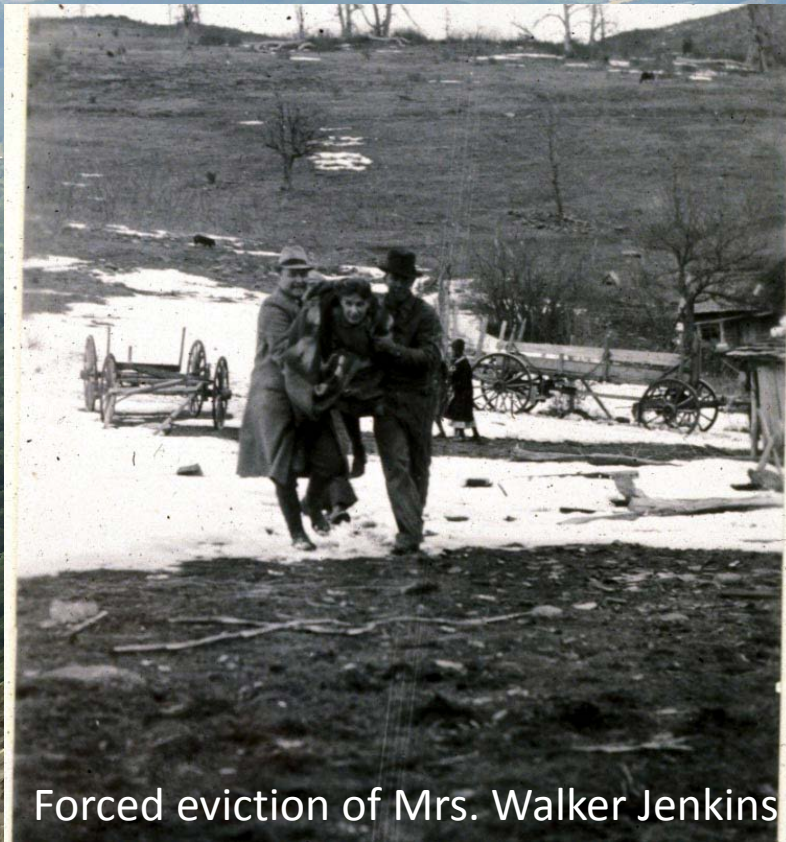


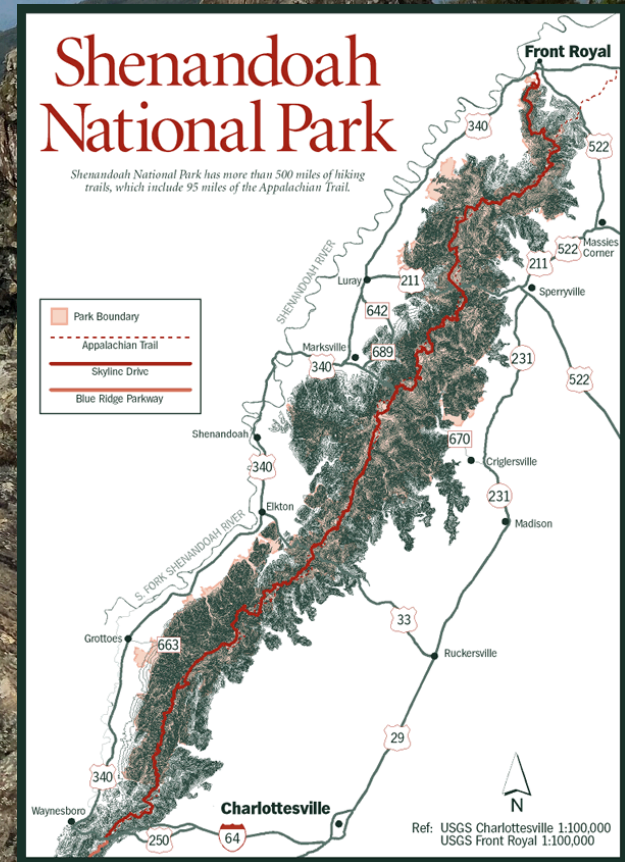
# Narratives of displacement: Reconsidering race and archaeological research in the Virginia Blue Ridge

Audrey Horning

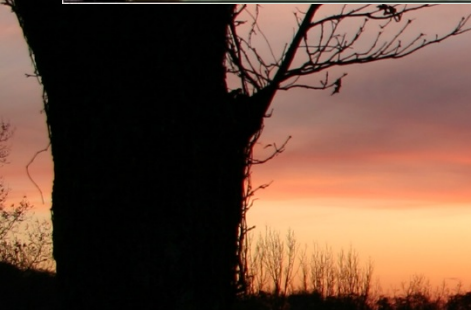
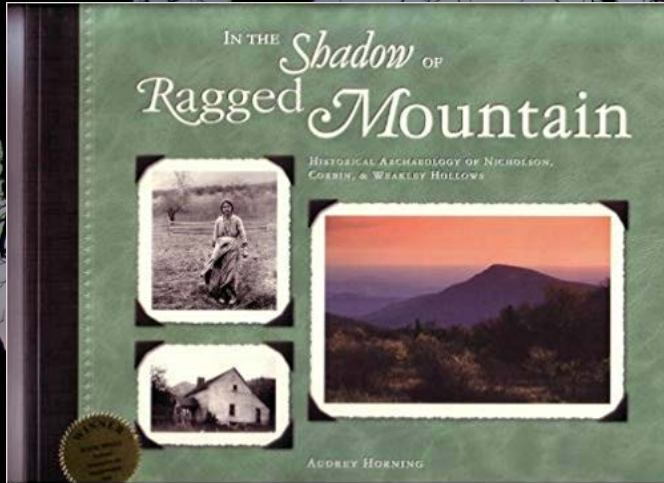
*Appalachian Studies Association* March 2020



Forced eviction of Mrs. Walker Jenkins







Revising the Narrative



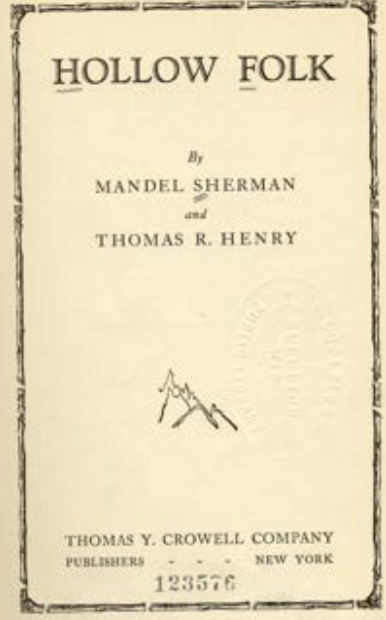
# Shenandoah National Park

Shenandoah National Park has more than 500 miles of hiking trails, which include 95 miles of the Appalachian Trail.

