

**A DOCUMENTARY
HISTORY OF
EPPINGTON
Chesterfield County
Virginia**

FILE COPY

**Prepared by
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**Part of the
Master Plan for
Eppington Plantation
Chesterfield County**

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INTRODUCTION

Archival research on Eppington included the examination of historic maps at the Virginia State Library, Virginia Historical Society, the Library of Congress, the National Archives, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources, and the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Archives. Maps reproduced in secondary sources such as The Official Atlas of the Civil War and The American Campaigns of Rochambeau's Army also were utilized. Plats of Chesterfield and Henrico Counties were searched, as were indices to maps and plats on file at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond and the Huntington Library in San Marino, California. During a research trip to England, indices to maps and documents that are on file at the British Museum Library, at Cambridge and Oxford Universities and at the British Public Records Office in Kew were checked for references to Eppington and its early owners. Research was carried out at the University of Virginia's Alderman Library and queries were addressed to scholars at Poplar Forest and Monticello.

During a series of visits to the Chesterfield County Courthouse, Eppington's chain of title was traced and research was done on land use patterns in that vicinity. Primary resource documents that were examined included deeds, wills, inventories and appraisals, estate sales, court proceedings and orders, chancery records, personal property and land tax records, military records, demographic and agricultural censuses, church records, slave schedules, marriage bonds and agricultural recapitulation records. Visits were made to the Amelia and Henrico County courthouses and abstracts of Charles City County records were used.

The records of Henrico County, Chesterfield's antecedent, are fragmentary for the years prior to the American Revolution. In contrast, those of Chesterfield County, which in 1749 was formed out of that portion of Henrico County which lay south of the James, are intact. Thus, both Henrico and Chesterfield documents were searched for information on the Eppes family and their real and personal property.

Faithful transcriptions of primary resource documents, such as the official records of the Virginia government first as a colony and then as a state, were utilized extensively, as were records of the Virginia Land Office (otherwise known as patents and grants). The Tucker-Coleman Papers, on file at the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation Research Archives, were reviewed carefully, for they contain late eighteenth and early nineteenth century legal papers from Virginia's High Court of Chancery; county court papers from Amelia, Chesterfield and Dinwiddie Counties; Virginia General Court Dockets, 1786-1808; the 1779-1790 law suit of Tucker vs. Francis Eppes; and other legal material that lacks provenience. A diligent search was made for personal papers that were left behind by some of the people associated with Eppington, most notably Francis and Elizabeth Eppes and their kin and Thomas Jefferson. Jefferson's correspondence, which is voluminous, was found to contain numerous letters written to and from Eppington. These documents shed a considerable amount of light upon life there throughout a period spanning approximately 30 years. For that reason, the Jefferson family's association with Eppington has been described in depth in the narrative that follows.

In order to determine whether military activity during the American Revolution or the Civil War ever had a direct impact upon Eppington, specialized references pertaining to both conflicts were examined. Johnson and Buel's compilation, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War; the indices to the Official Records of the Civil War; and E. B. Long's work, The Civil War Day by Day: An Almanac 1861-1865, were reviewed carefully in order to determine whether combat or troop movements ever occurred in the vicinity of the study area. Collections of historical photographs and engravings were examined at the Library of Congress, National Archives, Virginia State Library, and the College of William and Mary. Queries were addressed to the Valentine Museum and the Museum of the Confederacy. As well, a number of books that contain Civil War photographs were reviewed.

Secondary sources, such as local histories and newspaper

articles, were reviewed and a broad variety of scholarly works were used as a means of gaining a broader perspective on the site occupants and setting in which they lived. These included theses and dissertations that focus upon life in rural Virginia during the seventeenth through the nineteenth centuries; slavery as an institution; the county court system in Virginia; the tobacco economy; Virginia during the Reconstruction Era; and the agricultural reform movement in Virginia. The works of Thomas Jefferson, Henry Howe and Mrs. Frances Trollope, all of whom described contemporary life in rural Virginia, proved valuable in understanding the intellectual and social setting in which the Eppes and their kin lived and worked.

