

Journal of Backcountry Studies

EDITOR'S NOTE: This and two future articles, are drawn from the author's 1990 University of Maryland dissertation, directed by Professor Emory Evans. Dr. Osborn is President of Pacific Union College.

William Preston: Origins of a Backcountry Political Career

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Introduction

William Preston (1729-1783), backcountry Virginian, exemplified the North British emigration to the southern backcountry during the second and third quarters of the eighteenth century. His Scotch Irish Presbyterian roots, his family's humble antecedents, and his exploitation of opportunities provided by the quickening pace of Atlantic world trade exemplify underscore the Atlantic world character of backcountry settlement.

Beginnings (1729-1738)

Born Christmas Day, 1729, William Preston became the third child and eldest son of Elizabeth and John Preston. As residents of Newton Limavaddy, a small Irish town near Londonderry, the Prestons now had the son every Scotch-Irish family desired to carry on the family name.¹ William grew up in a family dominated by females consisting of two older sisters, Letitia and Margaret, and two younger sisters, Ann and Mary. A younger brother, James, died at an early age.²

William's father, John, came from a working class background in contrast to his mother, Elizabeth Patton, who came from the gentry.³ Elizabeth Patton met Preston while

Abbreviations in the footnotes are listed at the end of the article.

¹Francis Preston, "Journal of General Francis Preston," 26 September 1833, Preston Family Papers, Gray Collection, FC; Letitia Preston Floyd to Benjamin Rush Floyd, 22 February 1843, The Richmond Standard, 18 September 1880, hereafter cited as LPF Letter. These two children of William Preston, Francis and Letitia, wrote these accounts of their family several decades after the death of their father. While both should be taken seriously, Preston Davie, a family historian, questioned the complete accuracy of Letitia's account. For forty years Davie, a New York City lawyer, worked on writing a history of the Preston family but died in the 1960s before completing his lifelong passion. His widow willed all of his research documents and draft chapters to the Filson Club in Louisville, Kentucky which has preserved in 34 boxes this valuable collection of materials known as the Preston Family Papers, Preston Davie Genealogical Collection, Mss.A.P937g, hereafter referred to as PDGC-FC. In a draft chapter, "Of What Befell John Preston in the New World," Davie questions Letitia Floyd's veracity due to her jealousy of her richer brother, Francis. Apparently Letitia married into a distinguished family but one with fewer riches than Francis had. To downplay his roots, she attempted to "puncture what she considered an excessive pride of race on the part of her brother, who possessed much wealth, by portraying his family as of humble origin and pursuits in a day when class distinctions were still sharply drawn in Virginia." PDGC-FC, 68:9.

²John Frederick Dorman, The Prestons of Smithfield and Greenfield Plantation (Louisville: The Filson Club, 1982), 5.

³Davie, "John Preston," PDGC-FC, 68; "An Account of Colonel James Patton (1692-1755) of 'Springhill Plantation' South River, Augusta Co.; in the Colony of Virginia, and His Antecedents," ibid.,

crossing the Shannon River in a boat and became "much attracted" to his "beauty and deportment." Upon inquiry she discovered that he worked as a ship carpenter, but this "humble pursuit" did not deter her interest in John and "an understanding took place" with Elizabeth consenting to a "runaway match." Except for a continuing close relationship with her brother, James Patton, the marriage "placed her out of the pale of her family."⁴

James, in fact, was to have the most important influence on the future of the John Preston family. Patton had gone to sea as a young man since he did not stand to inherit any family lands as the third son of Henry Patton and Sarah Lynn. After serving in the Royal Navy during Queen Anne's War which ended in 1713, he probably entered the merchant marine.⁵ The dark-haired and brown-eyed James seemed destined to command with his "gigantic stature . . . over six feet four inches in height . . . handsome and dignified, and of remarkably commanding powers." After several years as a sailor, he took over as captain of his own ship eventually sailing to America on business.⁶ Although later claims that he owned several ships and that he made twenty-five trips across the Atlantic appear exaggerated, he had some experience in the colonial trading business consisting of peltries and tobacco from America for indentured servants from Ireland.⁷ Strong evidence exists that he made at least one trip to Virginia because William Beverley wrote him on August 22, 1737 wishing him "a safe return to us."⁸

About this time Patton began contemplating a permanent move to America, but he also wanted his sister's family, the Prestons, to move. Why would Scotch-Irish families

135. Also see Appendix A for a more detailed account of the Patton and Preston lineage.

⁴LPF Letter.

⁵Claims by Letitia Preston Floyd in LPF Letter that Patton served as an officer in the Royal Navy seem unfounded based on investigations into lists of officers available in Great Britain. See Patricia Givens Johnson, James Patton and the Appalachian Colonists (Pulaski: Edmonds Printing, Inc., 1983), footnote 6, p. 13.

⁶Mrs. William Lewis (Letitia Preston Lewis) to Hon. Robert W. Hughes, 13 June 1879, Preston Family Papers, UVA, microfilm 1279, hereafter cited as Lewis Letter. In this letter Mrs. Lewis, the great-grandchild of William Preston, cited accounts by her mother, Letitia Preston Floyd, about their ancestors. She claimed hearing this description about Patton from her aunt, Mrs. Eliza Madison, who heard it from her father, William Preston. Claims made in this same letter that Patton owned several ships cannot be substantiated from the records.

⁷Ibid.; A search of shipping returns during this period which list ship owners and ship masters of all incoming and outgoing ships only find Patton listed when he brought his family and the Prestons to Virginia in 1738. Howard McKnight Wilson, The Tinkling Spring. Headwater of Freedom. A Study of the Church and Her People. 1732-1952 (Fishersville: The Tinkling Spring and Hermitage Presbyterian Churches, 1954), 22.

⁸William Beverley to James Patton, 22 August 1737, Worthington Chauncey Ford, ed., "Some Letters of William Beverley," WMQ, Ser. I, III (April, 1895): 227, hereafter referred to as "Beverley Letters." The New York Public Library houses the original Beverley letters which can also be seen on microfilm in Beverley family papers, VHS, Mss1 B4678a 4788.

such as the Pattons and Prestons want to leave Ireland for the Virginia frontier?⁹ For Patton, the dangerous life on the sea when he had a growing family may have served as a major motivation. For the working class Prestons, economic conditions in Ireland made life very difficult for the Scotch-Irish who settled there over a century before. Originally England encouraged the Scottish migration to Ireland, but now in the eighteenth century the mother country tightened its controls by passing a series of Navigation Acts which resulted in Ireland not being allowed to have any intercolonial trade. By 1715 woolen manufacture, a major Irish industry, had stopped while rents increased rapidly at the same time as prices on farm produce and wages remained stagnant. While the Scots enjoyed freedom of worship, the requirement that tithes be paid to support the Episcopalian Church represented a major irritant to practicing Presbyterians such as the Pattons and Prestons. America symbolized a land where they could escape from these problems.¹⁰

Family reasons constituted a major motivation for both families. On the negative side, the Preston family, due to continuing questions about the marriage of Elizabeth to John, may have wanted to get away from Ireland. On the positive side, both Elizabeth and her brother James had an aunt and uncle who lived in Virginia. William Lynn, brother of their mother, Sarah Lynn Patton, moved to Virginia in the 1720s, built a beautiful home in Fredericksburg, purchased large landholdings, and established a successful medical practice. Since James Patton possibly had sailed to Hobbe's Hole on the Rappahannock River on one of his voyages, he may even have traveled the forty miles to visit his Uncle William in Fredericksburg.

Their Aunt Margaret Lynn Lewis represented an even greater influence since she lived in the area where the two families eventually settled.¹¹ Aunt Margaret married John Lewis who left Ireland after killing with a shillalah the Irish landlord who killed his brother and wounded Margaret in a dispute over rent. To escape from the law, John Lewis fled to Portugal where he found passage to Pennsylvania in 1729 with Margaret joining him later.¹² While waiting for his family to arrive, Lewis became interested in Virginia and moved to the Shenandoah Valley, becoming one of the first white settlers and land developers in what eventually became Augusta County.

Land probably served as the greatest motivation for both families to move. As

⁹For more on the Scotch-Irish background, see Appendix B.

¹⁰R. J. Dickson, Ulster Emigration to Colonial America, 1718-1775 (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1966), 6-16.

¹¹Davie, "Dr. William Lynn" and "Sarah Lynn," PDGC-FC, 139 and Johnson, Patton, 6, 7.

¹²Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, Virginia, 2d ed. (Bridgewater, Virginia: C. J. Carrier Company, 1902), 25. In a well researched local church history, Howard McKnight Wilson disputed this account by citing the studies of Virgil A. Lewis who attempted to verify these traditions about John Lewis and brands them "imaginary." Wilson, Tinkling Spring, 8-9. On the other hand, prolific author, Patricia Givens Johnson, accepts the story in two more recent books, General Andrew Lewis of Roanoke and Greenbrier (Blacksburg: Southern Publishing Company, 1980), 4-5 and Patton, 6-7. If the tombstone inscription on the grave of John Lewis comes from his time as cited by Johnson, "Here lies John Lewis who slew the Irish lord," more credibility should be given to the story than offered by Wilson.

younger sons, neither James nor John stood to inherit any land from their fathers. Since John came from a lower class than James, his eligibility for land, even if he had been the eldest son, was probably less than the possibilities for James. In either case, in spite of the risks inherent in a move to a wild frontier area, both men had an opportunity to improve their wealth and standing.

William Beverley, a member of one of Virginia's elite families, now entered the picture to provide both families the opportunity to get the land they wanted which would also provide them with increased status.¹³ Beverley had taken advantage of a recent loosening of Virginia land laws which now enabled land developers the right to establish their own terms with possible settlers rather than the previously restricted acreage and quitrent requirements.¹⁴

The Virginia Council granted Beverley 60,000 acres in 1734-5 in the Shenandoah Valley "on the West Side the great Mountains on the Sherrando River beginning on Jacob Stovers upper Tract" with the important condition that one family would be settled for each thousand acres within two years.¹⁵ The surveyor either made an honest or a deliberate mistake, but instead of surveying 60,000 acres he marked out 118,491 acres in what became known as Beverley Manor.¹⁶

In 1737 Beverley acquired an additional 30,000 acres adjacent to Beverley Manor near the Calfpasture River in partnership with John Lewis, the uncle of James Patton and

¹³Beverley's grandfather and father, both named Robert, served in similar positions in the House of Burgesses and the prestigious Council. His father wrote the well-known History of Virginia in 1705, the first serious history of the colony. His father's membership in what became known as the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe in the 1716 expedition of Governor Spotswood to the far reaches of Virginia's frontier made a great impact on William. Eventually father and son became interested in getting land grants in the west. Beginning in 1730 many land grants in the west had a William Beverley connection. By November, 1732 he received four grants of land in the Shenandoah Valley with varying partners amounting to 105,000 acres. Jane Dennison Carson, "William Beverley and Beverley Manor" (M.A. Thesis, UVA, 1937), 13-33.

¹⁴The procedures changed in 1730 with a grant of land to John and Isaac Van Meter, Germans who lived in Pennsylvania, when the Virginia Council accepted their proposal to receive 40,000 acres in the Valley in exchange for settling one family for each one thousand acres within two years. In earlier years the Council tightly restricted the amount of lands granted to individuals with strict guidelines for quitrents being paid and the lands being seated and planted within a prescribed period of time. A total of eight individuals or partnerships received 539,600 acres on this basis during the 1730s including Jacob Stover, Alexander Ross and Morgan Bryan, John Fishback, Benjamin Borden, and William Beverley. Manning Curlee Voorhis, "The Land Grant Policy of Colonial Virginia, 1607-1774" (Ph.D. diss., UVA, 1940), 161-5.

¹⁵Council Minutes, 28 October 1734, 23 April 1735, H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Executive Journals of the Council of Colonial Virginia (Richmond: The Virginia State Library, 1930), IV:336, 346, hereafter cited as Executive Journals.

¹⁶Carson, "William Beverley," 39 speculates that the surveyor doubled the size on instruction from Beverley who felt he could use his political connections to get approval more quickly than asking permission beforehand. In his request to the Council on 23 August 1736 for the additional acreage, Beverley wrote that he already settled sixty-seven families "at his great Charge." Council Minutes, 23 August 1736, Executive Journals, IV:375-6.

