many. All sources that discuss mountain and/or frontier food comment on the high grease content.

¹⁴⁸ Hooker, Carolina Backcountry, p.13, 34 and 196. If Woodmason let his feelings be known to his hostesses, they probably were serving him the most scanty fare possible. Vegetables of some sort and cider were nearly always available in some form. Clabber was very much like cottage cheese.

Estate inventories for the period show each household with one or more pots for boiling food and usually a Dutch oven for simple baking.¹⁴⁹ Salt cured and/or very tough meat cooked best when simmered for hours. Dried vegetables must be simmered for hours. They could be combined for nourishing stews. Fresh vegetables were also boiled. Boiling, simmering, baking and roasting (fresh meat only) spitted over an open fire were the usually preferred ways of cooking. Not only did these methods lend themselves easily to the preparation of the food stuffs available, but they were much less labor intensive than frying, braising, etc. By simmering a pot for hours, a woman was freeing her hands and her attention for some of the other labor intensive tasks that were her lot.

Fresh meat and fresh vegetables were rarely available at the same time. Winter brought fresh meat. With fewer farm chores, the men who wanted to hunt and had guns also had time to hunt.¹⁵⁰ Winter was also the time that domestic animals, usually hogs, were butchered and cured because the meat could

¹⁴⁹ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:165.

¹⁵⁰ Ibid, 1:82 and Reuben Gold Thwaites, Daniel Boone, (New York: Appleton and Company, 1902). Even a gun in the house and a husband who hunted could not guarantee a woman fresh meat to cook. Many of the hunters were 'long hunters'. A long hunt usually lasted from October until March or April. Some hunters, like Boone, could be gone as much as two years leaving their wives and families to fend for themselves.

be cured before spoilage set in or insects infested the meat.¹⁵¹ Butchering was hard work and was shared by every member of a family old enough to help. The men did the actual slaughtering and the heavy work, hanging scalding and eviscerating. Hog killing was not usually one of those agricultural tasks calling for the aid of neighbors or hired help. Eighteenth century porkers raised and fattened for consumption on plantations were considered quite adequate if it produced fifty pounds of cured pork. A hog of this size could easily be handled by one man.

After the frontier farmer had done his part in butchering the animal, it was the wife's turn to perform her duties in meat preservation. It was women's work to cut all but the largest bones, tend the curing brines, chop the meat for sausage, clean the intestines also for sausage, make head cheese, etc. Meanwhile, she cleaned and cooked the organ meats, a real treat, for quick consumption. She had a use for virtually every part of the animal including the blood which was also used for sausage. Blood sausage was especially appreciated by the German settlers.¹⁵²

Summer meant fresh vegetables and cured meat. Summer also meant endless hours hoeing and weeding the garden.

¹⁵¹ Arnow, Seedtime, p. 402.

¹⁵² Ibid, p. 402-3.

Insects had to be picked off by hand if the proper herbs could not be planted around the perimeter of the garden. Since many of the insect repelling herbs such as rosemary, sage, thyme, mint and hyssop, also were valuable for their flavor, they were planted whenever possible.

The long simmering pot containing dinner might even be slung over an outdoor fire in the summertime. Dinner, the main meal of the day was served in the middle of the day. The stew that had simmered all morning was usually supplemented by corn pone, made of meal and water, if nothing else. Corn pone was much better if made with milk and an egg, if one was available. It could also be sweetened with molasses or honey. This also made the batter more cohesive and since it was often baked on a stone or a board in front of the fire, cohesiveness was important.¹⁵³ Supper and breakfast consisted of leftovers from dinner. Diets were not widely diversified or interesting. There was no time or means for the average woman to indulge in fancy cooking even if she felt the inclination to do so.¹⁵⁴

¹⁵³ Pone could also be baked on the blade of a hoe, hence the term "hoecake" but this was not the usual method of preparation.

¹⁵⁴ Several carefully researched demonstrations of frontier cooking are in existence. The Scotch-Irish Farm, Staunton, Virginia and The Home Place, located at Land Between the Lakes near Murray, Kentucky, are particularly good. The Home Place is early Nineteenth Century but there is little to suggest that open hearth cooking had changed

The wealthier frontier wife had time, money and opportunity to prepare better meals. They could and did rival their eastern seaboard sisters in food preparation and preservation. Servants could tend the garden as well as perform other tedious household chores thereby freeing the lady of the house for more interesting occupations such as creative cooking. Extra money meant she could indulge in more exotic spices than just the herbs grown in her own garden. Recipes exchanged by the women of the Henry/Campbell/Christian family list spices such as mace, tumeric and cloves, all of which were imported.¹⁵⁵

In addition to the tending of the garden, the cooking and the preservation of fruits and vegetables, and the preservation and preparation of meat and meat products, the wife was also responsible for the production of any dairy products used by the family. Most families had at least one milk cow and perhaps a few chickens. Barnyard fowl were not considered as essential as the cow and are not listed in the inventories with one exception, a flock of geese¹⁵⁶. Fowl were hard to keep due to predators. A cow was essential for

much in that period.

¹⁵⁵ Graves, Dot, Compiler, The Elvira Henry Cookbook, (Red Hill, VA: Patrick Henry Memorial Foundation, 1979), inclusive.

¹⁵⁶ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:158.

milk and butter both of which were important in the frontier diet. Women and girls tended the dairy cows. They fed and milked and when necessary pulled calves. Except in winter, milk did not keep long, even for those lucky enough to have a spring house. Butter must be churned quickly and cottage cheese made. Some women also made hard cheese usually using venison rennet. Calves were too valuable to sacrifice for their stomach linings when the adult animal could produce so much more in the way of meat or milk. Food production, preparation and preservation made the largest inroads on the time of the frontier wife.