- Park Boundary
- Appalachian Trail
- Skyline Drive
- Blue Ridge Parkway



Ref: USGS Charlottesville 1:100,000  
USGS Front Royal 1:100,000



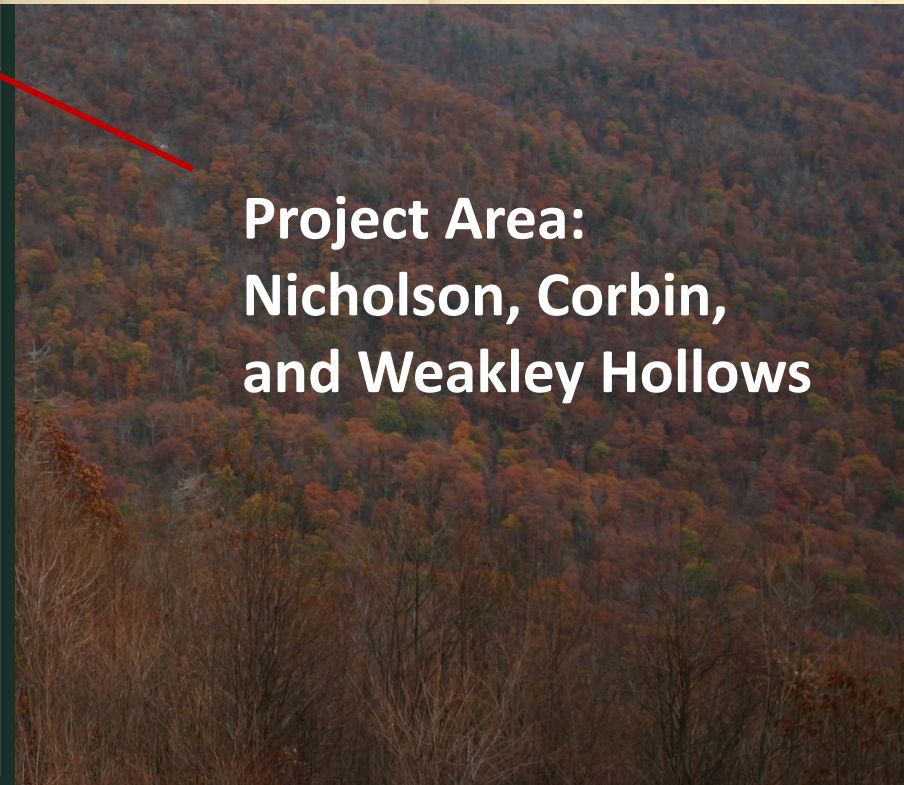
HOLLOW FOLK

I

THE HOLLOW FOLK

**T**HE dark interior valleys of the Blue Ridge Mountains are realms of enchantment. Here, hidden in deep mountain pockets, dwell families of unlettered folk, of almost pure Anglo-Saxon stock, sheltered in tiny, mud-plastered log cabins and supported by a primitive agriculture. One of these settlements, Colvin Hollow, has no community government, no organized religion, little social organization wider than that of the family and clan, and only traces of organized industry. The ragged children, until 1928, never had seen the flag or heard of the Lord's Prayer. They speak a peculiar language which retains many Elizabethan expressions.

Colvin Hollow is close to a center of American civilization, less than one hundred miles from the National Capital. It is less than eight miles from a hard-surfaced road. Automobiles have been driven within three miles of it. Airplanes roar across it. Vacationists tramp through it. Yet the community is



**Project Area:  
Nicholson, Corbin,  
and Weakley Hollows**



'unlettered folk...primitive agriculture...ragged children...never had seen the flag or heard of the Lord's prayer.'



'Centres Where Intelligence Practically is Missing Reported by Psychologists'

"LOST" COMMUNITIES IN BLUE RIDGE HILLS

By ELLEN WHEELER

WITHIN 100 miles of Washington, D. C., live groups of people who are far behind present-day civilization. They are called "holloes" people rather than mountaineers, because they dwell in unrequited pockets of the Blue Ridge Mountains—a section that is to become part of the new Shenandoah National Park. It is among such people that President Hoover has established on the bank of the Rapidan the model school to give his young neighbors the rudiments of an education. Not more than ten miles away, however, live people who have never even heard of President Hoover. If asked about Abraham Lincoln, they look blank and point over the ridge—"Oh, re-wah, a man over the ridge one of them things."

For the past year the Washington Child Research Centre has been making a comparative study of the people of Corbin Hollow, in Virginia, and of their more progressive neighbors. Corbin Hollow is not unique; it is estimated that in the Virginia and West Virginia mountains the Rip Van Winkle group number at least 1,000. The Corbin Hollow district was selected for study because close by are other communities with the same heredity, but in different stages of development.

These people are 100 per cent Americans. They still retain in their vocabulary quaint phrases of Elizabethan flavor. They are pure English and Scottish stock, probably of pre-Revolutionary origin. In Colonial or Revolutionary times, their forebears were pioneers who settled temporarily in the pleasant hollows of the Blue Ridges, where game and water were abundant and a bit of ground could be worked. They intended some day to travel further, but they never stirred.