Elizabeth Preston.¹⁷ To help settle this 30,000 acre plot, Beverley and Lewis turned to the latter's nephew, James Patton, as an agent and partner. Beverley wrote to Patton in Scotland expressing his pleasure if Patton "could import families enough to take the whole off from our hands at a reasonable price." Even though the original order provided for Pennsylvania families, he felt "families from Ireland will do as well." At this point Beverley did not expect Patton to settle himself which Beverley's comment indicates, "The drought is worse in Maryland and you must bring Bread & cash or bills to purchase tobo (tobacco) or go empty home."¹⁸

Letters crossed by sea because two weeks later Beverley received another letter from Patton which needed answering and in which he outlined the conditions of the 30,000 acre grant:

I am willing you should hold one quarter part of it being at 1/4 part of all the charges & doing your utmost endeavour to procure families to come in & settle it & I am satisfied to allow your pocket expenses be brought in as a charge against the Land

Beverley hinted for the first time that Patton may want to settle himself on the land with a proposal to hold the land "undivided & to sell out & make the most we can of it, unless either of us should have a mind to make a settlement there for our own use and then we might have what we have occasion for laid off & appropriated for the purpose." He even replied to an inquiry from Patton about bringing relatives--"If your relation comes in he may have the Land."¹⁹ Could this have been Preston? To help get settlers, Patton first turned to his brother-in-law and offered him 4,000 acres of land in exchange for his services as a ship-wright on a voyage across the ocean, an offer relatives later recalled that "he did not hesitate" to accept.²⁰ The profit motive served as Beverley's major desire. He expected money for the land unless Patton would bring tradesmen, gardeners, and a bolting machine or mill in exchange for land. Patton then purchased 1,970 acres from Beverley called "Springhill" and convinced Preston to buy 1,559 acres called "Spring Farm," both located near Staunton.²¹

With a deal now established, Patton set about finding other Scotch-Irish settlers in

¹⁷Council Minutes, 5 May 1737, *ibid.*, IV:395.

¹⁸William Beverley to James Patton, 8 August 1737, "Beverley Letters," 226.

¹⁹William Beverley to James Patton, 22 August 1737, *ibid.*, 226-7.

²⁰LPF Letter.

²¹Account Book of William Beverley, 1696-1756, Beverley family papers, VHS, Mss1B4678a 4783; Davie, "Of What Befell John Preston," PDGC-FC, 68:3. Davie also bases his account upon analysis of Beverley's account books. Determining the exact location of this property has been difficult. Letitia Preston Floyd wrote in 1843 that the Prestons initially settled seven miles below Staunton, but that John Preston died at "Gibson's Old Place" eight miles below Staunton. LPF Letter. Waddell, *Annals*, 57 notes that it is believed John Preston lived "on the farm a mile N.E. of Staunton, recently known as the Mosby-Taylor farm"

addition to the Prestons who would move to Beverley's and Lewis's lands in the Shenandoah Valley. Apparently those efforts resulted in success because a petition by Patton and Lewis for approval of these lands in 1742 noted that Patton had "at his great expense transported Several Families from the North of Ireland in Order to Comply with the Condition of the said Order."²² His own sister's family, the John Prestons, represented one of those families. So many Scotch-Irish eventually moved to Beverley Manor and the adjacent tracts that it became known as the "Irish tract."

For his last voyage, Patton rented from Walter Lutridge the Walpole, a ship of 85 tons with 6 guns and 10 sailors, built and registered in Boston, Lincolnshire, England in 1714. Patton took 65 passengers including his wife, Mary Osborne, and two daughters, Mary and Margaret, his sister and brother-in-law, John and Elizabeth Preston, and their children, Letitia, Margaret, William, and Ann to the southwestern frontier of Virginia.²³ After leaving Whitehaven, England on March 16, 1738, the Walpole made several stops, probably including Londonderry, to pick up the Prestons. According to family legend, the rough journey across the Atlantic resulted in the Prestons losing part of their property in a storm, but the prospect of gaining "a valuable tract of uncultivated land, called 'Robinson's'" helped ease their worry.²⁴ Several weeks after beginning the voyage Patton deposited his family and relatives along with the other passengers at Bellehaven, Virginia near the current Alexandria on August 26, 1738.²⁵ Eight year old William now began his

²²Council Minutes, 27 April 1742, Executive Journals, V:82. Later in the minutes, thirty-six families were mentioned as being brought over.

²³Colonial Office Records, Virginia Shipping Returns, CO 5\1445, South Potomac and Accomack, 1735-1750, microfilm of original in Public Record Office, London can be found in Records of the Synod of Virginia, UTS, VL12. In later years, John Preston proved the importation of his family in court in order to get his bounty in Augusta County Order Book, 1, 1745-7, VSL, 62:44. The fifty acres guaranteed each person by the royal government who came to America was finally claimed by William Preston in 1750 when he asked for 215 acres in Augusta County at the head of the Calfpasture. In making this claim, Preston mentioned all of the Prestons who came in 1738 except his sister, Ann, who perhaps had already claimed her 50 acres. 1 June 1750, Land Office Patent #30, 1750-52, VSL, 28:58-60.

²⁴Orlando Brown, "Memoranda of the Preston Family," 20 December 1842, University of Kentucky Library Reprint I, 1963. Brown updated an account of the Preston family left by his father, Reverend John Brown, who married William Preston's sister, Margaret. Brown died in 1837.

²⁵Peter Burke Indenture to James Patton, 28 April 1738, PP-DM, 1QQ 4. This indenture cites 23 August 1738 as the date when the ship arrived in Virginia; however, this probably represents the date they passed the capes off of Virginia. This indenture comes from the Preston Papers in the Draper Collection of Manuscripts at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin. Draper received this extensive collection of Preston manuscripts as a result of being introduced two years earlier to the family by David Campbell, former Virginia governor. W. R. Preston, William Preston's grandson, gave Draper six volumes of papers which were originally described in Reuben Gold Thwaites, ed., Manuscript Collections of the State Historical Society of Wisconsin (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1906), 60-4. Several years later Mabel Weakes prepared an extensive description in The Preston and Virginia Papers of the Draper Collection of Manuscripts (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1915). Two microfilm editions of the Preston Papers have been prepared, the most recent in 1980 described by Josephine L. Harper, Guide to the Draper Manuscripts (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1983), 183-8. As part of a more comprehensive collection of manuscripts, the Preston Papers are catalogued by volume number, followed by "QQ," and by the number within the volume. An excellent transcription of the entire

adventure in America.

Settlement (1738-1748)

Uncle James Patton now led young William Preston with his family, relatives, and other settlers brought on the Walpole, to the area around Staunton, Virginia.²⁶ They probably purchased or rented pack horses to carry their possessions on "traces" of Indian and game trails.²⁷ Even though Indians had used these trails for generations, the terrible road conditions represented serious challenges as they headed for one of the gaps through the Blue Ridge Mountains--Ashby's, Swift Run, or Rockfish. Along the way they sustained themselves by killing bountiful game which existed throughout the territory. Within a few weeks they probably arrived at the Lewis Creek settlement of their relatives, John and Margaret Lewis, the aunt of Elizabeth Preston and James Patton.

The conditions witnessed by William Preston on the trip were primitive and coarse. And the year before they arrived Beverley reported to Patton about serious drought conditions,

We have had and it still continues such a drought that has not been known here by any man alive and indeed I believe we shall not make corn to serve 'till April in this Colony; I pray God to send us rain & success in our affairs.²⁸

Presbyterian residents of Beverley Manor even sent an urgent appeal to their governing Presbytery of Donegal in Lancaster, Pennsylvania for wagon supplies which were promised for the following spring only a few months before the Prestons arrived.²⁹

collection of Preston Papers and other Preston materials from the Draper Collection was prepared within the last thirty years by S. C. Stuntz. This six volume typewritten collection in xerox form in beautiful binding can be found at the Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky. No other copies have been found. In calling the State Historical Society of Wisconsin, they were not even aware of its existence. According to sources at the Filson Club, their copy came around 1968 with the understanding that a General Draper from Massachusetts who married a Princess Boncompagni had this edition prepared at personal expense by a professional. The transcription appears to represent accurately the original documents and will be used throughout this work in referring to these papers as PP-DM.

²⁶Staunton may have been named in honor of Lady Staunton, wife of Virginia Governor Gooch. Another possibility may have been the Staunton near Kendal, Westmoreland County, England. Clay Catlett and Elliott G. Fishburne, An Economic and Social Survey of Augusta County, University of Virginia Record Series, XII, 7 (January, 1928), 4.

²⁷According to Lewis Preston Summers, History of Southwest Virginia. 1746-1786. Washington County. 1777-1870 (Baltimore: Regional Publishing Company, 1979 reprint of 1903 ed.), 27, the Indians chose their trails on the basis of "the ease with which the mountains could be crossed, the abundance of game, the absence of swamps and large streams of impassable water and the absence of hostile inhabitants."

²⁸William Beverley to James Patton, 8 August 1737, "Beverley Letters," 226.

²⁹The Records of the Proceedings of the Presbytery of Donegal, 1737, Presbyterian Synod Records, UTS, VL1, 150.

A problem with Indians also developed in 1737. Although Indian tribes primarily used the area for passage between the north and south and for hunting, occasional flare-ups took place with the Indians helping themselves to food in the frontiersmen's homes and taking whatever animals they chose as they continued their travels. In this year they scalped John Breckinridge a few miles south of Staunton which resulted in appeals to the Virginia Council for help.³⁰ Four months before the Prestons landed in Virginia, the Council responded positively to the appeal by appointing the Preston relative, John Lewis, as a captain over Beverley Manor and by sending arms and powder. However, they ordered Lewis not to offer any Violence to any of the said Indians passing quietly through their plantations nor to any Indians whatsoever unless the said Indians do first Commit Hostilities on the said Inhabitants in which case only they are at liberty to defend themselves and to Act offensively.³¹

In the same year the Prestons arrived in Beverley Manor with the Pattons, Virginia approved the formation of Augusta County, a new county centered around Staunton and carved from Orange County.³² Due to a lack of settlers, Augusta County did not actually organize until 1745.

How might the area be described where the Prestons settled in Augusta? This part of the Shenandoah Valley, known as the upper valley although located in the south, presented an attractive setting for many Europeans looking for a climate and lands similar to their homeland.³³ Robert Mitchell analyzed the attractiveness as follows: the presence of a large area of broadly undulating, well-watered, fertile land, early perceived to be most suitable for agriculture and lacking permanent Indian

³⁰Howard McKnight Wilson, The Lexington Presbytery Heritage (Verona, Virginia: McClure Press, 1971), 18.

³¹22 April 1738, Executive Journals, IV:414. The action stated, "Whereas the Inhabitants on Sherrando River by their petition have represented that the Northern Indians frequently passing through their plantations Commit frequent Outrages and have lately killed one of their men, And have prayed for a Supply of Arms & Ammunition for their defense, It is the Opinion of this Board and Accordingly Ordered that His Majesty's Stores there be delivered to John Lewis Gent who is hereby Approved to be a Capt over such of the Inhabitants as live in Beverly Manor, Thirty Muskets & Eight pair of Pistols with a proportionable quantity of Powder & Ball . . ."

³²Frederick County was also detached from Orange County in "An Act, for erecting two new Counties," November 1738, William Waller Hening, ed., The Statutes at Large; Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library, 1809-1823), 5:78-80, hereafter referred to as Hening, Statutes. Augusta may have been named after Princess Augusta, wife of Frederick Lewis, Prince of Wales. Catlett, Augusta, 3.

³³Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier. Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 22, described the comparison: "Settlers who arrived directly from northwestern Europe would have found summers warmer and more humid than they were accustomed to. Otherwise, despite local physical gradients, conditions were not unlike those across the Atlantic, and the crop and livestock patterns which the settlers brought, and to which they added New World domesticates, were well adapted to the seasonal rhythm of the valley."

settlements, could scarcely have failed to impress the earlier Europeans searching for favorable sites for settlement. This location of the valley between two formidable-looking mountain ranges merely magnified this impact.³⁴

The area did not consist of a "single uninterrupted grassland covering the valley floor," but enough openness existed to make farming an immediate possibility in many areas.³⁵ Trees such as white oaks, hickories, black oaks, red oaks, chestnuts, pines, and walnuts existed to provide ready materials with which to build homes and fences, and to provide for firewood. In spite of this rather idyllic description, life was difficult and primitive for the new settlers consisting of the back-breaking work of clearing fields, erecting houses, harvesting simple crops, and dealing with the fear of possible Indian attack.

For several years the Prestons lived with the Pattons and helped them establish their log cabin home at Springhill on Chrysties Creek on the South Branch of the Shenandoah.³⁶ To sustain themselves the first few months they relied upon game such as deer, bear, elk, panther, wild cat, turkey, wolf, fox, beaver, otter, hare, and buffalo while preparing the fields for crops.

William Preston's father finally moved to his own property four years later around 1743 on land adjoining Staunton.³⁷ A group of men probably helped the family erect a simple log cabin in a few days which served as their first home.³⁸ Once settled John Preston certainly continued his work as a cabinet maker, but he also expanded his initial land holdings of 4,000 acres.³⁹ He had, for example, acquired an additional 3,131 acres of land by 1747.⁴⁰ He also, as early as 1745, was involved in land speculation with his

³⁴Ibid., 19.

³⁵Ibid., 23-4; According to Carl Bridenbaugh, Myths and Realities. Societies of the Colonial South (New York: Atheneum, 1968 edition of original copyright of 1952), 141, the Scotch-Irish just planted their crops around fallen tree stumps since they did not view themselves as permanent settlers in contrast to the Germans who planned to stay on a long term basis.

³⁶Brown, "Memoranda," 3.

³⁷Ibid., 3. According to Brown, this land was located on the north side of Staunton; however, according to Letitia Preston Floyd, LPF Letter, they settled seven miles below Staunton. On the other hand, Waddell, Annals, 57, supports a farm one mile northeast of Staunton which would agree with Brown's location.