Estate inventories¹⁵⁷ reveal that the average person had a very limited wardrobe. One or two extra changes of clothing seems to have been the rule. Wealthier people would have had more, but for the frontier wife to keep each member of a large family supplied with a bare minimum of clothing would have been a monumental task. In her book, Kegley states that a man was probably buried in his best clothing and only older or second best left to inventory. The most extensive wardrobe, a man's, lists "an half worn suit of duroy" and "an old coatt". It also lists buckles, sixty yards of "half thuke", two yards of swan skin and thirty-six yards of checkered linen. The first two fabrics on this list were probably not

¹⁵⁷ Ibid, 1:158-168.

woven locally.¹⁵⁸

Trim for clothing as well as well as commercially woven cloth was available. The records of the store owned by James McCorkle of New Dublin (then Montgomery County) show that between September, 1774 and March, 1775, exhibits the variety of yard goods and notions available for sale to the frontier housewife. In that time period, he sold the following items: blue cloth, white "tammy", red "tammy", shalloon, skeins of thread, buttons, blue "durant" coating, "cambrick", cloth for leggons, linen tape, "nuns" thread, "persian", coat buttons, Irish linen, "oznabrig", buckram, "callimanco", white dimity, "Janes", hanks of silk and twists, "frize", and Brown holland for "stocking breeches".¹⁵⁹ The inventory taken of the estate of merchant Daniel Murphy showed that he had for sale at the time of his death "negro cloth, shirt buttons, white shirts, check shirts, check linen, gartering, shalloon, ribbed stockings, flannel, "callico", cotton caps, silk handkerchiefs, blankets, "hose". "oznaburg", cotton lace, a cloth coat, "a second hand red riding coat", a gross of pins, four hundred needles and several kinds of buttons.¹⁶⁰

¹⁵⁸ Cloth was both imported and woven locally by tradesmen. These commercial weavers were invariably men. See Appendix II for list of apprentices to learn the weavers trade.

¹⁵⁹ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:158.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid.

Kegley's study of inventories show only half the households with spinning wheels and only eight looms.¹⁶¹

Some women did clothe their families from raw material to finished product by their own labor. Where looms were, weaving was not taken lightly. Jennie Wiley was captured by Indians in 1789 because she elected to finish a piece of cloth on her loom rather than leave as soon as she got the alarm.¹⁶² Others also produced their own cloth, but they were the exception, not the rule. Most families preferred buying cloth from the few mercantile establishments available, from traveling peddlers or from local weavers. In homes where there were spinning wheels but no looms, raw materials were spun into yarn and then taken to one of the local weavers who was paid to weave the owner's yarn into cloth.

Flax and cotton were labor intensive agriculturally and larger amounts of cleared land was needed to raise those crops than was usually found on mountain farmsteads. Often out of every one hundred acres owned no more than three would or could be cleared and planted.¹⁶³ Had there been the land and the labor available, the weather was not warm enough for the extended growing season needed by cotton. Hemp and a small

¹⁶¹ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:167.

¹⁶² Addington and Hamilton, Indian Raids, p. 97.

¹⁶³ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:171.

amount of flax were the only fibrous crops produced and hemp was considered a cash crop. Sheep are the most labor intensive of all domestic livestock because they need constant attention and were not plentiful in the area until after the Revolution.¹⁶⁴ Production of food was more important than was the production of cloth since cloth was available to buy so it was to the production of food and the construction of garments from commercially produced cloth that a woman turned her attention.

The actual construction of a garment was also labor intensive. No frontier wife and mother had time to sit and sew to the exclusion of her other chores. The sewing and mending were done when a woman had a few minutes to sit and rest, often only in the evening by firelight. Without the benefit of modern machinery, a woman's shift, one of the simplest adult garments made in the eighteenth century, can be constructed in approximately two weeks when sewing is interspersed with other chores.¹⁶⁵ A replacement was made

¹⁶⁴ Ibid, 1:157. The largest number of sheep in any inventory between 1745 and 1786 was the 40 owned by William Sayers of Montgomery County. The importance of sheep and wool production can also be seen by a comparison of the number of sheep, horses and cattle in the same period. There were 321 sheep, 526 horses and 816 head of cattle.

¹⁶⁵ This time estimate is based on the personal experience of this writer. An Eighteenth Century linen shift was constructed while employed as a craft and historical interpreter at Old Salem, Inc., Winston-Salem,

when an old garment became virtually unwearable. The woman who waited too long to replace a worn shift was 'lazy and shiftless'. Virtually all of the clothing worn by the women and children in a family were made at home, as were men's shirts, as a rule although ready-made men's shirts were offered by some merchants. From the number of tailors and breechesmakers on the frontier,¹⁶⁶ it is probable that most of the men's clothing other than shirts were bought ready made or were tailor made to the individual. Mending took place more often than construction of new garments. Interspersed with the construction of new clothing and the mending of old, a woman also had to find time to knit stockings and caps for each member of the family. No wonder children wore the outgrown clothing of older siblings and night clothes were unknown. Men slept in their shirts and women in their shifts.

The amount of clothing owned by any one person was kept at a minimum because of the time and labor intensiveness of construction and because of the expense in purchasing cloth. Clothing was a valuable enough commodity that it was inventoried in estates and listed in wills. Women's clothing appears in only one of the estate inventories studied by Kegley. William Hustard owned one gown, one petticoat and one

NC.