The Survey Staff. The findings of the Washington centre are now being analyzed for publication. "No such close survey of the mountain people has ever before been attempted. Dr. Mandel Sherman, director of the research centre, headed the survey and, together with Dr. Cora B. Kay, child psychologist, and Dr. J. Allen Hinde of the committee on child development of the National Research Council, made the mental tests. Miss Helen R. Nebeker, nutritional, studied the diet, and Herbert M. Mann of the sociology department of the University of Virginia the social problems. Miss Miriam Starr, a student of the University of Virginia, who previous to the survey had taught summer school in one of the "holloes," and is herself a mountain girl, acted as

Centres Where Intelligence Practically Is Missing Reported by Psychologists

people high and comes down again. Our investigations coincide with this theory. As the intelligence increases in these Blue Ridge groups, the capacity for forming abstractions is controlled by reasoning and judgment, and the sterner, more formal aspects of religion diminish in importance. One of the things that have interested us in our study has been to examine the relation of religion to the growth of intelligence. About 120 families, typical of each group, and children from all the families in the five groups were studied for the survey.

Because of the educational handicap and the lack of language ability,

most part the people live in one-room cabins, with leaking roofs, dirt floors and holes in the unplastered walls. Families with six or seven children have only two beds and except in two houses no chairs were seen. Family life is most patriarchal in Corbin Hollow and the husband wields a stern and unquestioned authority. If there are benches the men sit down to eat and their wives serve them. Plates, knives and forks are conspicuously absent. Bread is broken off and thrown to the children, who eat with their fingers, holding chunks of fat meat in dirty hands. In the rare households that have dishes, the children are expected to eat from used plates. One

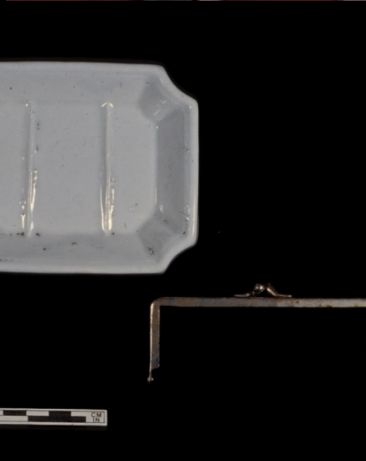
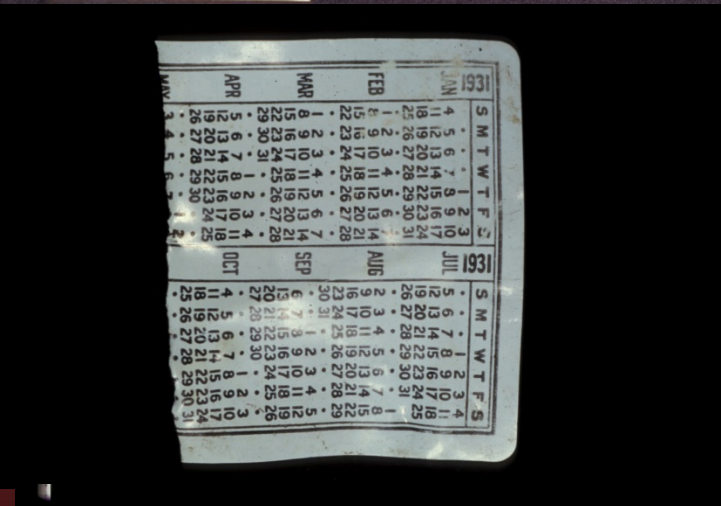


The Cabin of a Southern Mountaineer.

three types of intelligence and non-language performance tests were given—the Stanford revision of the Binet scale, the Pienaar-Cunningham group test and the individual performance tests. In the individual mental tests applied to the children of the most backward community, Dr. Sherman and his associates found the arrest of mental growth universal. Only one, the son of a fellow preacher, rated above 7 years, whether their chronological age was 10 or 15. An extraordinary "culture levels was

the crib under the beds in the low lofts. Most of the children have tobacco-stained teeth. Even 4-year-olds chew tobacco. The children sleep in torn, dirty clothes which have been cast off by their elders. When a Baltimore orthopedic surgeon volunteered to examine the children of one of the "holloes," it was almost impossible to get them to undress, not from modesty but because they actually did not know how. Some of the children have not bathed since they were born. "I've another visiting physician asked one mother holding in her arms a very sick baby if she knew what a drug store was, she answered, "Yeah, it's had a lot of that stuff!" "Lots of wheat?" asked the doctor. "Lots of dog store. That white stuff in a bottle and it does no good." None of the children studied by the survey group could sing or hum tunes. The only toy found in any of the houses was a small wooden block, tightly clubbed in the hand of a 16-month-old baby. Only one out of twenty knew that a ball was something to play with. Not even boys or 17 or 18 knew the meaning of holidays. None had heard of Thanksgiving and only those of Christmas. The Sunday school started by a Sumner school teacher was regarded as the place where candy was distributed. The Sunday school started by a Sumner school teacher was regarded as the place where candy was distributed. They rarely know how old they were. They had little conception of distance. When a 18-year-old youth was asked where a certain family lived, he replied, "Over that a piece." And when the same inquiry was put to him about another family, he said again, "Over that a piece," although the first family lived a quarter of a mile and the second a mile away. "They also failed completely in the quantity tests for the 10-year level. To the statement, 'I have never known a road from my house to the city which is downhill all the way in the city and downhill all the way back home,' a 15-year-old boy answered, 'I was once in the city and I was on the road.' To the one, "There was a railroad accident yesterday, but it was not very serious; only forty-eight people were killed," the comment was, "He shouldn't have killed him." The simplicity of their home surroundings are partial causes for their lack of education. This in itself is viewed as a serious matter. If the "holloes" people of the Blue Ridges should be disseminated from their rude cabins and their corn patches with the conservation of the mountains into the Shenandoah National Park, they would be patently unable to meet competition and the struggle for existence in the outside world.