³⁸For more information on house building, see Wilson, Tinkling Spring, 58-9 and Rhys Issac, The Transformation of Virginia. 1740-1790 (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1982), 72.

³⁹As early as 1741 Joseph Colton contracted with John Preston for , 5 of carpenter's work as seen in "Papers of the Preston Family of Virginia," L.C., 8, hereafter referred to as PP-LC.

⁴⁰On 19 and 23 April 1738 Preston had 738 acres surveyed and in 1739 he received a survey of 819 acres originally made for John Seawright. Lyman Chalkley, Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia (Baltimore: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1966 reprint of 1912 edition), 1:538; 2:375. In a 1744 plat of 10,500 acres, John Preston was listed for 1,054 acres lying on the Great or West River of the Calfpasture River plot. PP-DM, 1QQ 9. In 1747 he further increased landholdings by paying , 15 to his brother-in-law, Patton, and his wife's uncle, John Lewis, for 520 acres near the Great River of the Calfpasture. James Patton and John Lewis Deed to John Preston, 16 September 1747, Augusta County Deed Book, 1, 1745-1749, VSL, 1:274-7.

brother-in-law, James Patton. In April, 1745 the two of them, with eighteen others, received permission from the Virginia Council to survey and pay rights to 100,000 acres in Augusta County on three branches of the Mississippi River known as Woods River (later called the New River) and two others further west. The agreement for selling the land provided for sale at a rate of ,4.5 per one hundred acres with an understanding that the purchaser would settle, improve, and dwell on the land before April 15, 1748.⁴¹ But this seems to have provided little or no income because in 1769 William Preston filed for his family's twentieth portion against the Patton estate after then paying the proportionable part of survey charges, fees, and commissions.⁴²

The Prestons also began to operate an ordinary (tavern) as early as 1746.⁴³ This suggests the growing status and position for the Prestons because the colony's law regulating "ordinaries" and "tippling houses" stated that licenses would be granted only to those who could provide:

convenient lodging and diet for travellers, and pasturage, fodder, provender, and stableage for their horses, as the season shall require . . . and provide continually, all things necessary for entertainment, and have housing fitting for the same . . .⁴⁴

So William Preston grew up in a house that also served as a social center for the region because ordinaries were a key element in the social development of frontier Virginia. Travelers and local residents could meet here to socialize and conduct business.⁴⁵ William observed the social interchange, could see the land deals being made; he could hear public affairs being discussed; he could observe concerns about religion; and he could watch the importance of making good family connections through proper marriages. Already at an early age he was part of an extended family entrusted by the powers in Williamsburg with parceling out the valuable western lands and with establishing order on the frontier. All of this certainly helped shape his later ideas and attitudes.

The economic developments in the Preston family confirm Mitchell's theories on the development of the Augusta frontier. He argued that the frontier area rapidly moved from a subsistent agricultural economy to a dynamic commercial base. As Mitchell theorized,

The great majority of settlers were eager to exploit any profit-making opportunities available. In their acquisition of land for settlement, they viewed land less in

⁴¹Executive Journals, V:173; 10 October 1746, PP-DM 1QQ 57-8.

⁴²Agreement by William Thompson and John Buchanan, Patton Executors, 27 June 1769, "Preston Family Papers, Preston Davie Collection," VHS.

⁴³Augusta County Order Book, 1, 1745-1775, 129, 19 November 1746, original in Augusta County Courthouse, also on microfilm in county records at VSL, 62:129; and 21 November 1747, Chronicles of Scotch-Irish, I:33.

⁴⁴Hening, Statutes, III:395-401.

⁴⁵Isaac, Transformation, 30.

terms of a carefully nurtured garden to be transmitted intact to the next generation than as a commodity to be bought, sold, and leased in the open market.

Early in the Preston family's life in Virginia, this view of land became prevalent and even dominant during William's adult years. The continual purchase, sale, and rent of their lands became a source of income, and several moves to new lands also illustrated a lack of permanent attachment to land.

Mitchell continued,

In their daily affairs they were primarily concerned with providing the basic requirements for life and, of necessity, being as self-sufficient as possible. Yet the migration of other settlers to and through frontier areas and the need for materials that were not available locally promoted early trading. The earliest phase of development included local commercialism within the context of unspecialized general farming and a brisk land market.⁴⁶

By providing an ordinary, the Prestons also illustrated the tendency to help with the migration of settlers through Augusta on their way to the Carolinas, Kentucky, or deeper into the heart of southwestern Virginia. Naturally, trading took place at the ordinary owned by the Prestons which helped create greater commercialization as compared to a more self-sufficient approach and provided them with enough income to maintain themselves.

William probably helped his father in the ordinary as well as in such public service duties as maintaining the county road from the courthouse to Tinkling Spring, an activity that was required by law.⁴⁷ The Prestons also helped the community by entering into an agreement with the Augusta County parish to take in William Anderson, a "Bastard Child," after the mother expressed her willingness to give up her child.⁴⁸ The

⁴⁶Mitchell, *Commercialism*, 4.

⁴⁷John Preston was listed as one of several tithables to work with "overseer" William Thompson on this road. Augusta County Order Book, 1, 1745-7, 20 August 1746, VSL, 62:73. Virginians brought the English common law system of road management to the colonies which placed responsibility for the roads on the local parish or in the case of the colony, the county court. Under the English delineation, each parishioner was required to work six days per year on the roads. In Virginia, each county appointed a surveyor of the highway who had the responsibility for maintaining county or local roads. Edward G. Roberts, "The Roads of Virginia. 1607-1840" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1950), 16-27.

⁴⁸Vestry Book of Augusta Parish, 1746-1776, 17 June 1747, Augusta County Courthouse, 35. The agreement outlined careful duties on both sides: "the said William Anderson shall Honestly Faithfully and Truly serve his said Master & all his Lawful commands Either by night or Day Gladly Obey he shall not let nor suffer any Damage to be done to his said Masters Goods without giving him notice nor Frequent Ale Houses or Taverns nor Play at Cards or Dice nor at any time absent himself from his said Masters Service without leave but always as a true Honest and Faithful servant ought to do shall be diligent & serve his said Master Faithfully Honestly & Truly during the said Term . . . during the said Term & time will find him the said William Anderson his servant good and wholesome meat Drink Washing and Lodging also Linnen & Woolen Clothes fit for a servant and that he will Teach him or cause him to be Taught the Trade art and mystery of a Weaver & to Teach him or cause him to be Taught to Read Write and Cast Accounts." For more background on how parishes dealt with orphans, see Mitchell, *Commercialism*, 26.

agreement provided strict conditions for both the child and the master with Preston agreeing to ensure that the child would learn how to read and write.

In terms of public service, William's father took a more passive role than his more flamboyant brother-in-law, Patton, only occasionally appearing in the public record. However, young William Preston learned from these examples and later became an even greater participant in the public life of the community as he worked closely with his Uncle James.

Relatives later recalled that John Preston was deeply religious, handsome, energetic, and ambitious, but it was William's mother who probably had the most influence. She was described as having qualities of "masculine understanding, great ambition and impetuosity of temper. Humble fortunes which she brought on herself by marrying a ship carpenter, were powerfully resisted."⁴⁹

Religion provided a framework for these characteristics in most Scotch-Irish families. Although Patton, as was his tendency, took a more active leadership role in bringing a Presbyterian church and clergyman to their community, the Prestons provided critical financial support. Soon after the Prestons and Pattons arrived in 1738 the Reverend James Anderson, the first Presbyterian minister to preach in Augusta County, delivered a sermon in the John Lewis's home. He did not settle permanently in Augusta, but a permanent preacher, John Craig, settled in 1740 in the Triple Forks area.⁵⁰

With a growing and maturing family, the Prestons wanted a church home for their children which would provide the religious training considered essential for all Scotch-Irish Presbyterian families. John Preston joined the congregation in authorizing a group of five men, including Patton, to find a piece of property upon which to build a church.⁵¹ After much disagreement over the location of the church, the members finally settled upon Tinkling Spring in 1742 not far from where the Prestons may have lived. Evidently William's mother, Elizabeth, pledged , 16.13.10 to help finish construction of the new meeting house and eventually paid off the pledge in 1753 for , 18.17.4 with interest.⁵²

In this church William Preston attended weekly Sunday services which met for two hours in the morning and continued after lunch until sunset. He listened to sermons preached by John Craig, a man who would soon become his teacher. He may have

⁴⁹LPF Letter; Lewis Letter.

⁵⁰The Triple Forks area comprised the southern portion of Beverley Manor and was divided into two meeting houses for Craig--the Tinkling Spring and the Stone Meeting House. Wilson, Tinkling Spring, 44-9, 65, 70, 76-7.

⁵¹Ibid. The action commissioned the five "to Choose & purchase a piece of ground to build our meeting (house) upon it to Collect our ministers Sallary and to pay off all Charges Relating to (our) affairs to get pay of the people in proportion for this & to place Seats in the meeting house which we Do hereby promise to Reimburse them they always gi(ving) us a months warning."

⁵²Commissioner's Book, South Side of Triple Forks of Shenando Congregation, 1741-1767, Virginia Synod Records, UTS, VL102. A year before on 27 August 1753 Preston also paid 24 shillings on behalf of James Armstrong as the latter's proportion for building the Tinkling Spring Meeting House. PP-DU.

witnessed the baptism of his sister, Mary, and his brother, James.⁵³ He probably received the required metal token after being quizzed by the Rev. Craig on whether or not he could take Communion based on his spiritual condition.⁵⁴

In spite of their strong religious faith, many of William's Scotch-Irish neighbors were difficult people. Carl Bridenbaugh described them as

undisciplined, emotional, courageous, aggressive, pugnacious, fiercely independent, and hard-drinking, with a tendency to indolence, they nevertheless produced ambitious leaders with the virtues of the warrior and politician. As viewed by others, these were hard and unlovely qualities, effective in a new contry withal.⁵⁵

These traits even carried over into disputes between families. William's great uncle, John Lewis, and his uncle, James Patton, had the greatest disagreements with each other in Craig's new Tinkling Spring congregation. As described vividly in Craig's autobiography,

their Leaders proud Selfinterested Contentious & ungovernable all of them Closehanded about providing Necessary things for pious or Religious uses . . . their Disputes Rose So high a Difference happened between Col. John Lewis & Col. James Patton both Living in that Congregation which Continued while they Lived Which of them Should be highest in Commission & power which was hurtful to the Settlement but Especially to me; they were Jealous of my interest with the people to Such a Degree that I Could Neither Bring them to friendship with Each other Nor obtain both their friendships at once Ever after; they both had Good interest with the people of their own party; and one of them always by turns bitter Enemies to me which was very hurtfull both to my peace & Interests, then by turns Narrowly watched Every Step of my Conduct--marred my Support to the utmost of their power--use their interest with the people to Drive me from the place or Starve me out for wont of Support but to no purpose, for the people

⁵³Rev. Craig baptized Mary in 1740 and James in 1742. Taken from a list of baptism as recorded by Craig between 1740-9 in Virginia Synod Records, UTS, VL102.

⁵⁴According to family tradition, no Presbyterian meeting house existed near William Preston's "Greenfield" home in Botetourt County, so once a year he would make the sixty-five mile trip back to Tinkling Spring in order to take communion. John M. Preston, elder of the Seven Mile Ford Presbyterian Church, told this story to Wilson, Tinkling Spring, n35, 105.

⁵⁵Bridenbaugh, Myths, 133. A contrasting older view to Bridenbaugh's can be found in F. B. Kegley, Kegley's Virginia Frontier (Roanoke: The Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938), 137 where Kegley describes these settlers as "intelligent, industrious, public-spirited citizens" bringing their "former civilization, transplanted and developed in a new environment, withstood the ravages of frontier wars and flowered into the highest type of rural life produced in American history. . . . In no sense were these people crude back-woods settlers." Kegley disapproved of Paxson's description of the same people, "The participants in the movement into new lands were generally unimportant men, whose very names can be determined only after a more careful search of title deeds and recorded wills than any historian has yet made. Often only partly literate, or worse, they left no formal records of their life, and their monument in tilled fields tells nothing of their personality, except as it reveals their stubborn industry."

always entertained a Good opinion of me.⁵⁶

The differences revolved around who would have a higher or more dominant position on the Augusta County court.⁵⁷

The divisions created by this dispute forced the Prestons to take sides with either Elizabeth's brother, James Patton, or her uncle, John Lewis. The natural tendency would indicate a siding with the Pattons; however, an estrangement had also taken place between the Prestons and Pattons over a rumor about William. Many years later, Letitia Floyd reported that

a silly inquiry of a native Irish woman, "that William would get his uncle's fortune" so impressed Mrs. Patton (who was a proud, haughty lady) that no intercourse was allowed of in the two families.