Mutual Assurance Society records were searched for policies taken out on Eppington and insurance policies purchased by the owners of other Chesterfield County buildings were examined as a means of gaining a better understanding of the monetary values typically assigned to various types of structural improvements. In an effort to gain a fuller appreciation of Eppington's occupants' socio-economic status and their place in Chesterfield County society, land and personal property tax records, demographic and agricultural census records and slave schedules were reviewed carefully. These data were posited against statistics that were compiled in 1988 as part of a Phase III archaeology study that involved an upper middle class farmstead in eastern Chesterfield County. The research of Jeffrey O'Dell also was especially helpful.

Through the examination of a large volume of records, many insights were gained into the methods used by tax commissioners. Land tax records, which were filed in the State Auditor's Office after the Revolutionary War and first become available for Chesterfield in 1791, are based upon the assessor's estimate of a tract's value per acre, taking into account any improvements that might have been present. Such tax rolls typically describe the amount of acreage that was owned by specific individuals and usually note when and how property was transferred from person to person. As time went on, the record-keeping process became

increasingly sophisticated and tax commissioners began noting each tract's distance from the county courthouse, the names and positioning of neighboring property owners, and by 1820, whether the tract contained any structural improvements that warranted taxation. Assessors estimated the collective value of buildings, excluding from consideration any slave quarters, fences, roads and wells that might have been present. When formulating their estimates they usually noted whether new buildings had been added to a parcel during the previous year and whether any previously existing buildings had been destroyed or razed. As might be expected, some assessors were more conscientious than others in setting down their observations. It appears that tax assessments in Chesterfield County were updated at five year intervals. However, when a property changed hands or was appraised on account of an estate settlement, the assessor typically used that opportunity to revise his earlier estimate.

Land tax records for the Civil War years are incomplete and sometimes are missing altogether. But the record books for some of the years during which assessments were made are fragmentary and deteriorated. For example, good records exist for 1861, but in 1862, pages containing certain letters of the alphabet are missing. In 1863 no records were set down at all and in 1864-1865, only part of the county was evaluated. Given the fact that legal elections were not held until late in 1865, the assessments recorded that year probably were not considered legally binding. Thus, the few figures that were set down most likely were based upon earlier-dated records, with few (if any) personal visits being made to properties within the assessor's district. Finally, in 1866, with the restoration of local government, the county's tax assessors commenced performing their duties with regularity.

Personal property tax records for Chesterfield County are complete, with the exception of the war years. The types of personal property that were taxed were found to vary from year to year. For example, sometimes only male slaves age 16 or older were taxed, whereas upon other occasions, the assessment was based upon males and females who were at least age 12. As the same

annual criteria were applied to virtually all taxpayers, this variable did not interfere with the comparative analysis of tax records as status indicators.

A comparison between censuses and personal property tax rolls led to the determination that the number of slaves upon which a property owner was taxed usually represented approximately half of those in his possession. Slave schedules and estate inventories were used to further refine these data. Census records for 1860 and 1870 were found to contain serious discrepancies. Neither death records, which were recorded annually and based upon interviews with household occupants, nor birth records were found to be available for Chesterfield County prior to 1864. Although social and industrial statistics are not available for Chesterfield County for 1860 (unlike many other Virginia counties), some records have survived for the decades 1850 and 1870. These documents proved useful in gaining a broader understanding of life in the county as a whole.

Genealogical accounts of the Eppes, Wayles, Thweatt, and Jefferson families were found to be inconsistent and in many instances, frankly contradictory. Although the current study focuses upon the history of the Eppington property and its development, it was necessary to take into account the family heritage of those who owned and occupied the dwelling. Therefore, cautious use was made of what seemingly were the most trustworthy genealogical materials. It should be noted that an abundance of genealogical information exists on John Wayles Eppes' descendants and other families with whom the Eppes intermarried. Even so, those are not addressed in this report because of their peripheral association with Eppington.

Generous use was made of historical and genealogical data accumulated by Chesterfield County personnel in the Department of Recreation, by Mr. Mark R. Wenger of the Colonial Williamsburg Foundation and especially, by Ms. Mary Ellen Howe. These include original notes and transcriptions of Eppes documents that are in private hands and on file at Duke University in North Carolina. Ms. Sherry H. Bridewell, a Richmond attorney, and Mrs. Bettie

Weaver, a well known Chesterfield County scholar, responded graciously to research queries, as did Mr. Minor Weisiger of the Virginia State Library. Ms. Khris Paavola was able to procure a legible facsimile of the account of Francis Eppes' estate sale, thereby making it available for transcription and inclusion in this report as Appendix A. Appendix B consists of a categorical listing of the items in that estate sale. These two appendices provide new insights into life at Eppington, as reflected by the Eppes family's material culture.