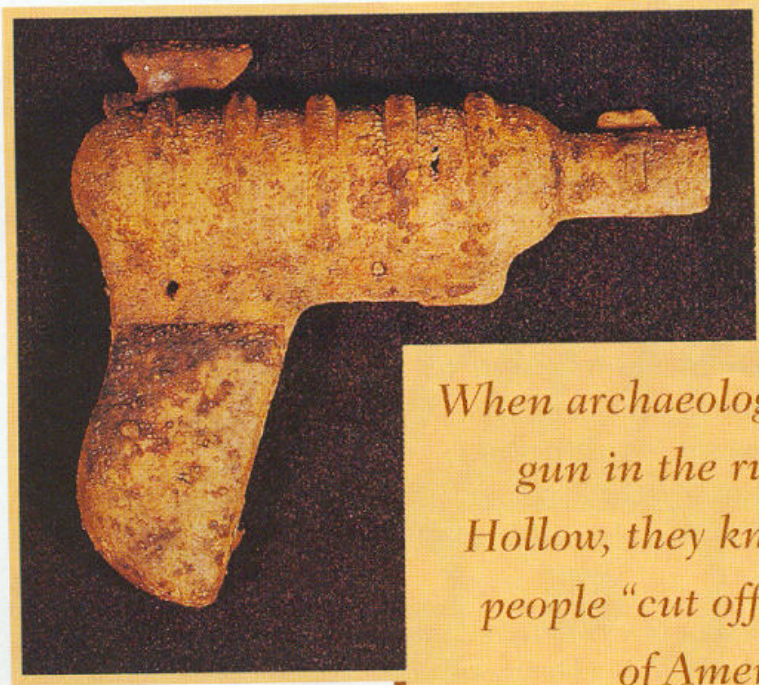








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...g to the  
...or two  
...on of a  
...cabin—  
...lantern,  
...ve, lacking running water—provides a  
...n lifestyle.” In fact, woodstoves and  
...re hardly unusual in rural America in  
...s. Furthermore, George Corbin lived  
...ighbors, and only three miles from a  
...e. Captured on tape in a 1977 inter-



*When archaeologists found a toy ray gun in the rubble of Corbin Hollow, they knew these were not people “cut off from the current of American life.”*

...sear of  
...e schol-  
...he Uni-  
...tensive  
...ed fam-  
...advocacy

...past to the displaced, to am-  
...not mere cultural flotsam s-  
...lows—to admit that inhabita-  
...their own destiny, clearly con-  
...trolled, by their mountainous

...or economic advantages or disadvantages. The archaeological, documentary, and oral historical record from the hollows highlights the relative diversity and complexity of the mountain past. Some “hollow folk” were relatively well-to-do, some were undeniably poor, most owned land, but a few were squat-

...ters; some planted orchards and corn, others raised livestock or ran businesses; some marketed traditional crafts locally, others drove far away for employment; some meticulously swept their yards and buried their trash, and the... down the many





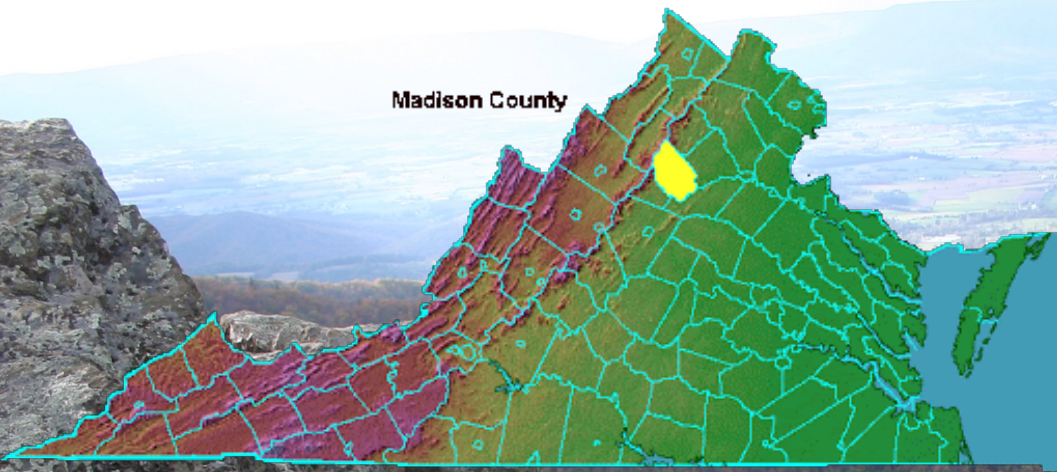
**Leona Dyer Brown interviewed at site of her childhood home.**







**Madison County**



### **Madison County Population**

(according to the Census)

1800: 4,896 white

3,436 black – 41%

1860: 4,457 white

4,397 black – 49.6%

2018: 11,553 white – 86.9%

1,223 black – 9.2%



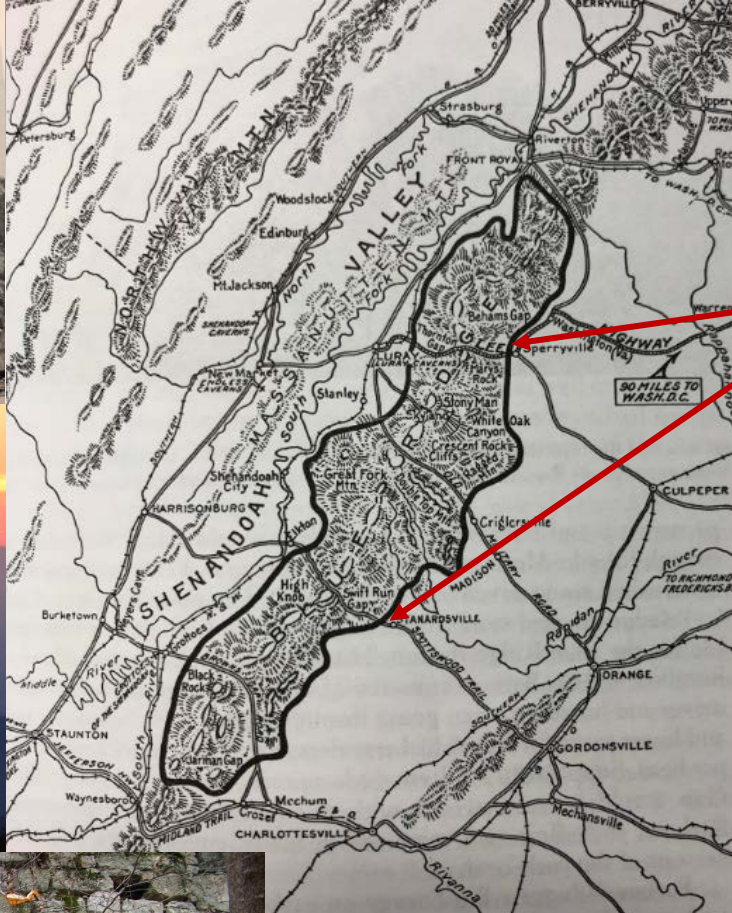
# Enslaved labor

18<sup>th</sup>-century roads  
across the Blue Ridge

18<sup>th</sup>-century  
Skinner/Barbee house

Mt Vernon iron furnace

Antebellum Belmont  
Plantation



JAMES RIVER







# The Narrative of Bethany Veney

A SLAVE WOMAN.