For William to get his uncle's fortune would have necessitated his marriage to one of Patton's daughters. To prevent this from happening, Mrs. Patton "urged their early marriage with a kinsman of hers by the name of [William] Thompson (who was a rich man) and the youngest to Col. John Buchanan."⁵⁸

William's religious background and the toughening brought on by frontier living may have helped him cope better when his father died during the winter of 1747-8.⁵⁹ John Preston had been a positive influence on William and he left his family in "good circumstances."⁶⁰ Eventually William would inherit 3,410 acres from his father including the valuable tract of 2,675 acres known as "Robinson's Tract" on Peek's Creek, a branch of the New River.⁶¹

Now the eldest son, the nineteen year old William, was required to take a strong leadership role in the family. Fortunately his mother also provided the family with strong support. And she now oversaw the strategic marriages of her four daughters while turning the task of preparing William for adulthood over to her brother. James Patton would use William as an assistant, get him strategic entry level positions, find a tutor, and take him

⁵⁶John Craig, "The Autobiography of John Craig," typewritten copy at UTS of original made 23 July 1949 from original manuscript in Historical Foundation of the Presbyterian and Reformed Churches.

⁵⁷The multiple changes of appointments and alliances in the Augusta County court are well documented in a very provocative dissertation by Turk McCleskey, "Across the Great Divide. Frontiers of Settlement and Culture in Augusta County, Virginia. 1738-1770" (Ph.D. diss., The College of William and Mary, 1990), 207-219.

⁵⁸LPF Letter.

⁵⁹The exact date of Preston's death cannot be ascertained from the records. On February 18, 1747/8 (under the new calendar), Elizabeth Preston agreed to give an accurate inventory of his estate. Augusta County Will Book 1, VSL, 72-3. No inventory of his estate can be found in the will books as was the normal procedure.

⁶⁰Davie, "John Preston," 8.

⁶¹See Appendix E for more information. No will for John Preston has been found.

on important trips where William witnessed on a firsthand basis the effective leadership skills of his uncle.

Learner (1748-1755)

With the death of his father in 1748, nineteen-year old William Preston now faced the challenge of preparing himself for the responsibilities of adulthood. In the next seven years, he gained experience in most of the areas he would encounter the rest of his life including work as a clerk and secretary to businessmen, experience as a land owner and surveyor, participation in negotiations and skirmishes with Indians, and public service in a vestry and militia. His uncle, James Patton, became his mentor throughout this period until his tragic death in 1755. By that time William stood ready to assume a position of leadership as a member of the elite in southwest Virginia.

After William's father died, his mother sent him to visit her brother James to bring news of the hard times they now faced as a family without a breadwinner. His aunt did not even recognize her nephew, illustrating the complete estrangement between the two families, but her youngest daughter did and passed him off as a neighbor's son. William got the needed message to his uncle who shortly thereafter began to oversee his education.⁶² William became the son Patton never had. In his earlier disputes with John Lewis, Patton had seen the benefits of Lewis having two politically active sons--Andrew and Thomas--and now Patton had a "son" he could use to similar advantage.⁶³ The first evidence of their association came in February, 1748 when young William prepared a bond for his uncle using the very legible handwriting which later characterized all of his papers.⁶⁴ And Patton, a member of the Augusta County Court, certainly became more aware of the family's problems when his sister came before the court and made oath that "she was in fear of her life or of some bodily hurt to be done her or family by Robert Hill and Robert Boyd." The court ordered the two men to pledge their good behavior backed up by a ,50 bond.⁶⁵ But a more intimate relationship did not develop between Patton and his nephew until the death of his jealous wife in 1749.

By then Patton was the most powerful leader in Augusta County. He had either served or was currently holding such positions as justice of the peace, lieutenant colonel of the militia, sheriff, vestryman, land agent, fighter of and treaty negotiator with Indians,

⁶²LPF Letter.

⁶³The relationship between fathers and sons is discussed by McCleskey, "Across the Divide," 208, 216-7. In spite of these disputes, Thomas Lewis experienced no problem in working as a county surveyor for Patton's land interests. *Ibid.*, 208.

⁶⁴Bond of Hugh McDaniel to Col. James Patton, 19 February 1748, Preston Family Papers, Mss1 P9267f39, VHS. The Library of Congress microfilmed and catalogued this "f" series which has been used in this study unless originals were needed for clarity. Hereafter referred to as PP-LC.

⁶⁵19 August 1748, Augusta County Order Book, 2, 1748-1751, VSL, 62:58. On the following day, Elizabeth Preston and Sarah Cunningham brought further complaint against Robert Hill who they claimed had called Patton "a Sorry fellow and not worthy to wipe his shoes and that he had done injustice as a Magistrate." *Ibid.*, 20 August 1748.

senior member of the county court, and coroner. As he took William under his tutelage, the young man experienced on a first-hand basis all of the major themes which would later dominate his own adult life.

Patton convinced his sister to move her family to Staunton where the family would be safer and where William could earn a living for the family by serving as his uncle's assistant and keeping books for him. In addition to the income provided by William's jobs, the sisters sold needlework such as cross stitch and embroidery.⁶⁶ In 1753 Elizabeth was once again operating an ordinary in the Staunton area which provided additional income.⁶⁷ At some point in the early 1750s Patton moved in with the Prestons where he could be closer to the county seat where so much of his business took place.

The Scotch-Irish desire that their children receive an education soon became apparent when Patton arranged for his nephew to be tutored by John Craig, pastor of the Tinkling Spring congregation.⁶⁸ Because of his older age, William received a practical education in such subjects as history, mathematics, and penmanship in contrast to a strong emphasis on Latin and Greek studies offered in a normal grammar school.⁶⁹

The selection of Craig as his tutor constituted both a natural and an odd choice. Scotch-Irish Presbyterians stressed the importance of the local church establishing a school in every community with the pastor providing leadership, so it would be natural for Patton to ask Craig for help.⁷⁰ However, these men had been feuding with each other for years.⁷¹ Patton must have so respected the abilities of Craig that he gave up his pride

⁶⁶LPF Letter. From this income, Letitia Floyd maintains that a "negro woman" was purchased.

⁶⁷Elizabeth Preston Bond for Ordinary, 17 May 1753. Augusta County Ordinary Bonds, 1745-1775, from originals in Augusta Courthouse.

⁶⁸For sources on John Craig, see Lillian Kennerly Craig, Reverend John Craig, 1709-1774. His Descendants and Allied Families (New Orleans: Accurate Letter Company, 1963) and Wilson, Tinkling Spring, 64-107.

⁶⁹LPF Letter. Lawrence A. Cremin, American Education. The Colonial Experience, 1607-1783 (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1970), 500-05 and Edmund S. Morgan, Virginians at Home. Family Life in the Eighteenth Century (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1952, 8th printing in 1987), 10.

⁷⁰James Leyburn highlights the Scotch-Irish desire that their children be educated in The Scotch-Irish. A Social History (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 319-321. According to Leyburn, "Wherever the Scotch-Irish went, schools were almost certain to follow churches among the first institutions to be formed." This meant that if a Scotch-Irish community "had a minister, it also had a school for its children." In the case of Preston, he did not attend a formal school but received private tutoring from his pastor.

⁷¹Craig, "Autobiography," 29-30, 33. Craig recounts two incidents which illustrate the pettiness of Patton towards him. On a Sunday just before worship started Patton had a constable pick him up for questioning at another location. When he arrived, he was asked questions about a runaway servant about whom he had never heard. Craig commented that Patton's purpose was "to terrify and affront me, and provoke me to speak something in passion whereof he might accuse me and drive me from my charge and all this because I would not become his creature to serve his interest." On another occasion, Patton had him arrested at the time his wife was within five weeks of delivering their first child. His wife became terrified but Craig had no choice but to go the fourteen miles to Patton's place. After asking some "trifling questions," Craig returned to his pregnant wife, but for the remainder of the pregnancy, she remained "in very low condition . . . during which time almost every night and sometimes for the most part of the night I had to sit and hold her arms, often not knowing whether she was living or dead."

to ask for help in educating William.

For the rest of William's life, education became a key ingredient in his own success and that of his children and relatives. As good Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, William's family probably stressed the importance of reading the Bible, but Craig instilled in his teenage pupil a lifelong interest in books and learning. Craig himself was highly educated for the time. He had received a liberal education in Ireland and ultimately graduated with a Master of Arts from the University of Edinburgh in Scotland in 1733.

In 1734 Craig moved to Pennsylvania where he taught school while preparing himself for the Presbyterian ministry and in 1738 became the pastor of the Tinkling Spring Meeting House located in the south part of Beverley Manor where the Pattons and Prestons lived. He held this post for thirty-six years. Clearly he transmitted his love of learning and his educational values to William Preston. It is possible to teach a young person the technical skills of reading and writing, termed as "inert literacy" by one historian. But Craig went beyond simple mechanics to transmit a "liberating literacy, in which a growing technical competence is combined with expanding motivation, expanding need, and expanding opportunity."⁷² Craig believed in the importance of diligence, persistence, care, patience, fearlessness, frugality, and humbleness--traits that were to become clearly observable in William Preston.⁷³ Craig also provided the young man with the practical skills so necessary for advancement in the frontier society--clear writing, logical thought, and an appreciation of the wider world.⁷⁴

Throughout this period, Preston worked as his uncle's assistant which meant serving as a witness and secretary to many of his many business transactions, traveling

⁷²Cremin, American Education. Colonial, 548-9. Cremin's description applies very aptly to Preston who became literate not only due to technical ability but in "interaction with a literary environment." Cremin asserts that this kind of education could more likely be found in a formal school as compared to what one learned at home or in the church, although he admits some individuals transcended their local limitations. Clearly Preston represented one of those exceptions who achieved a "liberating literacy" from Craig.

⁷³Presbyterian church historian Howard McKnight Wilson described Craig as "a strong minded, though humble-spirited, man who moved about his daily task with a sense of divine mission. His sense of the sinfulness and unworthiness of the natural man was deep-seated dating back to his childhood. . . . As a pastor he was diligent and persistent, going from settlement to settlement baptizing children and from house to house visiting the sick. . . . Craig was a man of earnest prayer and quiet patience laboring with constancy through the pioneer days of privation and loneliness under wilderness conditions that few ministers had the courage to face. He was an unusually humble man, living frugally in the wilderness, and giving evidence of fortitude, faithfulness and fearlessness that reminds one of John the Baptist." Wilson, Tinkling Spring, 97-8.

⁷⁴William Preston's grandson, Thomas L. Preston, the son of Francis, claimed in Historical Sketches and Reminiscences of an Octogenarian (Richmond: B. F. Johnson Publishing Co., 1900), 114 that after his training with Craig, "such was William Preston's piety, that the family thought of dedicating him to the ministry, but Mr. Craig decided that he was too old to begin the studies thought necessary for so learned and responsible a vocation. At that time (as always) 'life was real, and the youths of the frontier had to be up and doing.'" Nineteenth century Presbyterian scholar, Robert Davidson, in History of the Presbyterian Church in the State of Kentucky (New York: Robert Carter, 1847), 24, described Craig after studying his one extant sermon as "a strong-minded, diligent, and persevering minister, strictly orthodox, and yet pungent in the application of the truth to the conscience . . . The sermon follows the exhaustive method . . . The style is plain, unadorned, and strenuous, and it is a manly testimony to Calvinism."

with him to important meetings, and keeping accounts.⁷⁵ Patton was a demanding employer who gave detailed instructions and expected them to be carried out efficiently.⁷⁶ Through his uncle, Preston gained important experiences as a vestryman and leader of the local militia and an understanding of land dealings and Indian affairs. By the time of Patton's death in 1755 he was prepared for the future.

The first public office Preston held was as a member of the vestry in Augusta County. Patton was influential in getting him elected to this post in August of 1750. The elite handpicked those who received public office in Virginia, placing themselves in a position of perpetuating their values and authority throughout a county. Patton, as a key leader of the elite in Augusta County, selected his young twenty-one year old nephew as the next generation to whom he would pass on his power and positions.⁷⁷ The vestry, especially on the frontier, could serve as an initiation into politics. As the governing body for the Anglican parish this self-perpetuating twelve man group functioned largely as a social and moral agency.⁷⁸ In addition to finding new ministers for the established Church of England and watching after the physical upkeep of the church, the vestry also took on responsibility for looking after the poor, seeing that orphan children had homes, caring for children born to single mothers, reimbursing those who cared for the old and sick, processioning property lines through surveyors, and presenting certain moral cases before the county court.⁷⁹ Although the law provided that those appointed to public office, including vestrymen, had to be members of the established church, in Augusta

⁷⁵Many examples of Preston's work for Patton could be cited but only a few are cited as examples. Preston witnessed many bonds made by Patton including a note on 8 December 1752 from George Stimson to Patton, PP-LC, 86. Numerous bonds can be found for 1753-4 in PP-LC, 113-122. On 20 March 1755 Preston can be found collecting money for James Patton from James Pollock, PP-LC, 150.

⁷⁶On one occasion Patton wrote Preston: "tomorrow at night I expect you here without excuse" for a trip they would take together. He then listed numerous items he wanted brought along for the trip. James Patton to William Preston, 3 December 1753, PP-LC, 112. On another occasion, he asked William to bring blank forms of bonds and bills, clothing, and a large sum of money which was apparently to be used to pay off some debts so his children could get their plantations. 13 September 1753, PP-LC, 103.