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Colonization of the Appomattox River Basin

The earliest recorded European exploration of the Appomattox River occurred in 1607, when Captain John Smith and a small party of adventurers sailed into its mouth and proceeded upstream as far as the falls. Later, when Smith prepared his well known map of Virginia, he indicated with a cross-mark the extent to which he had explored the Appomattox and he identified Indian villages he had sighted along its shore line, which he attributed to a tribe called the Appomattocks (Smith 1910:I:347; 1612) (Figure 1).

By 1609 officials of the Virginia Company of London had advised their representatives in Virginia to build settlements in a more wholesome environment than Jamestown, which was in a marshy area. Sir Thomas Dale, upon arriving in Virginia in May 1611, set about implementing his superiors' instructions and resolved to build new settlements upstream toward the head of the James River. Having declared martial law, he set about shifting the focus of the colony's development from Jamestown to an environment he considered more healthful and relatively secure from foreign invasion. In 1612 Dale and his men took a strong stand against the Native population and drove the Appomattocks from their habitation near the mouth of the river that bore their name. By Christmas of 1613 he had undertaken the establishment of a cluster of settlements he called the New Bermudas or Bermuda Incorporation, within the immediately adjacent area (Smith

1910:II:510; Hamor 1957:31).¹

According to Ralph Hamor, initial settlement in the Bermuda Incorporation occurred at the Nether Hundred, a neck of land on the upper side of the Appomattox River, which later became known as Bermuda Hundred. Here, Dale constructed a two mile long palisade, securing some eight miles of good corn ground. Upstream, above the Nether Hundred, Dale laid out Rochdale Hundred, which he impaled for the grazing of livestock. Directly across the mouth of the Appomattox River from the Nether Hundred, Dale built Bermuda City in the fall of 1614, at a location which later became known as City Point, an area that later was associated primarily with the Eppes family (Hamor 1957:31-32). Sir Thomas Dale also settled men at three sites on the northern side of the James River: at Digges Hundred (across the James from Rochdale Hundred); at the Upper Hundred or Curles (which lay just downstream from Rochdale Hundred); and at West and Shirley Hundred (the island and mainland which lay across from the Nether Hundred and Bermuda City, an area now known as Eppes Island and Shirley Plantation) (Hamor 1957:31-32).

To promote the development of the Bermuda Incorporation, the aggregate of the Bermuda settlements, which were joined by charter to the Bermuda Town, Sir Thomas Dale allotted planters a small plot of ground for their own personal use and exempted them from public service for eleven months per year, emergencies excepted. Some Bermuda settlers, however, had signed special contracts, whereby they agreed to serve three continuous years on behalf of the Incorporation. In 1614 Ralph Hamor reported that there were "faire houses already builded . . . not so few as fifty" (Anonymous 1896:77-78; Smith 1910:II:516; Hamor 1957:32).

John Rolfe in his True Relation of the State of Virginia in 1616 listed Bermuda Nether Hundred and West and Shirley Hundred as two of the six settlements within the colony that were then

¹Dale's choice of the name Bermuda is reminiscent of the fact that Sir George Somers and his party were stranded in the Bermoothes or Bermuda Islands in 1609, when their ship the Seaventure, veered off course and wrecked on the islands' treacherous shoals (Smith 1910:II:635-639).



Figure 1: Virginia Discovered and Discribed [sic] (Smith 1610).

inhabited by the English. He described the population of the two hundreds as "members belonging to the Bermuda Town: a place so called there, by reason of the strength of ye scytuation, were it indifferently fortified" (Rolfe 1971:7). He stated that Bermuda Nether Hundred had 119 inhabitants, who lived at a

seate [which] conteyneth a good circuit of ground the ryver wynding round, so that a pale runnyng cross a neck from one part of the ryver to the other, maketh it (as it were) an Isleland. The houses and dwellings of the people are sett round about by the ryver and all along the pale so farr distant one from the other, that upon anie all-arme [alarm] they can second and succor one the other [Rolfe 1971:9].