¹⁶⁶ See Appendix A.

cloak, probably left by a deceased wife. Stays, the most difficult to construct of all women's garments and the most likely to have been produced commercially, appear nowhere. No shifts and very few gowns surface in any inventory from the southern mountain frontier.¹⁶⁷ The only woman's garment that is seen consistently in multiples is petticoats. Most women possessed at least two petticoats. They could be worn all at once for warmth with the cleanest one on top when a change was necessary. For daily wear, the oldest were worn on top. Shift, possibly stays, layers of petticoats and a short gown or jacket composed a woman's wardrobe which she usually wore complete at all times.

Eighteenth century standards of cleanliness were quite different from those of the twentieth century. Clothing was worn as long as possible before it was laundered. A clean shirt or a clean shift was a luxury. For many people, a clean shirt or shift was a new shirt or shift. If you only had one, it was difficult to arrange for laundering. If you had more

¹⁶⁷ Arnow, Seedtime, p. 361-2. At a sheriff's auction for debt in 1784, Catherine Lefever lost 1 cloak, 5 calico petticoats, 6 cotton jackets, 2 gowns, 2 robes, 1 shade), 1 silk handkerchief, 2 caps, aprons (1 gauze), 4 slips, 1 riding habit, gloves, mitts, chip hat, cuffs and stockings. The 1788 inventory for Mrs. William Neely lists 3 short gowns, 4 petticoats, 1 cloak and an old calico gown. Many of the families leaving southwestern Virginia during the years under study went farther west into Kentucky and Tennessee. Due to the shortage of information on women's clothing in the Virginia inventories, information from this area is used here.

than one, the clean one was kept for best and in case of emergencies where a clean shirt or shift was preferable.

Bed linens were changed once or twice a year. Very few inventories list extra sheets and many do not list any sheets.¹⁶⁸ Most people slept directly on ticking stuffed with corn shucks or grass. With the scarcity of barnyard fowl, few people had the luxury of feather beds until the Nineteenth Century.

In spring or early summer, a woman dedicated a day or two of her time to housework. At this time, tickings would be emptied, washed and restuffed. Any additional laundry was done at the same time. Some laundry; infant clothing, a shirt if a man was going somewhere that called for a clean shirt, maybe an extra petticoat, was done in between times. Daily house cleaning consisted of washing dishes and pots and sweeping the cabin floor occasionally, Bathing, even among the socially elite of the eastern area, was considered not particularly healthy and was not practiced. A clean face and clean hands were all that were necessary. There was no conception of the connection between dirt and disease and with the difficulty of providing water to clean, cleanliness by modern standards was not even considered.

Water had to be carried a considerable distance as a rule

¹⁶⁸ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:166.

and it was a woman's chore to do so. The yoke and buckets used to carry water weighed about twenty-five pounds empty. It was enough to carry water for cooking and drinking without any unnecessary cleaning.

Free standing furniture does not appear on the estate inventories until shortly before the Revolution and then in very limited amounts.¹⁶⁹ Built-in furniture was apparently more common. It was very difficult to bring free standing furniture to a remote mountain cabin. There were also very few joiners in the area.¹⁷⁰ It was much easier and more practical to build the furniture on the spot and much of what appears on the inventories may have been of home construction. Men are generally accredited with producing this furniture, but it was not unknown for women to construct furniture even among the wealthier settlers. When William Campbell married Elizabeth Henry, his mother, Margaret Buchanan Campbell, gave them a wedding present of a rope bed made with her own hands.¹⁷¹

In a home where there was a bedstead, there was only one. Infants slept first either with the parents or in a cradle

¹⁶⁹ Ibid, 1:167.

¹⁷⁰ See Appendix A. Only seven out of two hundred six apprentices were to become joiners.

¹⁷¹ Nelly C. Preston, Paths of Glory, (Richmond: Whittet and Shepperson, 1961) p. 136.

depending on the weather. Toddlers and young children slept on a pallet in the same room. Older children, adolescents, and adult unmarried children of both sexes slept in the loft on pallets.

Small one room cabins had lofts that were little more than crawl spaces and would have been covered entirely with bedding for a large family. Wealthier families had larger cabins of two side by side rooms, two story with one room above the other, or of the dog trot variety with two rooms or two, two story sections separated by a breezeway.¹⁷² The scarcity of furniture, limited living area, crowded living conditions and lack of concern for cleanliness all served to keep a woman's housekeeping duties at a minimum.

Pregnancy and childbirth were the leading causes of death among all women of the period. Diets were not designed to give the best nutrition for the expectant or nursing mother but on seasonal availability of food. A woman's work load did not change due to pregnancy. The same chores had to be done at the same time of the year regardless of the condition of the woman doing them. Multiple pregnancies without proper

¹⁷² Original preserved examples of dog trot and one room cabins may be seen at Crab Orchard Museum, near Tazewell, VA. The two room, two story cabin built by Alexander Breckinridge has been preserved and is on display in the city of Abington, VA, as is the two room cabin built for Reverend Cummings, the first pastor of Tinkling Springs Presbyterian Church.

nutrition, pregnancies separated only by periods of lactation with attendant nutritional drains, exhaustion and hygienic deficiencies all contributed to the deadly dangers of pregnancy and childbirth.