⁷⁷The elite might be defined as those who controlled the political and economic life of a county through significant personal land ownership, domination of land sales and grants, and control to public offices which dictated their own replacements or appointments to lower positions. McCleskey argues that the Augusta County elite managed access to real estate and positions of authority as carefully as their counterparts in the Tidewater. McCleskey, "Across the Divide," 87.

⁷⁸Mitchell, Commercialism, n.65, 47, writes, "In Augusta County although the parish framework existed and an Anglican church was built in 1762, the influence of the church was weak. Nonconformists only joined the church on a nominal basis when they were interested in holding local political office. Despite continual complaints levies were usually about the same level as general taxes and could be easily avoided. The money that was collected was used mainly for local social welfare programs rather than for the specific use of the church."

⁷⁹Richard L. Morton, Colonial Virginia (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1960), II:466 and Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and Thad W. Tate, Colonial Virginia. A History (White Plains: KTO Press, 1986), 65, hereafter referred to as Colonial Virginia with the author of the section being quoted listed as the author.

County where Scotch-Irish Presbyterians dominated all public life, the governor chose to ignore the fact that eight of the twelve vestrymen elected in 1746 were Presbyterians.⁸⁰

Patton was a member of the Augusta County vestry and his nephew was now elected as clerk of that body replacing John Madison, one of only four Anglicans on the vestry.⁸¹ One of Patton's motivations in procuring this election for his nephew may have been an earlier dispute with Madison in 1748 over Madison's election as a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses from Augusta County. Patton petitioned the House complaining of an "undue election" on the basis that individuals who were not freeholders had voted. After conducting an investigation, the Committee of Privileges and Elections concluded that Madison had actually received the vote of the largest number of freeholders.⁸² Perhaps in the election of his young nephew, Patton was attempting to show Madison that he still possessed political muscle in Augusta County in spite of his recent loss.

William now began the tedious process of rewriting all of Madison's old records into a new vestry book.⁸³ For the next twelve years Preston served as clerk of the Augusta vestry earning at least ,5 per year. More importantly, it gave him experience in local government and provided him with the political and social connections that would help him achieve even higher offices in upcoming years.⁸⁴

Land speculation was one of the ways eighteenth century Virginians invested capital and gained wealth and status.⁸⁵ Preston had numerous role models--William

⁸⁰John Logan Anderson, "The Presbyterians and Augusta Parish, 1738-1757: A Political and Social Analysis" (M.A. Thesis, University of Virginia, 1985), 19-20. Anderson's thesis analyzes the Augusta County Vestry Book. Not all citizens accepted the Presbyterian domination of the Anglican vestry. On 30 November 1748 the House of Burgesses rejected a petition from local Anglican residents appealing for the removal of dissenters as vestrymen. H. R. McIlwaine, ed., Journals of the House of Burgesses of Virginia, 1742-1747, 1748-1749 (Richmond: Virginia State Library, MCMIX), 310, hereafter referred to as JHB. McCleskey argues that even though Presbyterians outnumbered Anglicans in the thirty meetings held by the Augusta vestry between 1747 and 1769, they never tried to "exploit" this advantage. "Across the Divide," 187 and Table 16.

⁸¹Preston's election in 1750 came shortly after he finished his education with Craig. Since a majority of the vestry also came from Craig's Tinkling Spring Presbyterian Church, both Craig and Patton may have pushed for the election of the young twenty-one year old.

⁸²On 31 October 1748 Patton brought his original complaint to the House of Burgesses which was then referred to the Committee of Privileges and Elections. On 1 November 1748 the committee ruled that both Madison and Patton would present a list of individuals whose freeholds were being challenged. On 14 December 1748 the committee concluded that Madison "had a greater number of legal freeholders, who voted for him at the election." This dispute did not prevent Madison and Patton from becoming good friends in later years. JHB, 1742-1747, 1748-1749, 261, 264, 323.

⁸³June 1747, Augusta Vestry Book, Augusta County Courthouse, 32-3.

⁸⁴22 November 1752, ibid., 110. The Augusta Vestry Book reveals very little about Preston's specific role during this long period of service as clerk. One duty he undertook for the vestry was taking in a "bastard child" for the vestry in 1752 just as his father had done during William's childhood. In the indenture, William agreed to care for the child until he became twenty-one years of age. 22 August 1752, ibid., 104.

⁸⁵On how colonists viewed land, see Chapter 4. In an excellent book dealing with the history of land dealings and surveying in colonial Virginia, Sarah S. Hughes, Surveyors and Statesmen. Land Measuring in Colonial

Beverley, Thomas Lewis, and most importantly, his own uncle, who possessed enormous influence and power due to their land dealings. As early as March, 1749, probably at the encouragement of Patton, he acquired two parcels of land, totalling 699 acres, from William Beverley in Beverley Manor and before the end of that year he owned 1,219 acres.⁸⁶ Illustrating the ability to make money on land purchases, Preston sold his first 334 acre parcel two years later for \$60, a profit of nearly 600%.⁸⁷ At a time when only one out of three white tithables owned land, Preston's ownership status placed him in an elite group of only nine individuals in Augusta County owning more than 1,000 acres--all this at twenty years of age. The death of his father when William was young benefited him by freeing him to become economically independent when most sons remained dependent upon their fathers well into adulthood.⁸⁸

Becoming a surveyor was another way to gain wealth, power, and status on the frontier. Patton encouraged his nephew to learn this profession because, among other things, it provided knowledge of good land, and landholdings were crucial to gaining political power in Augusta County. But more importantly, Patton needed immediate help in getting surveys completed of lands he had been granted in the New River area. In the process of becoming a surveyor, Preston ended up breaking the law to help his uncle. It is not known who gave William his training, but he probably served an apprenticeship in 1749 or 1750 under his older second cousin, Thomas Lewis, the surveyor for Augusta County.⁸⁹ The mathematical skills he learned from his pastor and teacher, John Craig,

Virginia (The Virginia Surveyors Foundation, Ltd., and The Virginia Association of Surveyors, Inc., 1979), 72, writes, "Those men fortunate enough to become principal surveyors in counties on the edge of settlement could command, and expected, handsome rewards in wealth, political power, and social status. Surveying, like the law, was one of the respectable ladders to the top of Virginia's eighteenth-century society."

⁸⁶Indenture by William Beverley to William Preston with James Patton serving as a witness, 2 March 1749, PP-LC, 2:40 and Augusta County Deed Book 2, 1748-1750, VSL, 2:679-685. Preston purchased a 334 acre parcel for \$10.4 and a 365 acre parcel for \$9.2.1. However, Sheriff Robert Montgomery signed a receipt for Preston in 1749 for quit rents on 1,219 acres and in 1750 for 885 acres in PP-LC, 2:56. These figures illustrate the difficulties of determining all land purchases, surveys, and sales for a particular individual. We can only find records for the purchase of a total of 699 acres.

⁸⁷Alexander Wright purchases land from Preston on 31 May 1751, Augusta County Deed Book 3, 1750-1751, VSL, 3:382-6.

⁸⁸Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects. Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," VMHB, 98 (July 1990): 452-4, 459 and McCleskey, "Across the Divide," 52-5.

⁸⁹Thomas Preston in Reminiscences, 114, states that young Preston learned surveying under Craig, his teacher. I can find no evidence that Craig possessed any surveying skills. Sarah Hughes in Surveyors, 64, notes that "surveying was not a full-time occupation entered after long specialized training. It was a skill, like the law, which an educated man could pick up through reading or brief apprenticeship." In light of his family ties to his second cousin, Thomas Lewis, it is more likely that this apprenticeship came under him. John Lewis, the father of Thomas and Andrew (later a well-known frontier soldier), migrated to Augusta County around the same time as the John Preston family. Thomas Lewis was eleven years older than William Preston. John Lewis served as William Beverley's agent when Beverley Manor began to be developed in 1738. In 1745 when Augusta County was formed, Thomas at twenty-six years of age became the head surveyor, a position he held for thirty years. Hughes, ibid., 89.

enabled him to master the common instruments of surveying used on the frontier--the compass (called a circumferentor) and chain. But the best way to learn how to survey came from going into the field with an experienced surveyor and conducting actual surveys with someone like his second cousin.⁹⁰

In 1751, sixteen months before he received his license to survey from William and Mary College as required by law, Preston began illegally surveying for Patton's Woods River Company, but no one seems to have noticed.⁹¹ The lands he surveyed for the Woods River Company came from a 1745 grant Patton received along with nineteen other colonists including William's father, John. This Company was granted 100,000 acres on three branches of the Mississippi River including Woods River (later known as New River), Indian River (later known as Holston), and Clinch River in southwestern Virginia. With settlers squatting on the lands, with Tidewater speculators taking aggressive moves, and with other groups such as the Ohio and Loyal Companies encroaching on their claims, Patton must have decided he could not wait until his nephew got proper clearance.

Preston was not the only surveyor of Patton's to survey without a license during this period, but he was never caught. Thirty years later John Buchanan, his uncle's major surveyor, became the focus of a major investigation. Before Preston's illegal surveys, Buchanan also surveyed without a license.⁹² The issue in 1781 focused on the legality of the surveys done by Buchanan before he received his commission. Preston kept his mouth shut when Thomas Lewis wrote to him admitting that he had allowed Buchanan to survey with only a bond for his performance but without the required license at the "pressing instance of Col. Patton a circumstance that my giving way to have given me many time much uneasiness."⁹³ During this dispute, Edmund Pendleton, Patton's attorney in his land disputes in the early 1750's, also wrote Preston expressing his disbelief that gentlemen "of fair character and in so open and public a transaction would contravene a plain law to answer no purpose that I can discover." They must have "known the impropriety of such a conduct." Instead he wondered if perhaps the commission had been

⁹⁰Preston was probably never given a test before he received approval to serve as a Deputy Surveyor in Augusta County. Virginia did not require an examination of the skills of its surveyors or assistants but left this determination largely up to the recommendation of the local county court. The county court generally let a surveyor have as many assistants as he needed. On a theoretical level, William and Mary College bore responsibility for authorizing these positions, however, in actual practice such approvals were left up to the local level. The College's main concern centered around receiving the fees due them for surveys as a means of financial support. *Ibid.*, 96-8.

⁹¹At virtually the same time, Lord Fairfax received a reprimand from Governor Dinwiddie in 1752 for not having his surveyors properly commissioned by William and Mary College. As noted by Douglas S. Freeman, *George Washington* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1948), 1:259, "Indeed, Fairfax had employed surveyors for his domain precisely as he hired men for other work, and apparently he had not troubled himself to ascertain whether they had qualified before the college."

⁹²Edmund Pendleton to WP, 1 November 1781, David J. Mays, ed., *The Letters and Papers of Edmund Pendleton* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1967), I:374-6, hereafter referred to as *Pendleton Papers* and PP-DM, 5QQ 99. The controversy over Buchanan's surveys is outlined by Johnson, *Patton*, 75-6; however, Preston's illegal involvement has not been noted by other historians.

⁹³Thomas Lewis to William Preston, 1 August 1781, PP-DM, 5QQ 97.

lost and that if Buchanan had been alive he could have produced evidence that he really did have his commission.⁹⁴

During eight weeks between March and May of 1751, Preston illegally surveyed forty-two pieces of property, all but six of them on behalf of "Col. Patton & Company." Most of this work focused on lands already occupied by settlers centered around Patton's New River grant. The work must have been intensive because during one seventeen day period, he surveyed twenty separate pieces of property.⁹⁵

After this two month period, no record exists of any more land-related work until November 6, 1752 when Preston officially became assistant surveyor under Lewis in Augusta County. He posted bond, took the oath of office, and for the next seventeen years held this position.⁹⁶ Later on in Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties he would be head surveyor and all told he would perform the functions of surveyor for thirty years--a task he performed well and honestly in spite of a rather questionable beginning.

Within a month after receiving his commission, Preston began an intensive schedule of surveying over the next two years before Patton's death. In December alone he surveyed twenty-five sites around the James and Roanoke Rivers and Catawba Creek (a branch of the James) with an average size of ninety-nine acres. He carried out a similar pace in 1753 with ninety-eight surveys and in 1754 with seventy-one surveys. In addition, he listed another fifty surveys containing 5,200 acres for the same period without any specific dates.⁹⁷

Even for a young assistant surveyor like Preston, all of this work produced a substantial income. The surveyor's charges found in William's account book for this period show close to an average of ,3 in fees for each survey.⁹⁸ Of course, as an assistant surveyor he probably only kept between 8 and 10 shillings per survey with the rest going to the head surveyor and to the College for their one-sixth fee.⁹⁹ However, even at this lower amount Preston in 1753 could have earned a minimum of ,49 just from the surveys listed in one of his survey books with more coming from other surveys and with much more resulting from other land deals in which he was engaged. In 1755 Thomas

⁹⁴Edmund Pendleton to William Preston, 1 November 1781, Pendleton Papers, I:374-5 and PP-DM, 5QQ 99.

⁹⁵"Survey Book by William Preston, 1751, 1767," PP-LC, 67. The law required that surveyors enter their work in a "book well bound." Hening, Statutes, 6:35.