Rolfe also shed further light upon the rules governing the Bermuda Incorporation's work force, for he wrote that the corporation admitted no farmers unless they had procured from the governor four of the colony's men to be their servants, on whose behalf they paid rent in corn. Bermuda Nether Hundred's inhabitants included 17 such farmers, who with their four servants each, would have accounted for 85 persons out of the Hundred's population of 119, or approximately 71 percent of the area's occupants. Other residents, according to Rolfe, were engaged in making pitch and tar, potashes, charcoal and other industries. At Bermuda Hundred (i.e., the Nether Hundred), Dale chose to make his home and the colony's deputy governor, George Yeardley was residing there in 1616 (Rolfe 1971:10; Hamor 1957:32). The system Dale instituted, whereby farmers could grow crops for themselves after making their contribution to the colony's common store, demonstrated that when Virginia settlers were able to labor on their own behalf (as opposed to living communally), they were much more productive.

The establishment of the headright system, under the Virginia Company's third charter, fueled the spread of settlement, for it provided a means whereby colonists could claim 50 acres of land by paying for their own transportation to the colony and they could acquire a like amount for anyone else whose passage they'd paid. So-called "Ancient Planters," persons who had come to Virginia before Sir Thomas Dale's departure in 1616, were entitled to 100

acres of land as a personal dividend.

Although some of the outlying plantations established by Sir Thomas Dale appear to have been abandoned around the time of his departure, in 1619 the Bermuda City and Bermuda Hundred settlements still were viable, for they were represented by Samuel Sharpe and Samuel Jordan in America's first legislative assembly (Tyler 1966:249). Even so, in 1624 when a group of Ancient Planters penned an account that was highly critical of the Dale years, they said that Bermuda Hundred was built by men who, laboring under martial law, were already exhausted from hardship and deprivation. At Bermuda Hundred, the Ancient Planters reportedly "built such houses as before and in them lived in continual repairs, and building new where the old failed, until the massacre" (Anonymous 1896:76). In 1619, when Sir George Yeardley arrived in Virginia to assume the colony's leadership, he found "sixe Houses much decayed at Charles City" (Anonymous 1896:80).

There were no fortifications against a foreign enemy and protection against the Indians was negligible. This vulnerability may in part account for the fact that when the March 22, 1622 Indian uprising occurred, four men were slain at Master Abraham Piercy's plantation on the Appomattox River, five were killed at Charles or Bermuda City, and eight others in the vicinity also lost their lives (Kingsbury 1906-1935:III:566; Smith 1910:582-583).² Although Bermuda City was abandoned after the massacre, some of the other upstream settlements were held. But sporadic attacks continued to plague the settlers who remained and one writer claimed that the Indians returned to the abandoned settlements, where they burned the colonists' houses and killed their livestock (McIlwaine 1934:51; Kingsbury 1906-1935:III:612; Tyler 1966:417). Virginia Company officials, though not unsympathetic to the settlers' plight, ordered them to re-occupy immediately the plantations they had abandoned. In February 1624,

²Within the colony 347 men, women and children lay dead, many of whom had lived near the head of the James River, where the settlers were broadly dispersed and the area, sparsely populated.

when a census was taken of the colony's inhabitants, 41 people were living at Bermuda Hundred or "the neck of Land at Charles City." A year later, when a muster was made, there was a total of eleven nuclear families at Bermuda Hundred, an indication that the community was taking on an air of permanency (Hopten 1980:169-170,190,202-205).

Records of the Virginia Land Office indicate that settlers in increasing numbers moved into the colony's interior, establishing homesteads along both sides of the James and Appomattox Rivers. By May 1625 when a list of patented land was sent back to England, a total of 2,900 acres "upon Appomattox River" had been claimed by ten men. None of these tracts was described as being planted at the time, though a notation was made that "here is land laid out for Charles City and ye Common Land" (Kingsbury 1906-1935:IV:551). Some of the tracts "upon Appomattox River" were claimed by the male indentured servants of other planters, who apparently intended to relocate to their own property at some future time. Abraham Piercy's 1,150 acre patent, by far the largest amount of land claimed in the area by a single individual, had been occupied by his servants in 1622 when the massacre struck and four men were killed. Land records suggest that his tract lay on the north side of the Appomattox River along the upper part of Ashen or Ashton Creek, and extended toward the James River (Nugent 1969-1979:I:88,549).