The average frontier woman had her first child at twenty-one and continued through an average of nine live births to have her last child at the age of thirty-eight. These are average figures. Many families in the study consisted of fewer children and involved women who died very young, probably in childbirth. Some families were larger. One woman in the study gave birth eighteen times. The youngest mother was fifteen and two mothers gave birth at the age of forty-nine.¹⁷³ None of these births were attended by a physician. Childbirth was woman's work and was attend by midwives or 'granny women' as they were known.

The identities of the mountain 'granny women' during the Revolution cannot be ascertained. One woman from Washington County stands out as a definite possibility in this area. Grizelda Campbell McCutcheon, paternal aunt of General William Campbell, had an unusual enough given name that it seems safe to surmise that where it appears in the next generation, the child was probably her namesake. All of her daughters and some of her daughters-in-law used the name or some diminutive

¹⁷³ See footnote 3, page 2.

of it. This is to be expected and only follows the prevalent naming pattern where the first daughter was named for the maternal grandmother; the second for the paternal grandmother and the third for the mother. Many of the neighbors also used this unusual name or some diminutive such as Grissal or Grizzel. This appellation was possibly imposed on innocent female infants outside the family in honor of the midwife that attended their births since it does not appear outside the immediate neighborhood.

Mothers were in full charge of infants, toddlers and young children. Fathers did not become actively involved with child rearing until the children were old enough to keep up with him in whatever endeavor he undertook and this usually involved male children only. A father's role in child rearing was to teach a boy to be a man. The mother had already spent the first few years of a boy's life preparing him for the time the father assumed the paternal role in child rearing. The father taught the son to raise a crop or a cabin but the mother had taught him to weed and hoe a garden so he would be able to weed and hoe a corn crop. She had given him any formal education he was to receive unless they were a wealthy family. He could care for himself including preparing simple meals if away from home and civilization for an extended period of time. The father received a miniature replica of himself that only needed to be finished and matured. Boys

learned the beginnings of woods lore and other survival techniques from the women of the household.

A daughter's education remained the sole responsibility of the mother. Fathers contributed little if any to the rearing of the daughter. A father's primary responsibility to the daughter was protection. It was, however, impossible for the father to furnish all of the needed protection to his family due to the rigors of frontier life. Particularly during the Revolution, fathers were absent from the home for extended periods of time and their protection was therefore withdrawn. At those times, protection of the children, especially very young children, became one of the primary responsibilities of the mother.

Part of the education the mother was to impart was religious, if any religion at all was practiced by the family. The women would have welcomed the first minister. He was not only an aid in an attempt to instill religious training in the young, but church was a welcome social outlet. The frontier minister needed to be as assertive as his congregation. David Campbell described the religious views of the early settlers in Washington County's portion of the Holston Valley and their first minister.

The first settlers on Holston river were a remarkable race of people for their intelligence, enterprise and hardy adventure. The greater portion of them.....were mostly descendants from Irish stock and generally, where they had any

religious opinion were presbyterians. A large portion were religious and many were members of the church. There were some families, however, and among the most wealthy, that were extremely wild and dissipated in their habits.

The first clergyman that came among them was the Rev. Charles Cummings, an Irishman by birth, but educated in Pennsylvania. This gentleman was one of the first settlers, defended his domicile for years with his rifle in his hand and built his first meeting house near the spot where he and two or three neighbors and one of his servants had a severe skirmish with the indians¹⁷⁴

The women, who were considered keepers of the family altar as far as religion was concerned, welcomed the coming of organized religion to the frontier. They might have been considered the keepers of the family altars, but when the call went out to the Reverend Cummings, only one woman, Margaret Edmiston, signed the call.¹⁷⁵

It often fell to the women and the boys under militia age to protect the home during the Revolution due to the man's absence. Indians were an ever present danger and the war added other dangers. Roving bands of either opposing militia or of dishonest opportunists masquerading as opposing militia endangered lonely farmsteads. One particular unnamed grandmother with the aid of her two young grandsons was extraordinarily enterprising in her method of defending their

¹⁷⁴ Letter to L. Draper from David Campbell, Dec. 17, 1840. Draper MSS, vol. 12, Series ZZ, Reel 83.

¹⁷⁵ Kegley, Early Adventures, 1:85-86.

home near the Holston River. When she heard of the approach of a band of supposedly Tory marauders, she and the boys took to the woods leaving the rest of the family in the cabin. As the band neared, the three began to move about shooting, jangling harness, shouting and making all sorts of noise that would be made by a group of men large enough and well enough armed to have no fear of brigands. The deception apparently worked because the marauders left without disturbing the farmstead.¹⁷⁶

Jennie Wiley, mentioned earlier, had mistakenly felt secure enough to finish her weaving because her fifteen year old brother was with her to help protect her and her children when Indians attacked her home in the Clinch Valley in 1789. Jennie's confidence was ill-founded. Her brother and all of her children were slain and she herself was taken prisoner.¹⁷⁷

Louisa Smith Bowen was another that found that deception was the best defense against overwhelming odds. While her husband was away with the militia at King's Mountain, the Indians attacked their stockaded home near the Washington Tazewell County line. There was only Louisa and a slave to defend the premises. Throughout the night, they walked from

¹⁷⁶ Draper MSS, vol. 12, Series DD King's Mountain, Shelby Papers, Reel 84, pp. 56-7.