⁹⁶Preston bond as deputy surveyor of Augusta County, 6 November 1752, Executive Papers, 1745-1776, Augusta County Courthouse; 20 November 1752 in Augusta County Order Book 3, 1749-53, VSL, 62:403, and Augusta County Will Book 1, 1745-53, VSL, 41:470. The first official listing of Preston as Assistant Surveyor in Augusta County appears in the county surveyor's records on 3 March 1753, Augusta County Surveyors Records 1, 1744-61, VSL, 107:62.

⁹⁷"James Patton and William Preston Survey Book," copy made of original in possession of Wytheville Community College located at VHS, Mss5:5 P2785:1. In addition, the Augusta County Surveyors Record, 1, 1744-1761, VSL, Reel 107 has many surveys by William Preston as Assistant Surveyor. Other surveys for this period can be found in PP-LC, 89, 89A, 99.

⁹⁸"William Preston's Account Book of Lands Sold and Bonds Received, 1752," PP-LC, 87.

⁹⁹Hughes, Surveyors, 158, cites this figure as the average earned by assistants in Augusta County.

Lewis paid Preston ,73.4 for 183 surveys.¹⁰⁰ In addition he earned ,5 per year as clerk of the Augusta vestry. No record exists on how much his uncle paid him as his assistant. Of course, much of this money was owed him since many colonists were not able to pay their bills when charged. However, for such a young man his income level placed him in a comfortable category compared to most Virginians.¹⁰¹ The hard cash he earned from his surveys also gave him a great advantage in a colony largely based on credit.¹⁰²

Preston's work as an assistant surveyor also provided him with knowledge of choice lands that he could acquire.¹⁰³ By 1754 he either surveyed, entered, or purchased twelve pieces of property for himself amounting to 4,602 acres.¹⁰⁴ This does not mean he actually ended up purchasing all of these lands, but it illustrates the beginnings of a large fortune in land which Preston would build during his lifetime.¹⁰⁵ By the time of his uncle's death in 1755, Preston stood in a position to earn an independent livelihood from fees earned as a surveyor and from his ability to buy and sell his lands for a profit.

Although we do not know the name of the young lady involved, we have the first inkling of a romance taking place on one of his survey trips. Preston wrote in his survey book, "Wednesday 10th July 1754 then, then, then, away, away, away, wealth to the inexpressible pleasure of William Preston a former devotee _____ who bowed to the Shrine of Venus." Seven days later he noted, "high spirits."¹⁰⁶ Obviously he had found some pleasure amidst the rigors of surveying lands in frontier Virginia.

The relationship between the frontier settlers and Indians would dominate

¹⁰⁰PP-LC, 359.

¹⁰¹In 1754 Preston earned 355 pounds of tobacco as signed by John Madison for a variety of activities including the recording of land, and filings of papers and petitions. PP-DU.

¹⁰²Hughes, *Surveyors*, 158 argues that the income of surveyors "ranked them among the colony's occupational elite. Skilled carpenters earned about ,10 per year . . . Even the eastern surveyor, whose fees brought perhaps only ,15 to ,30 annually, had a cash income from part-time employment greater than that of 40 percent of tobacco farmers."

¹⁰³Hughes writes, "land speculation was practically built into the definition of the role of surveyor that evolved in the seventeenth century." In the eighteenth century, we find a similar role. *Ibid.*, 64.

¹⁰⁴Preston purchased 277 acres from James and Agnes Brown on 17 November 1752, PP-LC, 84 and Augusta County Deed Book 5, 1752-4, VSL, 4:31-4. For actual indenture, see 16 November 1752. PP-DU. Apparently Preston improved these lands during the following year because on 22 November 1753 he asked the county court to order Silas Hart, John Malome, John Trimble, and Henry Smith to value the improvements he had made to this property in Augusta County Order Book 4, 1753-5, VSL, 63:73. The other land purchases can be found in Augusta County Surveyors Record 1, 1744-61, VSL, 107:87; Augusta County Will Book 2, 1753-60, VSL, 42:46; Augusta County Deed Book 6, 1754-1755, VSL, 6:476-9, and PP-LC, 140.

¹⁰⁵Frequently delays in actually filing for a land patent from Williamsburg after the survey took place was to avoid having to pay quitrents on the property. Getting the survey done earlier helped ensure that no one else could have the same land surveyed. In 1754 Preston went to his sister Letitia for a loan of ,32. Although the reason for the loan is not indicated on the bond, it seems probable that he may have been short of cash for some of his land deals. 27 September 1754, PP-LC, 138.

¹⁰⁶"Patton-Preston Survey Book," VHS, Mss5:5 P2785:1.

Preston's entire adult life. During Preston's childhood, the Indians represented a relatively minor irritant, but in his teens and as a young adult the problems became more severe.¹⁰⁷

Native Virginia Indians were virtually extinct by the 1750s but groups from both the south and the north regularly passed through the Shenandoah Valley and Virginians, like most English Americans, viewed them as a "barbaric impediment to settlement to be avoided or destroyed as the situation warranted."¹⁰⁸ But despite the virtual absence of resident native Americans in Augusta County, Indian relations came to dominate the psyche of the region. Growing demands for land in Ohio by colonists in Virginia, including residents of Augusta County such as James Patton, conflicted with areas in which Indians already lived and hunted, leading to major disputes. Indians wanting traditional passage rights through the Shenandoah Valley came into conflict with colonial efforts to move their trails further west. Additionally the lands in the Valley had served for decades as the hunting grounds for Indians but with the rapid settlement by whites, conflicts developed. A further problem developed when northern and southern Indians who were engaged in wars against each other would pass through Augusta County and would demand and take food without permission.¹⁰⁹ On the other hand, whites also attacked the Indians without provocation in some instances leading to retaliation on both sides. Beginning in the early 1750's, attempts by both the English and French to solicit Indian allies in their fight with each other led to Indian attacks on settlers and colonial attacks against tribes friendly to the French. A further factor may have been the natural

¹⁰⁷No published history of Indians in colonial Virginia exists. Walter Stitt Robinson's dissertation, "Indian Policy of Colonial Virginia" (Ph.D. diss., University of Virginia, 1950) comes the closest. While not focused strictly on Virginia, Bruce G. Trigger, ed., Handbook of North American Indians. Northeast, 15 (Washington: Smithsonian Institution, 1978), provides further insight through chapters with such titles as "Nanticoke and Neighboring Tribes," "Virginia Algonquians," and "Iroquoian Tribes of the Virginia-North Carolina Coastal Plain." Some of the new books approaching Indians from an ethno-historical perspective offer new perspectives on the Indian wars against the frontiersmen and other tribes in books such as Francis Jennings, Empire of Fortune (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1988) and Francis Jennings, ed., The History and Culture of Iroquois Diplomacy. An Interdisciplinary Guide to the Treaties of the Six Nations and Their League (Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 1985).

¹⁰⁸Warren M. Billings, John E. Selby, and That W. Tate, Colonial Virginia. A History (White Plains: KTO Press, 1986), 43-4. Each of these authors wrote a separate section of this book which will hereafter list the author of the section being quoted and the title as Colonial Virginia. Except for a group of Shawnees who lived near Winchester, the entire Shenandoah Valley remained entirely uninhabited by Indians during the eighteenth century. Joseph A. Waddell, Annals of Augusta County, Virginia (Bridgewater, Virginia: C. J. Carrier Company, 1958 reprint of 1901 edition), 17. In actual fact, very few Indians lived anywhere in Virginia during the eighteenth century. The seventeenth century had seen most of Virginia's Indians, called tributaries, being placed on reservations. By the 1730's, the Nottoways lived on two tracts of land and the Nasemonds were so small that they lived with the Nottoways and requested permission to sell their lands in 1744. Robinson, "Indian Policy," 203-4.

¹⁰⁹Craig, "Autobiography," 26 described "numbers of heathen traveling among us, but generally civil tho some people were murdered by them about that time. They march in small companies from twenty to fifty sometimes more or less. They must be supply'd at any house they call at with victuals or they become their own stuarts and cooks spairing nothing they chuse to eat or drink in the house and carries with them bread and meat as they please which was troublesome expensive & sometimes dangerous for they go all arm'd for war in their way."

proclivity of the Scotch-Irish who dominated Augusta County to view anyone resisting their attempts at settlement in harsh terms.¹¹⁰ In brief the problem that frontier Virginians had with Indians was part of a larger conflict.

Four years after the Prestons arrived in Augusta County the first formal fight between Indians and the county militia occurred in December, 1742 when a clash took place with a group of Northern Indians, the Onondagas and Oneidas, traveling to attack the Siouan Catawbas in the Carolinas. This battle at Balcony Falls resulted in the death of eight Indians and eleven whites.¹¹¹ Negotiations began and resulted in the Treaty of Lancaster with the Six Nations (dominated by the Iroquois). In this treaty, the Indians in exchange for ,400 relinquished claims to all of Virginia's chartered lands not realizing that the colony claimed sea-to-sea boundaries including Ohio.¹¹² However, the Indians also achieved several important gains including the right to travel through Virginia on the "Virginia Road," the gain of a new ally in the British, and added prestige with their tributaries. As pointed out by historian Richard Morton,

this little nation of not over fifteen thousand people held the balance of power for several years between the great empires of France and England in America and helped shape the course of history in that crucial period.¹¹³

During the next few years as Preston grew up, relative peace existed between the Indians and colonists in Augusta County. However, to most Augusta County residents the threat of Indian attack was always possible and it was in this period that Thomas Lee, commissioner of the Lancaster treaty who became president of the Virginia Council, saw an opportunity to make a major land purchase involving western territory ceded by the Indians. He organized the Ohio Company with several prominent Virginians and received in 1748 a grant of 200,000 acres on the Ohio River between the Monongahela and Great Kanawha Rivers. Three years later the company reorganized and added Governor Robert

¹¹⁰As noted by Leyburn, *Scotch-Irish*, 147-8, "Experience in Ulster in several ways prepared the character of the people for the life they were about to begin on the American frontier. They lived on land in both regions that had often been forcibly taken from the natives. The confiscation itself was declared legal by the authorities and the actual settlement was made by Scots in the conviction, no doubt, that the land was now rightfully theirs. When the natives, whether Irish or Indian, refused to accept either the legality or the settlement, preferring rather to fight back by whatever means they could devise, the settlers fought equally hard to retain the homes and farms they had made by their own labor. They learned from hard experience that one must fight for what he has; that turning the other cheek does not guarantee property rights; in short, that might makes right, at least in the matter of life and land ownership. The streak of cruelty already noted as part of Lowland Scots character was, if anything, intensified by the conditions of daily life cheek by jowl with enemies. A man must be hard as well as ingenious to survive and to keep his own in an iron age."

¹¹¹James Patton to Governor Gooch, 18 December 1742, *VMHB*, 30 (1922):303 and James Patton to Governor Gooch, 23 December 1742, PP-LC, 12. For a detailed account of the Balcony Falls incident, see Johnson, *Patton*, 37-45; Robinson, "Indian Policy," 227-8, and Craig, "Autobiography," 26.

¹¹²Francis Jennings, "Iroquois Alliances in American History," Jennings, ed. *Iroquois Diplomacy*, 46; Jennings, *Empire of Fortune*, 10.

¹¹³Morton, *Colonial Virginia*, II:534.

Dinwiddie as a member along with such future leaders as George Mason and George Washington.¹¹⁴ Because the Iroquois complained that they had not understood what they had signed away at Lancaster and blamed their interpreter for misleading them, calls for a new treaty began to arise. The French now began to agitate the western Indians to strike against English settlements in the Ohio and also encouraged the Six Nations to fight the southern Catawbas.¹¹⁵

Up to this point, Preston had only been an observer to these events with the Indians, but in 1752 he began gaining direct experience as Patton's secretary and clerk at the Treaty of Logstown (north of modern day Pittsburgh). Commissioners appointed by Virginia to negotiate a new treaty with the Indians included James Patton, Joshua Fry, and Lunsford Lomax. The Six Nations were represented by several Indian chiefs from different tribes.¹¹⁶ While none of Preston's observations about the event have been found, it is known that he signed the treaty as a witness which means he probably accompanied Patton to the negotiations. In this process, he witnessed the elaborate formalities observed in such treaty conferences as the whites and Indians exchanged strings of wampum accompanied by formal speeches with each exchange. After intricate behind-the-scenes negotiations, the Virginians won everything they sought. On June 13 the Six Nations agreed to "signify our consent and confirmation" of the Lancaster treaty in a "full & ample a manner." In addition they consented to allow colonists to settle on Virginia's claims in Ohio and that "the said settlement or settlements shall be unmolested by us, and that we will, so far as in our power, assist and protect the British subjects there inhabiting." In addition, the Indians allowed the Ohio Company to build a fort at the point where the Monongahela and Allegheny Rivers join to make the Ohio River. The colonists could not have expected more, but the treaty was soon violated.¹¹⁷

In this context, the French began to stir up the Indians again to fight the English by playing off tribes against each other and then encouraging attacks against settlers

¹¹⁴Robert Dinwiddie, a Scotsman, spent most of his life in the colonies. He became a very rich businessman in Bermuda before beginning service in 1738 as "Surveyor General of the Southern part of the Continent of North America." As part of this job, he moved his family to Virginia around 1741 where he eventually became a member of the Virginia Council in 1745. In 1751 he became Lieutenant Governor of Virginia but in effect functioned as the Governor. The Earl of Albemarle carried the official title as a sinecure from the King. This paper will use the title "Governor" to refer to Dinwiddie since the colonists used that title. Dinwiddie eventually returned to his homeland in 1758. For biographical treatments see John Richard Alden, Robert Dinwiddie, Servant of the Crown (Williamsburg: The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation, 1973) and Louis K. Koontz, Robert Dinwiddie (Glendale: The Arthur H. Clark Company, 1941).