In April 1625 Francis Eppes I, the immigrant ancestor of Francis Eppes VI of Eppington, was elected to serve in the colony's legislative assembly as the burgess from Shirley Hundred. He was appointed Commissioner for the Upper Parts on August 8, 1626, and as a military commander led an attack that was made on the Weyanoke and Appomattocks Indians on July 4, 1627. In 1629 Eppes appears to have set sail for England with his wife and sons but he had returned by 1632 and served as a burgess for Shirley Hundred, the Farrer plantation (Jordan's Journey), and Chaplin's Choice. In August 1635 Eppes patented 1,700 acres on the lower side of the Appomattox River's mouth, at City Point, in what was then Charles City County. Mentioned in his patent were his three

sons, one of whom was Francis Eppes II (Meyer and Dorman 1987:257-258).

During the second quarter of the seventeenth century the development of Virginia's tobacco economy led to a land use pattern that consisted of dispersed, relatively self-sufficient farmsteads. Although the majority of plantations at first were relatively small, by the third quarter of the seventeenth century a significant number of individuals who took advantage of the headright system managed to accumulate vast landholdings that consisted of literally thousands of acres (Billings et al. 1986:55,122). This attests to the fact that relatively successful tobacco planters, by paying for the passage of indentured servants, could not only increase their property holdings dramatically, but also be assured of having the work force that was necessary to clear and seat the land to which they asserted a claim (Nugent 1969-1979:I:vii).

Another way in which planters accumulated substantial quantities of land was through serial marriage. In the seventeenth century, when a colonist's lifespan was relatively abbreviated, the majority of men and women married more than once. These serial marital unions typically led to the consolidation of landed estate.³ Research has shown that women re-married more often than men, probably because a lone woman would have found difficult the management of a plantation. Also, Virginia society had a surplus of men and a shortage of marriageable women, making widows likely candidates for re-marriage. Household size during the mid-seventeen century generally was smaller than later in the century, when the number of laborers that joined planter households increased and mortality rates declined (Kelly

³Kevin P. Kelly, who studied economic and social development in seventeenth century Surry County, observed that the majority of very early land patents were 250 acres in size or less. By 1630, however, patent-size began to increase dramatically and patents of 550 acres or larger were issued to ca. 24 percent of those to whom land was allocated. This trend was sustained until ca. 1670, at which time it began to subside. He noted that by the middle of the century 74 percent of the patents that changed hands were transferred in their entirety (Kelly 1972:129,131).

1972:84,137).

Generally, shore line areas with the best soils for agriculture were patented first. But as the more successful planters were able to acquire smaller tracts that had been abandoned, they were able to consolidate their holdings into what became major plantations. These same men usually served as governmental officials and therefore had a greater opportunity to enhance their own positions, both socially and economically. Ultimately, this led to the emergence of a planter elite that served as the colony's ruling class (Billings et al. 1986:66-68). The forefathers of Francis Eppes VI, who built Eppington, epitomize this phenomenon.

The earliest extant patents for land on the upper side of the Appomattox River are relatively easy to relate to modern topographic features, for they follow the convolutions of the river and its tributaries, making it possible to chronicle the spread of settlement. To the west of Swift Creek and bordering south upon the Appomattox Indian town were the 650 acres granted to Charles Magnor in 1620, a plantation which marsh was known as the Conjurers Field. To Magnor's east, across the creek and further inland, lay the patent of Samuel Sharp. At the head of Ashen Swamp was Abraham Piercy's land. John Baugh, who in 1638 patented 250 acres on the Appomattox River, acquired land that extended from Swift Creek eastward to Ashen Swamp, bordering directly upon the river. Baugh gradually increased his landholdings in the area and eventually, 750 acres of his land was sold to William Walthall, a merchant whose name became permanently identified with the area. To the east of Baugh's property line, in the vicinity of a massive geological outcropping known as the Great Rock (or Point of Rocks) was the acreage of Ambrose Cobbs. To his east was the patent of Abraham Wood, who was in possession of extensive landholdings on both sides of the Appomattox River (Nugent 1969-1979:I:81-82,88,95,110-111,137,352,549; Hotten 1980:233).