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With Introduction by REV. BISHOP MALLALIEU,

AND

Commendatory Notices from REV. V. A. COOPER, Superintendent of Home  
for Little Wanderers, Boston, Mass.,

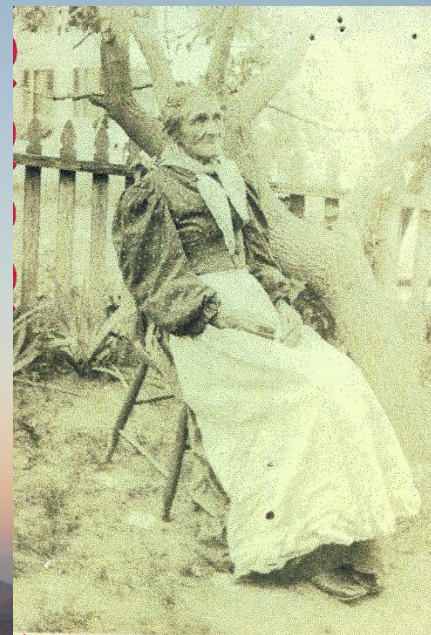
AND

REV. ERASTUS SPAULDING, Milbury, Mass.

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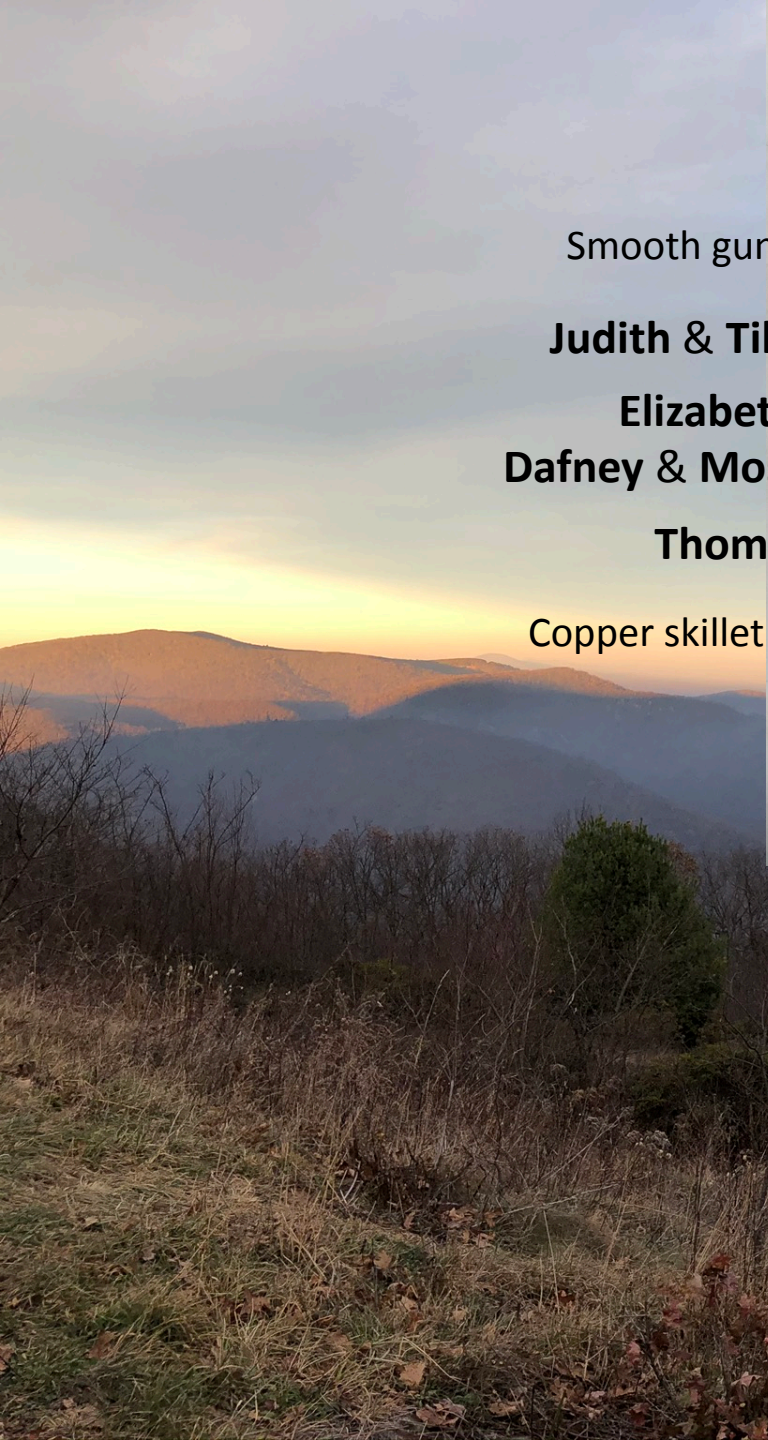
WORCESTER, MASS.

1839.