¹⁷⁷ Addington and Hamilton, Indian Raids, p. 97. Clinch Valley, Virginia.

portal to portal firing in all directions. The Shawnee, evidently thinking as they were intended to, decided the house was too well fortified to take and left with the dawn. This mighty mite of stamina and fortitude was married to a huge bear of a man in the palm of whose hand she could stand while he held her at shoulder level. Unfortunately, Reece Bowen did not come home from King's Mountain. His comrades-in-arms brought her his shoes.¹⁷⁸

Kitty Moffett Edmondson Estill was not yet a mother when she was captured by the Shawnee led by a half-breed named either Dickson or Dickerson. While she was visiting with her mother and stepfather's family near Jackson River, the Indians attacked. Her brother-in-law was killed and her sister managed to escape into the woods. Kitty, along with her eight year old half brother, James Trimble, and a young slave boy, were captured. Kitty was unable to run due to advanced pregnancy. George Moffett, brother of the captured woman, organized a rescue party that caught up with the Indians and their captives five days later. If a captive was to live, it was important that they do whatever was requested by their Shawnee captors. When the rescue party arrived, Kitty was sewing the ruffles on a shirt she had made for

¹⁷⁸ This is a folk story without any proof. It was told to this writer by several people in the area including those working at Crabtree Orchard Museum and the Washington County Historical Society.

Dickson/Dickerson while on the trail. In the ensuing melee, Kitty, James and possibly the slave boy were rescued. Kitty was safely delivered of her first child a few weeks later.¹⁷⁹

A mother's need to protect her child and her need to educate that child towards his or her role in life could be practically combined. A child busy on a task in her mother's sight was also a child the mother felt was as safe as she herself. A child playing outdoors could be in a great deal of danger as Mrs. Jesse Evans discovered in the summer of 1779. Her ten year old daughter was in the cabin on the Clinch River with her helping with the weaving while the four youngest children were playing outdoors when Indians attacked. Mrs. Evans was able to barricade herself and her daughter in the cabin until help arrived. Three of the four children outside the cabin were killed and the fourth was scalped and left for dead.¹⁸⁰

Many mothers found that their best efforts at protection were not enough. Throughout the Revolutionary War and into the decade of the 1790's and beyond, Cherokee and Shawnee

¹⁷⁹ Moffett/Trimble Family History, unpublished. Supplied by Mrs. Carlton W. Trimble of Thayer, MO. In this history, this story is told three different ways by three different narrators. It is also referred to in Draper MSS, Series ZZ, Virginia Papers. The date is not definite, but probably occurred between 1765 and 1775.

¹⁸⁰ Addington, and Hamilton, Indian Raids, p. 48. Clinch Valley, Virginia.

raiding parties were an ever present threat. Women, with or without the aid of young boys, stood little chance of protecting the young children and themselves in lonely, isolated mountain settings. The protection of a man in the house was not an absolute guarantee of safety, either. A sister of Henry Dickenson, a Mrs. Scott, had her husband at home with her when Indians attacked their farm in Powell's Valley, Virginia early one morning in 1780. Her husband and children were all killed and scalped before her eyes and she herself was taken prisoner. She managed to escape, remarried and raised another family on the frontier.¹⁸¹ These women did not surrender to adversity.

All were in danger, both young and old. Those who were captured and who could keep up with their captors on the trail might live and perhaps escape. Those who could not, died. The old and the very young were less likely to stand the pace but children were treasured by the Shawnee and many young prisoners were adopted. The older captives were expendable as was the mother of John Day.

The Shawnee Indians had come into Botetourt County in the State of Virginia and killed my brother David Day and taken my mother and two Sisters, Lallie Day and Martha Day prisoners and also took some other property and made for their towns. The first night the Indians Camped on a Mountain, between Cape Coper River and Cedar Creek, and at

¹⁸¹ Letter to L. Draper from David Campbell. Draper MSS, Vol. 12, Series ZZ, Virginia Papers, Reel 83, p. 140.

that Camp killed my Mother Susan Day. (formerly Susan Wyley daughter of James Wyley as I understood) & Capt. Guy(?) raised twenty men, of which I was one. We followed said Indians, & when we came to the Indian Camp aforesaid there lay my mother dead, and striped naked. her head skined and we lifted her, and laid her between two rocks, and laid some rocks over her, & we followed on after the Indians, and the second day came in sight of them at their Camp, and I raised my gun to shoot one of them, and just as I was about to draw trigger, I saw one of my sisters rise up right before the muzzle of my gun between me and the Indians, and I was so alarmed at seeing my sister rise before my gun that I involently hollowed which so alarmed the Indians that they broke and run, leaving the prisoners and what they had at the Camp & ran with all their might, and we got the prisoners and what property the Indians left at the Camp, and brought all safe to the post.¹⁸²

All frontier farm families were at risk regardless of who they were. Indians and white marauders had no more respect for the wealthier settler than they had for the poor and perhaps less. The more in the way of worldly goods that was possessed by a frontier family, the more that was available to their attackers as plunder.

The bravery of these women at least equalled that of the men and all acts of bravery did not involve protection of home and children. Husbands could also be the beneficiaries of wonderful acts of valor and devotion as described by the grandson of one of them.

¹⁸² From the pension statement of John Day made July 9, 1838, describing events of March 1782. Draper Mss, vol. 6, Series DD, King's Mountain Papers, pp. 50-51.

My Great Grandfather Wm. Moore was wounded at Kings Mountain and his leg was amputated on the field. When the news reached my great Grand Mother she mounted a horse & rode alone out to him. Remained with him until he were well enough to remove and brought him home.¹⁸³^R

Men absent due to military service were concerned with the safety of their families, but most of the women had no option but to face the dangers of a lonely life, regardless of how intense those dangers became. A few of the more influential families, such as the Campbells, had other options. There were relatives and friends that they might flee to in order to be sheltered and they had the means to get there. William Campbell was very concerned with the women of his family on the Washington County frontier as well as others there when he wrote to his cousin, Arthur, from College Camp near Williamsburg in August of 1776.