¹¹⁵Robinson, "Indian Policy," 230-1.

¹¹⁶The Iroquois consisted of five tribes--Cayugas, Mohawks, Oneidas, Onondagas, and Senecas--making up the Five Nations of New York. When joined later by the Tuscaroras, they were called the Six Nations. Waddell, Annals, 96.

¹¹⁷The instructions, journal of the commissioners, minutes, and actual treaty can be found in "The Treaty of Logg's Town, 1752," VMHB, XIII (1906):143-174. For a traditional account of the treaty, see Robinson, "Indian Policy," 231-3; Johnson, Preston, 13-4, and Johnson, Patton, 123-150. For another interpretation from an Indian perspective which outlines in detail the backroom dealings and double crossing, see Jennings, ed., "Iroquois Alliances," from Jennings, ed. Iroquois Diplomacy, 48-50 and Jennings, Empire of Fortune, 21-45.

moving into the Ohio area from Virginia.¹¹⁸ These attacks impacted on Augusta County as bands of Indians traveled through the territory. In some cases the Indians were unfairly attacked without provocation but in other instances, they burned colonial houses and stables for no apparent reason.¹¹⁹ Beginning in 1754, the colonial government began stepping up the involvement of the Augusta militia in defending the frontier.¹²⁰ Governor Dinwiddie in early 1754 asked Patton in Augusta County and Lord Fairfax in Frederick County to draft fifty men each to go along with a total of two hundred militiamen under the command of George Washington. These soldiers were to help with the building of the fort on the Monongahela and to guard against the French efforts to occupy the area first.¹²¹ Both drafting efforts completely failed. Instead in February Dinwiddie decided to recruit three hundred volunteers and as an encouragement set aside 200,000 acres of land east of the Ohio River to be given to those who enlisted in the military for service at the new fort. As a further incentive, no quit rents would be charged for fifteen years on the lands the soldiers would receive in proportion for their service.¹²² In April Washington finally headed out with a band of 120 motley volunteers "without tents, without clothes, in short without any conveniences to shelter them (in that remarkably cold and wet season)."¹²³

As Washington finally marched toward the Monongahela, he received news that the French had already seized the site of the fort. He now hoped to defeat the French and retake the fort. In May he defeated a small French force near Great Meadows. By now the French had built Fort DuQuesne where the English had wanted their fort to be located. After hoping to attack the French at their new fort, Washington moved back

¹¹⁸Waddell in Annals, 96, explains the confusing alliances taking place at this time: "It is generally supposed that the French were specially skillful in gaining the friendship of the Indians and it may have been so to a considerable extent; but there is another reason why the Shawnees, Delawares and other Algonquin tribes, became their efficient partisans. Champlain and other early French settlers in Canada, to ingratiate themselves with the Indians of that region, assisted them in their wars with the Iroquois, or Five Nations of New York, and thus gained their lasting friendship, while the English secured the Iroquois as allies. The Shawnees, Delawares and others were congeners of the Canada Indians. The Iroquois waged incessant and exterminating war with all other tribes."

¹¹⁹In one case Erwin Patterson tried to stir up the Indians by accusing Sam Stalnaker of charging Cherokee Emperor Ammoscossity too much for corn, a charge denied by the Emperor. Another case involved charges against John Connolly who supposedly "beat, bled, and abused" the Emperor "in a very gross manner contrary to the peace." See January 1753, PP-DM, 1QQ 70-3.

¹²⁰Freeman, Washington, I:327-445 contains a detailed account of George Washington's involvement in the events leading up to the loss of Fort Necessity.

¹²¹Governor Dinwiddie to James Patton, January 1754, R. A. Brock, ed., The Official Records of Robert Dinwiddie, (New York: AMS Press, 1971 reprint of 1883 edition by Virginia Historical Society), I:50-1, hereafter referred to as Dinwiddie Papers.

¹²²Hening, Statutes, 7:661-2.

¹²³Washington to Loudoun, [January 1757], John C. Fitzpatrick, ed., The Writings of George Washington from the Original Manuscript Sources (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1931), 2:7-8, hereafter referred to as Washington Writings.

toward Great Meadows when promised troop reinforcements failed to arrive and supplies began to falter. With the threat of imminent attack by a large force of French and Indians, he quickly constructed Fort Necessity at Great Meadows.¹²⁴ Overwhelmed by a superior force and without supplies, Washington accepted the offer of the French on July 3 allowing them to leave the area without surrendering.

The news of this loss shocked the people of Augusta County who kept in touch with what was happening through volunteers under Washington commanded by Andrew Lewis, a well-known Augusta County resident. Many fled with their families leaving "their harvest and the rest of their stock prey for the enemy." Patton pled with Governor Dinwiddie for help, especially for ammunition to guard against the Indians sent out in raiding parties by the French to "ravage amongst us."¹²⁵ By September petitions came to the House of Burgesses also pleading for help.¹²⁶ In response the Governor ordered a company of the colony's regiment to help protect the colonists from further attacks.¹²⁷ Apparently the response came too late because by October ten colonists had been killed by Indians.¹²⁸

Recruitment of militiamen did not proceed very well in Augusta County. First, many soldiers deserted from the military and then spread stories about their terrible experiences throughout the county. In later years, Washington wrote about the impact of having these soldiers who had not been paid

recounting their sufferings and want of pay, (which rags and poverty sufficiently testified,) fixed in the mind of the populace such horrid impressions of the hardships they had encountered, that no arguments could remove these prejudices, or facilitate the recruiting service.¹²⁹

Secondly, many of these men had the higher priority of protecting their own families and farming their lands to provide daily sustenance than to be out fighting Indians away from their home territory. To help with the problem of recruitment, Patton took his nephew

¹²⁴Freeman, *Washington*, I, 402, gives the reason for the fort as follows: "The whole and the parts were not a design of engineering art but of frontier necessity. Wherefore, George gave it the name, Fort Necessity."

¹²⁵James Patton to Governor Dinwiddie, 2 July 1754, PP-LC, 135.

¹²⁶Petition from Augusta inhabitants to House of Burgesses, 3 September 1754, *JHB, 1752-1755, 1756-1758*, 202. The appeal mentioned that many had been "obliged to desert and abandon their habitations, and it is supposed many more will follow their example; that the successes of the French in the late engagement with the Virginia Regiment has greatly alarmed and terrified them; that several Indians have lately been discovered lurking about, and doing mischief to the people."

¹²⁷Governor Dinwiddie to Governor Sharpe, 6 September 1754, *Dinwiddie Papers*, I:303-6.

¹²⁸Although questions have been raised on whether William Preston prepared the "Preston Register" due to misspellings and other inaccuracies, this guide to those either killed or taken prisoner by the Indians represents the best available source. For the original, see PP-DM, 1QQ 83. In printed form, see Joseph A. Waddell, "Indian Wars in Augusta County, Virginia," *Virginia Historical Magazine*, II (April, 1895):397-404.

¹²⁹Washington to the Earl of Loudoun, [January] 1757, *Washington Writings*, 2:8.

another step. William had helped his uncle on many business ventures and in the vestry, but now it was time for active duty in the militia. On February 14, 1755 Preston received his commission as a captain of a company of rangers in Augusta County serving under his uncle who occupied the position of Lieutenant Colonel, the highest county ranking available.¹³⁰ Even before he got his company together, news came that five more settlers died in June. In early July thirteen more died, two were injured, and three were taken prisoner.¹³¹

If this news was not bad enough, General Braddock's defeat by the French on July 9 and death four days later from wounds suffered in the battle on the Monongahela as part of an effort to retake Fort Duquesne was more disastrous. He had been supported in this battle by nine companies of Virginians commanded by George Washington. Dinwiddie could not bring himself to believe initial reports about the defeat.¹³² Almost two weeks went by before he finally got detailed reports which not only confirmed the large loss of men and supplies, but the death of the British commander.¹³³

Oblivious to happenings in Pennsylvania of such large consequence, Preston began to recruit for his ranger company. On July 8, one day before Braddock's defeat, Dinwiddie asked Patton to "raise another company in Augusta" and for two more companies to be recruited in Frederick and Hampshire Counties. Dinwiddie also stated that if it seemed that the "enemy's designs are against Augusta, I shall order one of the above companies immediately to march to their protection."¹³⁴ Apparently Patton gave no assurance that he would be able to raise the requested numbers which frustrated Dinwiddie.¹³⁵ On July 16 Dinwiddie still expressed hope to Colonel David Stewart of Augusta County that Patton would be successful in his recruiting efforts. He also asked Stewart to "support your spirits with proper resolution in these dangerous times, and by no means allow any of the people to leave the county, but to take up arms in defense of

¹³⁰William Preston Commission from Robert Dinwiddie, 14 February 1755, Preston Family Papers, College of William and Mary, 1. On 29 July 1755 he received the same standard commission again which charged him with "duly exercising and disciplining the soldiers under your command and by seeing that they are provided with arms and ammunition as the law requires. And I hereby command them to obey you as their Captain. And you are to follow all such orders and directions, from time to time, as you shall receive from me, or any other of your commanding officer according to the rules and disciplines of war." PP-LC, 162.

¹³¹"Preston Register."

¹³²These sentiments were expressed by Dinwiddie in several letters. The following from Dinwiddie to Colonel Charles Carter, 18 July 1755, *Dinwiddie Papers*, 2:101-2, summarizes his feelings: "The News from Colo. Innes surpriz'd me at first, but on reading the Let'r over some Times I concluded it was wrote immediately on the Acc't given him. w'ch Acc't I was willing to think was from a Deserter who, in a great Pannick, represented w't his Fears suggested; however, I tho't it absolutely necessary to order the Militia of each Co'ty to be muster'd . . . I wait with Impatience for another Express from Fort Cumb'l'd, w'ch I expect will greatly contradict the former."

¹³³Governor Dinwiddie to Lord Halifax, 25 July 1755, *ibid.*, 2:117-8.

¹³⁴Message from Governor, 8 July 1755, *JHB, 1752-1755, 1756-1758*, 292.

¹³⁵Governor Dinwiddie to Colonel Jefferson, 9 July 1755, *Dinwiddie Papers*, 2:95-6.

the whole."¹³⁶ On the same day, all of Dinwiddie's frustration came out in a letter to Patton in which he even began questioning his abilities to lead:

I am sorry to hear a further dismal account of murders in your county, and I fear your people are seized with a panic in suffering the Indians in such small companies to do the mischief they do, without raising to oppose them. Surely if they were properly headed and encouraged they would overcome them all. I have sent some powder, etc., to Col. Stewart. I have ordered the whole militia of this dominion to be in arms, and your neighboring counties are directed to send men to your assistance on your application. Our news from the Ohio is bad. I enclose you a letter to the same purport as those sent to all the counties. I shall be glad to hear you have dispersed and destroyed these banditti."¹³⁷

Dinwiddie did not accept the notion that the men needed to stay home and protect their families and take care of their farming businesses. He viewed them as cowards unwilling to stand up to the Indians; however, it also took great courage for them to stay at their unprotected homes while Indians roamed throughout the territory randomly harassing and killing isolated families.

Based on all of these reports--the killings of more colonists by Indians and Braddock's defeat--Dinwiddie now ordered that all of the militia in the nine counties surrounding Augusta be ordered out and that three companies of rangers patrol the frontiers. Having the militia in place would enable them to guard the frontier and be available for regular military duty.¹³⁸

Meanwhile Preston's July recruitment efforts progressed well with eighteen recruits by the end of the month.¹³⁹ His company eventually had fifty-two recruits within six months including a first and second lieutenant, three sergeants and three corporals, Thomas Lloyd as surgeon, and a drummer boy.¹⁴⁰ Expenses began to mount as Preston purchased such items for his soldiers as whiskey, lodging, tavern dinners, wheat, rice, corn, turnips, pork, bacon, mutton, and even sixteen tomahawks.¹⁴¹

Toward the end of July Patton traveled with a group of his militiamen to take

¹³⁶Governor Dinwiddie to Colonel David Stewart, 16 July 1755, *ibid.*, 2:100.

¹³⁷Governor Dinwiddie to Colonel Patton, 16 July 1755, *ibid.*, 2:101.

¹³⁸Governor Dinwiddie to Governor Dobbs, 23 July 1755, *ibid.*, 2:111-2.

¹³⁹William Preston list of rangers, 16 July 1755 - 1 January 1756, PP-DM, 1QQ 92. By 1 January 1756 Preston had recruited a total of 52 rangers averaging 26.5 years of age, an average height of 5 feet 6 inches, and coming from the following origins: 24 Ireland, 12 England, 8 Pennsylvania, 3 Germany, 2 Virginia, 1 Jersey, 1 New England, and 1 Scotland. This breakdown seems to reflect the Scotch-Irish dominance of Augusta County.