Stony Man Mountain





1 Candle mould 1/6. Jug & butter pot 4/..  
1 Walnut chest £2..2. 1 Walnut Table £1..4..6.  
6 Sleys £1..11..1 two chests 11/2.  
1 Smooth Gun 11/. 1 Negro boy Thomas £122. **Thomas**  
1 Negro woman named Judith & child named Tilda  
1 Negro girl named Elizabeth.  
1 Negro woman named Dafney & child Moses.  
1 Negro man named Thomas £12..5.  
1 Copper skillet 15/. 1 bed bedstead & furniture  
2 Beds, bedsteads & furniture.  
1 Looking Glass 8/. 1 pr of sheets 15/..  
3 Table cloths 12/6 1 spelling book 6.  
1

Smooth gun

Judith & Tilda

Elizabeth

Dafney & Moses

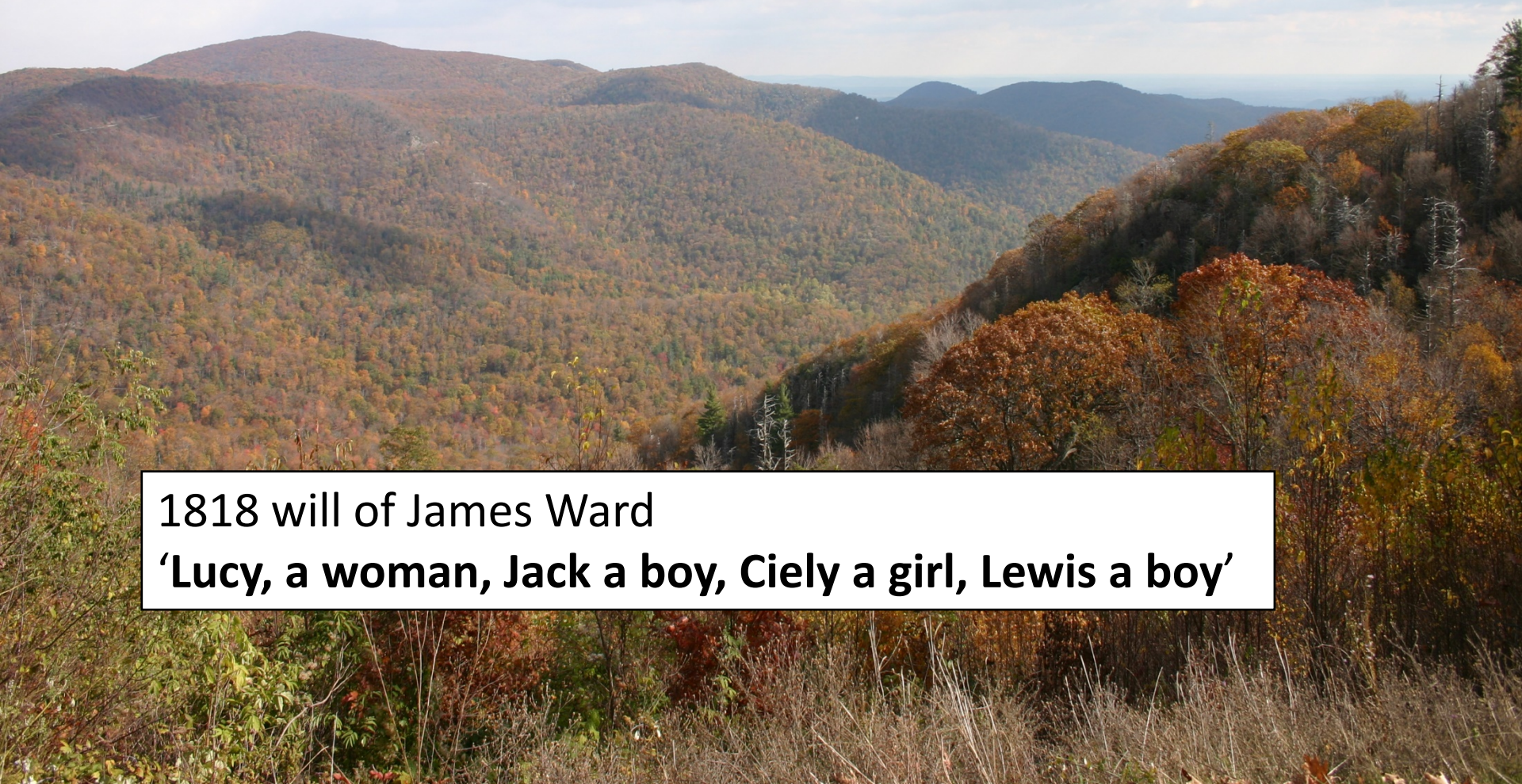
Thomas

Copper skillet

### 1807 will of James Hurt, Weakley Hollow



tract. Together with all the tract of land which I purchased of John Barber, by  
on the North side of Houghsee river- also four Negroes, namely, Lucy a woman,  
Jack, a boy, Ciely a girl, and Lewis a boy- Also my still, and household & kitchen  
furniture, together with my stocks of Horses, cattle, Hogs & sheep, for and during the  
Mand her heirs an