I am very uneasy on acct of my Mother and sisters. I hope the old Woman will be prevailed upon to retire to some place of safety. All the Women and Children in the County (Washington) ought to be removed out of the march of the Enemy as soon as it can properly be done that the Men may be together employed in repelling and fighting the Enemy.¹⁸⁴

Arthur agreed. He also would like very much to see the

¹⁸³ Letter to L. Draper from William G. G. Loving. Draper MSS, Series DD King's Mountain Papers, Vol. 14, p. 65.

¹⁸⁴ Letter from William Campbell to Arthur Campbell. Draper MSS, Series ZZ, Virginia Papers, Vol. 12, Reel 123, p. 25.

Campbell women safely in Augusta. One of those sisters of William's was his own wife.

As to your Mammy and sisters I wish they could be conveyed to Augusta; but this must be kept a secret from the rest of the inhabitants.¹⁸⁵

William understood the military need to have all the women and children removed from the frontier. He also understood the men's need to protect their families and the women's obstinacy over leaving the homes they had worked so hard to establish and maintain. Arthur understood all these things and also the logistical impossibilities in removing so many people from the frontier. War or no war, the women tried to see that life went on as usual.

Margaret Buchanan Campbell was going nowhere. She could take care of herself as well as any son or son-in-law could. She might not like the situation, but she could handle it. This is obvious in a 1782 letter to her son.

We have an account hear of a Battle that our men and the Indians have had the Other sid of French Broad if there is any thing of it that may be depended on I would be glad you would write me the Particulars and do Pray inquire about Arthur and if you hear any thing about him do let me know it if it should be Death itself dont keep it his from me.

.....there was Some men from Botetourt came hear yesterday Evening and insulted me a good deal and gave me the worst Language ever I got from any one that traveled the road and threatned to take my

¹⁸⁵ Letter from Arthur Campbell to William Campbell. Ibid, p. 30.

oats and foder as much as they Pleased and I offered them Straw and to make Mose Cut itt and to go to the mill and have Corn ground to mix with itt to feed there horses all I could say had no Effectt they went to the fodder stack and took fodder for the matter of twenty horses and left a receipt for Both butt i doent regard the fodder the took so much as the insulting Language the gave me which to unsufferable to Bare with it from such mean Rawhide as some of them is. there is one John Reburn they cald him and one Henry Waterson the Colt Shearton(?) at these three I think is as mean men ever I saw it was these that gave me the worse most abusive Language of any of the Company would not wish you to enter into any quarrel with them or get any ill will to yourself but would be glad to have some satisfaction for it you may threaten them hard and Promise them to take satisfaction for this if ever the do so again I Expect the will be a great deal worse as the turn home again but I think if you give them really hard it will in a great measure deter them if you go out to the Towne or have any oportunity to write to arthur you may let him know that we are all very well and wish to see him home as Col Crocket waits I must Bid you farewell.

Margaret Campbell¹⁸⁶

Margaret's strength was admirable. It was also a trait that she passed on to her daughters. Strength and ambition in a woman of that time could find only one likely outlet; her husband. Her grandson, David Campbell, said the younger Margaret Campbell pushed her husband.

Arthur had now married William's third sister a woman of excellent mind & of uncommon beauty and sprightliness. This young wife encouraged her husband and urged him forward in all his plans by which he might acquire distinction and reputation as a public man. Her whole mind seemed to be

¹⁸⁶ Preston Papers 1744-1898, Reel C36, Section 5, Virginia State Library, Richmond, VA. Letter from Margaret Buchanan Campbell to William Campbell, 1782.

devoted to this one object, to which she made every other bend. No privation, however great, in smallest degree dismayed her if she believed it was in consequence of her husband's effort to acquire either military or civil distinction. Her extreme solicitude and promptings to push her husband up that ladder of fame caused him sometimes to make false steps & involved him in unnecessary altercations with his brother-in-law as well as others. Except this, and it was always done in a mode & manner to gratify her husband, she was among the most exemplary of women in her deportment towards him, never having a word in opposition to him upon any subject and believing him to be the greatest man in the country, not excepting her brother of whose qualities she entertained a very exalted opinion.¹⁸⁷

Arthur Campbell's life was filled with strong women who were unafraid to let their wishes be known. His mother had been the driving force behind him as he grew to manhood. It was she who had insisted on education. He married his cousin who pushed him to succeed. After the death of William Campbell, he assumed the guardianship of William's children and had their mother to contend with. William Campbell's widow, Elizabeth Henry Campbell, did not need to be tutored in how to be a Campbell woman. She had the same temperament as her brother, Patrick Henry.

The guardianship of the children of William Campbell was not a peaceful arrangement. Evidently, Arthur Campbell and William Christian were appointed, or had themselves appointed,

¹⁸⁷ Letter to L. Draper from David Campbell. Draper Mss, Series ZZ, Virginia Papers, Vol. 12.

guardians without the knowledge or consent of the mother. Arthur rather peremptorily called for an accounting of the estate. This angered Elizabeth and her new husband, William Russell. The tug of war over the children continued. The children seem to have been the point of contention, not the estate.