¹⁴⁰"An account of pay due the company of rangers of Augusta," 14 July 1755 - 1 February 1756, PP-DM, 1QQ 91.

¹⁴¹"William Preston's account with Virginia," July 1755, PP-LC, 164, 170 and "William Preston Account," 23 July 1755, Preston Family Papers, Didier Collection, VPI, 1.

ammunition to the area around Draper's Meadows which had been under Indian threat. Living at the Meadows were his friends from the Draper and Ingles families. Accounts on what actually happened next differ sharply. It is clear that Patton left the rest of his soldiers and went to the Meadows without proper guard.¹⁴² He either died on July 30 or 31, 1755, but whether or not the Indians killed him on his way to see his friends or after he arrived is open to dispute.¹⁴³ Within days the Virginia Gazette published the following account on August 8:

By an express this morning from Augusta County, we have the melancholy account of the murder of Col. James Patton, who was killed by a party of Indians, the last day of July, on the head branches of the Roanoke, and eight more men, women, and children. Col. Patton was going out with ammunition &c. for the use of the frontier inhabitants, and stopping at a plantation on the road to refresh himself, the convoy being about five miles before, he was beset by 16 Indians who killed, and stripped him, and then made off with his horse &c.¹⁴⁴

Only one month later the Gentleman's Magazine published a report in London, England which appears to be based upon the Virginia Gazette account with two additional details. Their account had him stopping to see friends but

such was his misfortune, that he fell into the hands of some Indians, who had just murdered his friends and their families, and not discovering his danger till it was too late, he was also inhumanly murdered upon the spot.¹⁴⁵

In addition to Patton, others killed on the same day included Eleanor Draper and her grandchild. The Indians took four prisoners including Mary Draper Ingles who later told an exciting but disputed account of her escape from her captors.¹⁴⁶ The men sent to find

¹⁴²Governor Dinwiddie to Colonel David Stewart, 11 August 1755, Dinwiddie Papers, 2:152-3, complains, "I think he was wrong to go so far back without a proper guard."

¹⁴³See Appendix C for a summary of the various accounts on how Patton was murdered. In regard to the date, the "Preston Register" gives 30 July but the 8 August 1755, Virginia Gazette (William Hunter, pub.) cites the last day of July.

¹⁴⁴8 August 1755, ibid.

¹⁴⁵"Journal of the War in America," The Gentleman's Magazine, 25 (October, 1755), 474-5. According to journals of the House of Burgesses, Patton "was murdered by a party of Indians, on his return home from the last session of this assembly." 15 August 1755, JHB, 1752-1755, 1756-1758, 307.

¹⁴⁶The story of how Mary Draper Ingles escaped from her Indian captors is one of the best known of this period. While many histories of this period include the story, the most direct presentation was prepared by her son, John Ingles, Sr. and printed more recently by Roberta Ingles Steele and Andrew Lewis Ingles, ed., The Story of Mary Draper Ingles and son Thomas Ingles as told by John Ingles, Sr. (Radford: Commonwealth Press Inc., 1969). Most of the story's details have been challenged by Lee Pendleton, "Indian Massacres-Montgomery County. 1755-1756. Drapers Meadow Massacre Retold and Fort Vause and its Traditions," (1968), typescript at VPI.

the Indians who murdered Patton and his friends found nothing.¹⁴⁷

If we accept some of the family accounts, William Preston just missed being murdered by the same Indians since he had been traveling with his uncle and had been sent on an errand. However, no solid evidence exists on his whereabouts.¹⁴⁸ On July 25 he recruited three rangers for his company, but the location for this recruitment is unknown.¹⁴⁹ Since his uncle had given him a commission as a captain, they may not have been traveling together. By August 8 Preston was on his way to Williamsburg to inform the governor of his uncle's death.¹⁵⁰

Ironically Governor Dinwiddie wrote a letter to Patton on August 1, not knowing that he had died only hours before. His tone was harsh and condescending as he expressed sorrow for their condition but at the same time feeling that if they had fought the Indians as a united group they could have easily destroyed them. He informed Patton that a load of ammunition was on its way even though shortages existed. He asked,

How can you think I am able to order sustenance to the poor people that have left their plantations. I wish they had not been seized with such panic as prevented their resisting the few enemies that appeared in your county . . . I have good reason to believe the Indians are not so numerous as you imagine, however all possible care should be used to oppose their barbarities.¹⁵¹

Two weeks later Dinwiddie, now aware of Patton's death, continued to complain in very forceful language, this time to Patton's mourning son-in-law, John Buchanan:

It is a real surprise to me that the few Indians who have been in Augusta should have gone so great lengths in robbing and murdering your people when I consider your numbers, which, if they had acted with spirit and resolution I think they could have destroyed them all, and protected your women and children, but I fancy there has been a general panic over the whole county . . . You have had more ammunition and arms than all the other frontier counties together, and so it is that I cannot supply with any more.

Perhaps the same letter provides a clue on why the colonists were so ineffective in their own defense:

I am sorry to hear from you that the militia is not to be depended on or will they obey orders; which makes it obvious they have not been properly disciplined, or

¹⁴⁷Governor Dinwiddie to John Buchanan, 14 August 1755, PP-DM, 1QQ 86.

¹⁴⁸See Appendix C for analysis.

¹⁴⁹"William Preston list of rangers," 16 July 1755 - 1 January 1756, PP-DM, 1QQ 92.

¹⁵⁰"William Preston's account with Virginia," July 1755, PP-LC, 164.

¹⁵¹Governor Dinwiddie to James Patton, 1 August 1755, PP-DM, 1QQ 85.

kept under proper command, which on refusal, you should punish them according to law.¹⁵²

Again, the frontiersmen had tough choices to make. Would they stay and defend their families or leave them defenseless? How would they survive financially unless they continued their farming or other businesses instead of joining the militia? It is understandable that many chose to defend their own homes and neighborhoods rather than being concerned about the broader problem.¹⁵³ These decisions were not easy ones to make while the governor, living in luxury in Williamsburg, could not sense the difficult choices faced in a desolate frontier area besieged by Indians.

William Preston no longer had a male mentor to guide his learning experience. His uncle had served as a positive role model for William who would now follow almost an identical path for the next twenty seven years of his life as he continued to take on more public offices, as he expanded his surveying and land purchases, and as his service in the militia continued with growing Indian attacks later to be joined with English and Loyalist threats during the American Revolution.

APPENDIX A: The Preston and Patton Background in Ireland

Who were the Prestons and Pattons? Forty years of effort by prominent New York City attorney Preston Davie, a family historian who attempted to trace his genealogy, resulted in little being discovered about the Preston roots. Family tradition indicated that the Prestons had a right to a coat-of-arms in Ireland because of having twelve belted knights.¹⁵⁴ Other traditions indicate that John Preston's English father, Archibald, and his three brothers, helped defend Londonderry against King James I in 1689, but little else is known about when or how the Prestons left Scotland and came to Ireland.¹⁵⁵

In contrast, the Patton lineage of William Preston comes with well-defined roots and heritage. Rev. William Patton became the first Patton to make the short twenty mile trip from Scotland to Ulster sometime during the reign of King James I of England between 1603-25. By 1639 he served as the Presbyterian rector of the parishes of Ram-
eigh, Clonmany, and Aughnish, all in Donegal county. Before his death in 1641, the

¹⁵²Governor Dinwiddie to John Buchanan, 14 August 1755, PP-DM, 1QQ 86.

¹⁵³One of Albert Tillson's major theses is that residents in Augusta County chose to focus more on the local neighborhoods rather than concerning themselves with the broader outlook favored by the elite. Albert H. Tillson, Jr., "The Militia and Popular Political Culture in the Upper Valley of Virginia, 1740-1775," *VMHB*, 94 (July 1986): 299 and "The Southern Backcountry. A Survey of Current Research," *VMHB*, 98 (July 1990): 410.

¹⁵⁴Lewis Letter.

¹⁵⁵PDGC, FC and Brown, "Memoranda."

rector accumulated a significant amount of land through purchase and grant. His son and heir, Henry, Sr., settled on the family lands but soon became embroiled with his son, Henry, Jr., in the wars of 1689-92 between the dethroned James II, whom they opposed, and the supporters of King William III and Queen Mary, whom they advocated. Both father and son were attainted by the Irish Parliament on May 12, 1689 for their involvement in this war, but fortunately for both of them the next Parliament revoked the attainder. Instead of being hung, they may have received the manor of Springfield adjoining the family estate of Croghan in exchange for services to William III.¹⁵⁶

The younger Henry Patton married Sarah Lynn who came from an English family which possessed a manor in Tyrone, Ireland. Sarah's brother, William, and her sister, Margaret, eventually moved to Virginia serving as a crucial link to the Preston and Patton settlement in America. The Patton marriage produced several children including Elizabeth, who eventually married John Preston, and James (born in 1692). Their father, Henry, Jr., died in 1743, only twelve years before his younger son, James, died in America.

APPENDIX B: Scotch-Irish Background

William Preston grew up around Scotch-Irish families both in Ireland and Virginia. Ironically the term, "Scotch-Irish," was never used in Ireland but only in America after the arrival of immigrants whose ancestors had originally moved from Scotland to the Ulster province of Ireland. Very few Scots ever married Irish citizens, hence the conjunction of these terms bears no relationship to a union between these two regions. The Scots never gave up their Presbyterianism in the move to Ireland and in later years objected to being called Irish due to the Roman Catholic connotation of being Irish. The rejection was only partial because when those of Scottish origin from Ireland moved to America, they rarely chose Scottish names for their cities instead opting for such Irish names as Derry, Tyrone, Donegal, Londonderry, and Antrim. Only around 1850 did the term "Scotch-Irish" come into regular usage, partially due to prejudice felt by many Americans against the Catholic Irish who began arriving in large numbers. As social historian James Leyburn noted,

Despite its hybrid nature, with one term biological and cultural and the other geographical, it expresses a historical reality: the Scots who lived in Ulster before they came to America simply were not, in background, religion, and many other aspects of culture, identical with the Irish of the southern provinces of Leinster, Munster, and Connaught; neither were they, after many decades, any longer identical with the people of Scotland.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁶Davie, "James Patton," PDGC-FC, 135.

¹⁵⁷James G. Leyburn, *The Scotch-Irish. A Social History* (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 1962), 327-334.

Originally motivations for the Scottish migration to Ireland included the English desire to have a population in this province which would subdue the cantankerous Irish population. The Scots also had reasons for leaving Scotland. Many farmers lost their traditional lands in 1610 when the form of land tenure changed. Religion served as the greatest motivating factor with several English kings such as James I, Charles I, and Charles II attempting to get the Scottish Presbyterian Church to give up its form of church government and become more episcopal. Ulster provided a place where more religious freedom prevailed in contrast to the hundreds being imprisoned, tortured, and some even hung in Scotland for religious reasons.¹⁵⁸

Ireland became a place where the Scots could take over the lands of native Irish with impunity, thus enabling them to rise more rapidly in the social scale. The economic difficulties of Scotland with the apparent opportunities in Ireland gave many Scots the excuse they needed to migrate. This contrasted with their home country which was one of the poorest and most backward of European countries. Poverty-stricken, generally lawless, still lingering in the Middle Ages in the seventeenth century (and even into the eighteenth), with agricultural methods hardly better than primitive, there was every reason why an ambitious Scot should look elsewhere for improvement of his condition.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁸*Ibid.*, 83, 99-105.

¹⁵⁹*Ibid.*, xv.

Abbreviations

CC - Kentucky Manuscripts, Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

DM - Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

FC - The Filson Club, Louisville, Kentucky

JHB - Journal of the House of Burgesses, H.R. McIlwaine, ed.

LC - Library of Congress

LPF Letter - Letitia Preston Floyd letter to Benjamin Rush Floyd

OED - Oxford English Dictionary, 2d ed.

PDGC-FC - Preston Family Papers, Preston Davie Genealogical Collection, The Filson Club

PP-DM - Preston Papers, Draper Manuscripts as transcribed by S. C. Stuntz from State Historical Society of Wisconsin

PP-DU - John and William Preston Papers, Duke University

PP-LC - Preston Family Papers, 1727-1896, "f" series at Virginia Historical Society as microfilmed and catalogued by the Library of Congress

PP-UVA - Preston Family Papers, University of Virginia

PP-VHS - Preston Family Papers, "a" through "e" series, Virginia Historical Society

RVHS-UVA - Roanoke Valley Historical Society as filmed by the University of Virginia

S - Draper's Notes, Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

U - Frontier Wars, Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin

UVA - University of Virginia, Archives

VHS - Virginia Historical Society

VPI - Virginia Polytechnic Institute

VSL - Virginia State Library, Manuscript Division

UTS - Union Theological Seminary, Richmond, Virginia

VMHB - Virginia Magazine of History & Biography

WMC - College of William and Mary, Williamsburg, Virginia

WMQ - William and Mary Quarterly

WP - William Preston

ZZ - Virginia Papers, Draper Manuscripts, State Historical Society of Wisconsin