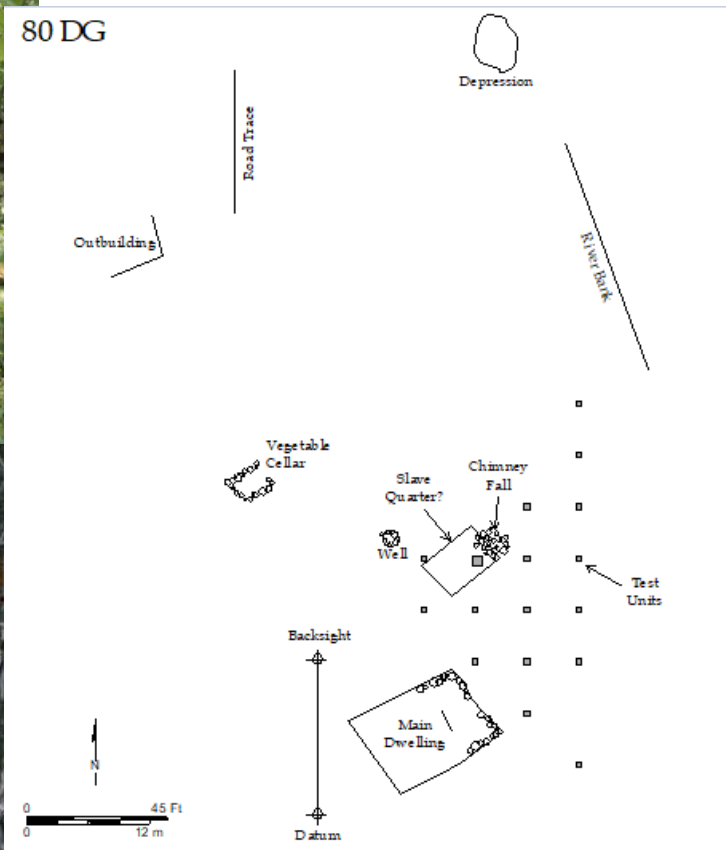
1818 will of James Ward

**'Lucy, a woman, Jack a boy, Ciely a girl, Lewis a boy'**





1997



Nicholson/Ward property after park acquisition, 1936







I William Nicholson Son of Madison Virginia do constitute bind and deliver my son  
William Nicholson Servt unto James Ward for the term of five years  
commencing and he the said James Ward is to instruct the said William Nicholson  
in the several and necessary branches of farming as far as in his power he  
and is also to bestow him with a liberal Education, such as befitting a poor man's son  
and is also to clothe and feed said Nicholson with raiment and diet befitting an  
apprentice, and he the said William Nicholson do's family and solantly  
express that he will obey his masters commands keep his secrets teach his utmost  
labour diligently and faithfully during the period above mentioned, and is to  
obey his masters orders in all parts and particulars according to the best of  
his skill and judgment. in witness whereof, I the above named William  
Nicholson have do hereunto set my hand and seal this 10<sup>th</sup> day of May 1810

Signed and acknowledged

In presence of  
Benjamin Sillars Jps  
Thomas Cabbage  
Jps

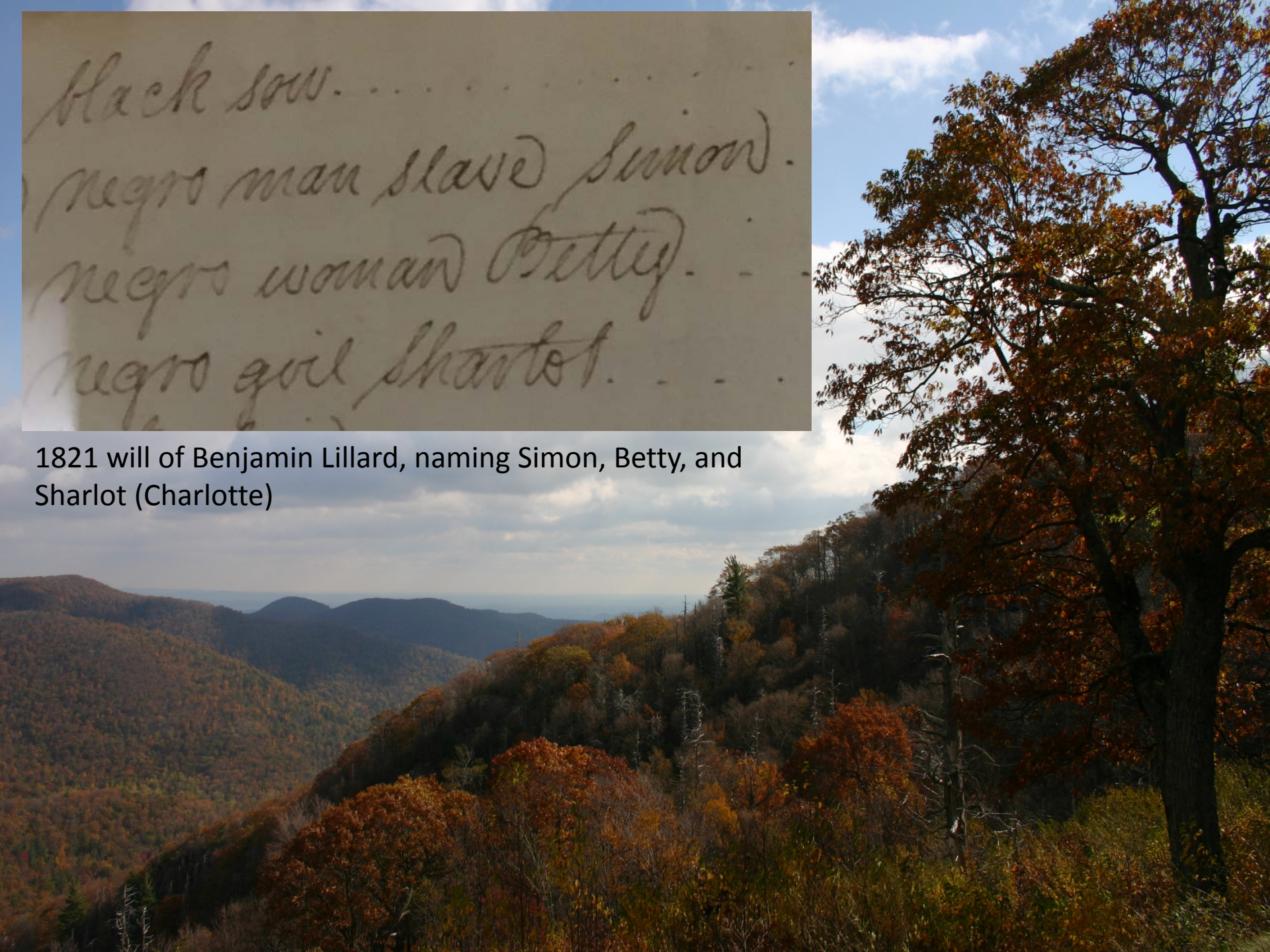
William Nicholson  
Wm

Indenture of William Nicholson to James Ward 1810  
"bestow him with a liberal education such as befitting a  
poor man's son" (Madison County Will Book 2: 251).