Arthur insisted on control of the children's education. The son, Charles, died early and only the daughter Sarah, or Sally as she was known to the family, remained. The Russells resisted any control Arthur might have over Sally angrily and sometimes past their legal rights to do so. Their moral rights might have been another matter. Arthur, at least on one occasion, encouraged Sally in what at that time would have been considered scandalously disrespectful behavior. He found her on the grounds of Aspenvale, the Campbell home now occupied by the Russells, and talked her into mounting his horse behind him and leaving to go home with him and attend school. She did not see her mother or step-father and sent a friend to tell them where she had gone. When the Russells came after her, Arthur would not allow them to see her. The contentiousness continued for quite some time until Elizabeth found an attorney and a loop hole in the guardianship and had it set aside. At one time, she had attempted to involve her brother who was by this time Governor of Virginia. Patrick Henry showed the brilliance for which he was renowned. He

refused to get involved and let his sister fight her own battles.¹⁸⁸

Most of the women in this particular time and place would not have exhibited the belligerent behavior Elizabeth Henry Campbell Russell had. They would have had the need to reserve their energy for the more basic issues of frontier survival.

CONCLUSIOJN

Eighteenth century tithable lists and later tax lists do not include white women; only males and slaves were considered as productive workers in farming operations. In this, Virginia's western frontier seemed to be little different from the Tidewater and Piedmont areas. Ironically, the frontier white women who cared for livestock, raised huge gardens, preserved and prepared all food stuffs, made all the family clothing, raised large families, gave their children what education they acquired and fought Indians were not considered productive enough to be taxed.

A woman's world consisted of her cabin, her garden and her family. In understanding what that world was like and how she functioned in it, a glimpse of the woman within it can be seen. Rarely did she venture far into the outside world.

¹⁸⁸ Letter to L. Draper from David Campbell, February 16, 1843. Draper Mss, Series DD, vol. 12, pp 36-38.

Women on the frontier did not fight political wars against European nations; they fought the Cherokee and the Shawnee. Women did not take an active role in government; they enabled their men to do so. Women did not raise crops; they raised children, animals and gardens. Men built the country while women built the families and the men that came from those families. The woman's role was as vital to the new nation as was the man's. It was perhaps more vital on the frontier than elsewhere.

APPENDIX

- A. Apprentices bound by the Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington County Courts - 1770-1790.
- B. Wives and daughters of the men of the Washington County Militia who fought at the Battle of King's Mountain, October 7, 1781.
- C. Examples of eighteenth century indenture contracts.

APPENDIX A - Apprentices bound by the Augusta, Botetourt, Montgomery and Washington county courts 1770-1790.¹⁸⁹

TRADE	NUMBER	MALE	FEMALE
Unspecified	117	51	66
Blacksmith	27	27	
Weaver	25	25	
Cooper	14	14	
Shoemaker	12	12	
Tailor	9	9	
Breechesmaker	8	7	1
Nailor	7	7	
Saddler	7	7	
Tanner	6	6	
Carpenter	5	5	
Wheelwright	5	5	
Hatter	5	5	
Wagonmaker	4	4	
Cabinetmaker	3	3	
Farmer	3	3	
Joiner	2	2	
Coppersmith	2	2	
Carpenter/joiner	2	2	
Potter	2	2	
Saddletree maker	1	1	
Wheelwright/joiner	1	1	
Mason/plasterer	1	1	
Bookkeeper	1	1	
Millwright	1	1	
Printer	1	1	
Currier	1	1	
Gunsmith	1	1	
Bricklayer	1	1	
Spinster/seamstress	1		1
TOTAL	275	207	68

¹⁸⁹ Gill, Apprentices of Virginia, inclusive.

APPENDIX B - The wives and daughters of the men of the Washington County Militia who fought at the Battle of King's Mountain October 7, 1781.¹⁹⁰

WIVES

DAUGHTERS

Anna Turner Adams

Elizabeth _____ Alexander

Elizabeth Alexander McClung

Jane Wallace Alexander

Jane Alexander Campbell
Dorcas Alexander Pilson

Elizabeth Burge Alley

Ann Frazier Banning

Mary Allison Beattie

Nancy Beattie Edmondson
Ellen Beattie White

Elizabeth McCutcheon Berry

Mary Berry Johnson
Grizzel Berry Maxwell
Sarah Berry Williams

Mary Hatler Bickley

Martha _____ Bishop

Mary _____ Blackburn

Elizabeth Blackburn Bay
Grizelle Blackburn Blackburn
Mary Blackburn Meyers

Janet Matthews Blackburn

Elizabeth Black Blackburn

Nancy Blackburn Carson
Jane Blackburn Snody
Ann Blackburn Weir

¹⁹⁰ "Ancestral Files", computer disc, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. These records have been compiled by members of the church and other interested parties. They are on disc with no editorial names available.