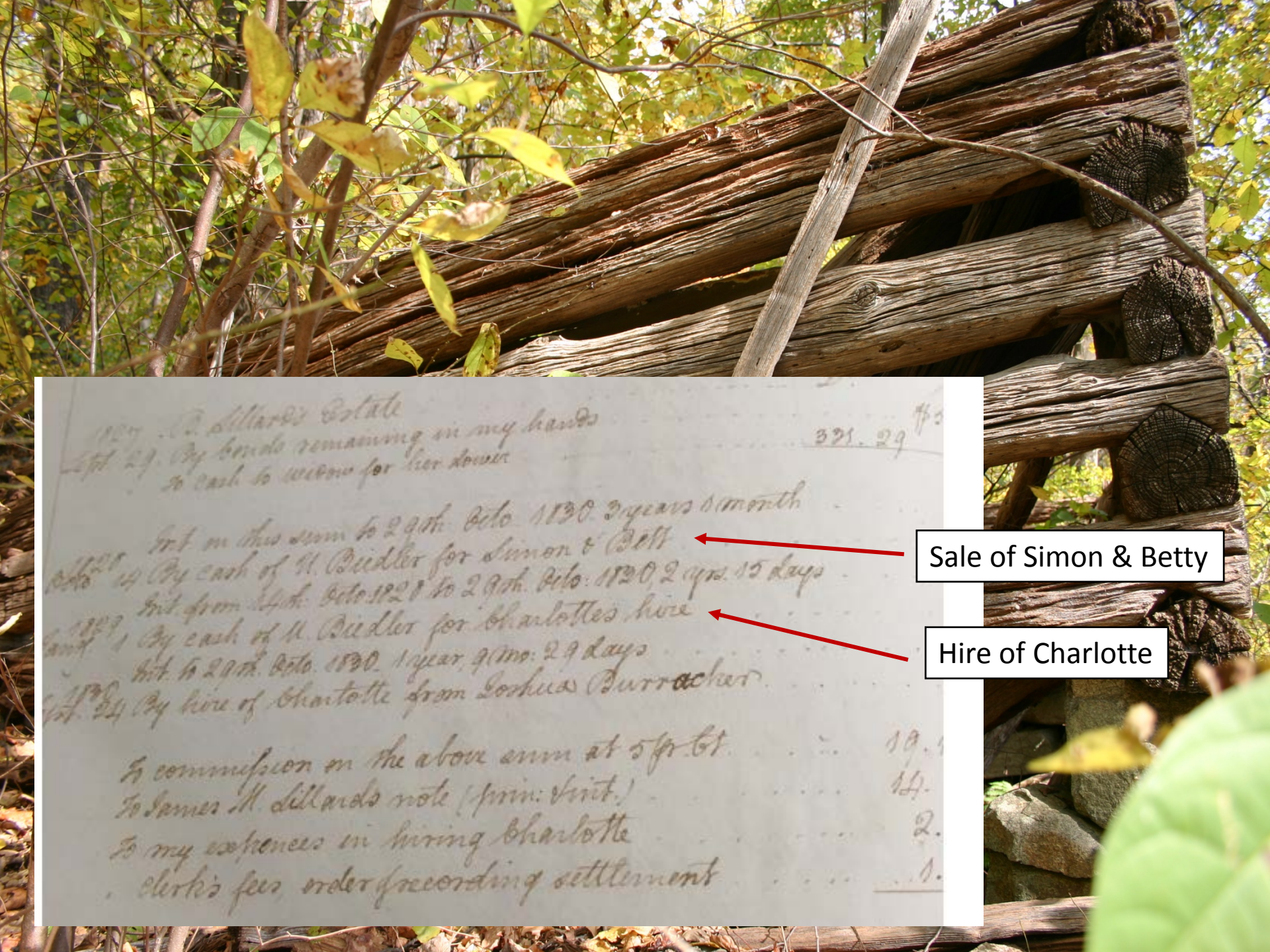


Black sow. . . . .  
negro man slave Simon.  
negro woman Betty. . . . .  
negro girl Sharlot. . . . .

1821 will of Benjamin Lillard, naming Simon, Betty, and Sharlot (Charlotte)







1127 J. M. Dillard's Estate  
 Oct. 29 By bonds remaining in my hands  
 in cash to witness for her dowry 321. 29

1128 Int. on this sum to 29th. Octo. 1130 3 years 1 month  
 Oct. 14 By cash of M. Buidler for Simon & Betty

1129 Int. from 14th. Octo. 1128 to 29th. Octo. 1130 2 yrs. 15 days  
 Oct. 1 By cash of M. Buidler for Charlottes hire

1130 Int. to 29th. Octo. 1130 1 year, 9 (mo.) 29 days  
 Oct. 24 By hire of Charlotte from Joshua Purracher

To commission on the above sum at 5 per Ct. 19. 1  
 To James M. Dillard's note (prin. & int.) 14. 1  
 To my expences in hiring Charlotte 2. 1  
 Clerk's fees, order of recording settlement 1. 1

Sale of Simon & Betty

Hire of Charlotte



No. of case: 72. On whom committed: Arthur Lee. White or colored: colored. By whom committed: Three or four persons unknown. White or colored: -----. Where: Rappahannock Co., Va. When: Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1868. By whom reported: W. A. McNulty, A. S. A. C. Character of the outrage and action in this case: No. 259, R. F. & A. L., Va., 1868, dated Sept. 24<sup>th</sup>, 1868. Reports that Lee was taken from his house about 11 or 12 o'clock at night on the night of Sept. 14<sup>th</sup>, 1868, and was found dead next morning, having been beaten to death. A. S. A. C. and Civ. Aut. are making all efforts in their power to find the murderers, but without avail so far. Will report any further information. Filed.

## 1868: Arthur Lee dragged from his home and beaten to death







**Skyland kitchen staff**



**Corbin Hollow family  
(Eddie & Blanche  
Nicholson) with  
baskets to sell at  
Skyland**





# Blue Ridge Heritage Project

The Daily Progress Aug 31, 2016



For years, Madison County's Jim Lillard has dreamed of ways to remember people who once lived in the area now SNP. He had to. One of those people was his mother Margaret Ruth Woodward Lillard, who was born in Park territory in 1918. Things turned out well for Jim's family (though many others were not so fortunate), but they, nevertheless, were displaced from land they loved. Because Jim wanted to remember and celebrate this heritage, he created