WIVES

Susannah Bryant Boren

Lily McIlhaney Bowen

Louisa Smith Bowen

Winnie Gryson Bowling

Mary Buchanan Boyd

Magdalene Gamble Breckinridge

Elizabeth Cowan Breckinridge

Jane Trim Browning

Jean Evans Callan

Elizabeth Henry Campbell

Margaret Campbell Campbell

Elizabeth Walker Carmack

Elizabeth Dysart Carson

Jane Allen Craig

Susanna Woods Crain

Esther Montgomery Doak

Loadicea _____ Dorton

Mary _____ Dryden

Mary Knox Duff

DAUGHTERS

Sarah Boren Doriss
Nancy Boren Hogan
Rebecca Boren Lathrop
Mourning Boren Waters

Jane Bowen Cunningham
Agnes Bowen McFerran

Nancy Bowen Buchanan
Mary Bowen Porter
Rebecca Bowen Whitley

Ann Breckinridge Chambers
Rachel Breckinridge Cowan
Elizabeth Breckinridge Duncan

Margaret Craig Laird

Mary Doak Breckinridge

Hannah Dryden Brandon
Margaret Dryden Hope
Phoebe Dryden Wilson

WIVES

Ann Edmiston Edmondson
Elizabeth Edmondson Edmondson
Rebecca _____ Elder

Martha Jackson Elkin

Winnifred Saunders Elliott

Mary _____ Fisher

Margaret Wallace Foster

Susanna Bottom Francis

Jane Givens Givens

Martha Golden Goff

Gracy Williams Goff

Jane Callaghan Grier

_____ Cotton Harrell

Anne Crawford Hayter

Kissiah Bailey Hillan

Mary Shelby Hobbs

Jane Barker Johnson

Margaretta Hoffman Keane

DAUGHTERS

Esther Edmondson Kennady

Jane Elkin Barnes
Elizabeth Elkin Crow
Rhoda Elkin Crow
Nancy Elkin Crow
Dorcas Elkin Hawk
Sibbe Elkin Richardson
Martha Elkin Ritchardson
Mary Elkin Ritchardson
Katherine Elkin White

Rachel Foster Logan

Elizabeth Goff McEwin

Mary Goff Kennedy
Sallie Goff McCandless

Rebecca Hobbs Blanton
Rachel Hobbs Russell
Mary Hobbs Benham

Isabella Johnson Cumings
Lucy Johnson Reynolds

WIVES

Winnie Clayton Kilgore

Catherine McDonald Kincannon

Sarah Lewis Lewis

Martha Dunkin Litton

Hannah Erwin Logan

Mary Anne Dillard Love

Mary Marshall Love

Amie Gist Lowery

Margaret Vance Lusk

Sarah McLain Maxwell

Agnes _____ Maxwell

Sarah McCutcheon McClung

Rebecca Leggett McClure

Rosannah Fryatt McConnell

Elizabeth Weir McCutcheon

Margaret _____ McCutcheon

Rachel Newman McElwee

Esther Huston McFarland

Rachel _____ McGuire

DAUGHTERS

Ann Barbara Lewis Martin

Elizabeth Litton Shoemaker
Mary Litton Long

Margaret Lusk Pipy

Jean Maxwell Sharp

Susan McClung Alexander
Nancy McClung Cummins
Hannah McClung Henderson
Margaret McClung Mussen
Sarah McClung Wilson
Mary McClung Sittlington
Jane McClung Thompson

Jane McElwee Caldwell
Martha McElwee Gilmore

WIVES

Margaret _____ Montgomery
Susannah Porter Montgomery
Mary Robertson Montgomery
Judith Martin Moore
Mary Kirkpatrick Morrison
Penelope Smith Outlaw
Peggy Rhea Preston
Eady _____ Prewitt
_____ Patterson Ramsey
Nancy Mitchell Robertson
Elizabeth Mitchell Russell
Elizabeth White Russell
Sarah Clement Rust
Lydia _____ Savage
Mary Baker Scott
Anne Dooley Sharp
Hannah Fulkerson Sharp
Catherine Hicks Skaggs
Jane Greenlea Snodgrass
Sarah Anthony Talbot
Nancy Owen Taylor
Sarah Moffitt Trimble
Margaret Laughlin Vance

DAUGHTERS

Jane Montgomery Casey
Ann Montgomery Preston
Ann Montgomery McCroskey
Mary Russell Robertson
Elizabeth Russell Turpin
Roseanna Trimble Coleville

WIVES

Bethia Kinkade Vance

Hannah Wilson VanHook

Jane Miller Wallace

Elizabeth Hudson Clay Watkins

Elizabeth Barnett Whiteley

Cynthia Harmon Wynn

Phyllis Marrs Wynn

Mary Boren Young

DAUGHTERS

Nancy Wallace Dew

Elizabeth Wallace Robbins

Ruth Wynn Worsham

Orpha Wynn Edwards

Sarah Wynn Jones

Mary Young Douglas

APPENDIX C - Examples of eighteenth century indenture contracts.¹⁹¹

Contract A

(Place Name) the _____ Day of _____
One Thousand, Seven Hundred and _____
Be it remember'd, That (Name and place of residence in England
did by Indenture bearing like Date herewith agree to serve
_____ or his Assigns, _____ Years in _____ and did thereby
declare h__self to be then of the Age of _____ Years, a single
Person no Apprentice, nor Covenant, or Contracted servant to
any other person or persons. And the said Master did thereby
Covenant at his own Cost, to send his said Servant to the said
Plantation, and at the like Costs to find h__ all necessary
Cloaths, Meat, Drink, Washing and Lodging, as other Servants
in such Cases are usually provided for and allowed.

Contract B

London

These are to certify, That (Name, age and place of residence
in England came before me one of His Majesty's Justices of
Peace, and Voluntarily made Oath, That _____ Deponant is not
Married, no Apprentice nor Covenant, or Contracted Servant to
any Persons, nor listed Soldier or Sailor in His Majesty's
Service, and is free and willing to serve _____ or his
Assigns Four Years in _____, His Majesty's Plantation in
America, and that _____ not perswaded, or enticed so to do,
but that it is _____ own Voluntary Act.

¹⁹¹ Smith, Colonists in Bondage, p. 10.

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