During the second quarter of the seventeenth century, Francis Eppes I consolidated his patent on the lower side of the

Appomattox River's mouth into a tract of 1,980 acres. He served as Charles City County's burgess in 1640 and 1646 and prior to his death in 1674, had managed to acquire land on Shirley Hundred (or Eppes) Island (Meyer and Dorman 1987:258). During the mid-seventeenth century Abraham Wood's landholdings along both sides of the Appomattox River grew to encompass literally thousands of acres. In the aftermath of a second Indian uprising that occurred on April 18, 1644, a military garrison and trading post known as Fort Henry was established on Wood's land on the lower side of the Appomattox. In 1646 Fort Henry, by law, became the focal point of all Indian trade on the south side of the James River and it was one of the official checkpoints through which Virginia's tributary Indians could gain access to the James-York peninsula (Hening 1809-1823:I:315,325-326). It was from Fort Henry that Abraham Wood and a party of fellow adventurers set out on a westward journey in 1650. Later, in 1671, the Batts and Fallam expedition (which included Wood's son-in-law, Peter Jones) headed west to discover the mountains (Salley 1911:5-20; Batts et al. 1906:235).⁴

In October 1646 a treaty was made with the Indians, an agreement whereby the Natives ceded to the colonists the acreage of the James-York peninsula inland as far as the fall line, and they agreed to vacate the lower side of the James as far south as the Blackwater River. The area on the south side of the James between the head of the Blackwater River and the Old Manakin Town also was reserved to the use of Virginia planters and an arbitrary boundary was established (Hening 1809-1823:I:325,348).⁵ Thus, the land that later became Eppington lay within the vast territory that was left to the occupancy of the Indians.

⁴As late as 1678 Abraham Wood, then a Major-General, was still serving the public interest. In 1680 he succeeded in expanding the Treaty of Middle Plantation to include several more Indian tribes than had signed the original May 29, 1677 peace agreement (Spencer 1680).

⁵Indians needing access to the ceded lands were obliged to obtain a striped coat that they could use as a badge of safe conduct.

In 1662 the boundary line separating the Indians from the settlers who lived within the ceded territory was reaffirmed and Natives who had a reason to enter that area were obliged to carry copper or silver badges that identified the Indian town to which they belonged. Parties of armed horsemen were ordered to procession the boundary annually, a line that later was visibly demarcated by surveyors. The western portion of the boundary line was more explicitly defined than it had been previously and was said to run from the head of the Blackwater River to the Appomattocks Indian town, then across to the Monacan town (Hening 1809-1823:II:219-220;III:85).

During the 1670s, the rebel Nathaniel Bacon, who lived at Curles Neck on the upper side of the James River across from Bermuda Hundred, claimed that settlers who lived near the head of the river were being harassed by the Indians. Rallying popular support, he led an uprising that generally became known as Bacon's Rebellion, the underlying causes of which are still a subject of scholarly debate. Bacon's men sought revenge against all Indians indiscriminately and attacked any that were within convenient range, including the Pamunkeys, who were tributaries to the colony's government. King Charles II, concerned about the unrest in the colony, dispatched a group of commissioners to investigate its causes. They, in turn, queried county officials about the issues that had fomented the discontent.

The people of Henrico County, of which the Winterpock area was then part, prepared a list of grievances in which they stated that the bloodshed caused by Indian attacks had never been revenged and that the forts that had been built by Sir William Berkeley in 1676 were utterly useless.⁶ They also alleged that certain people had monopolized the Indian trade and that the monopolists (who were high ranking government officials) had betrayed the settlers to the Indians. They also stated that when the Natives wore body paint, friend and foe became

⁶In 1676 when forts were built at the head of the colony's main rivers and at several other locations, Fort Henry on the Appomattox again was used (Hening 1809-1823:II:326-328).

indistinguishable and that they couldn't determine whether the Indians who entered their territory were peaceful Tributaries or members of the more aggressive tribes that lived inland. The Henrico citizens closed their list of grievances by demanding that a war funded by donations rather than taxes be waged against virtually all Indians (British Public Records Office: Colonial Office Papers 5:1371).

Whether Bacon's followers were right or wrong in their allegations about the Indians, the laws passed by the Grand Assembly in June 1676, later dubbed "Bacon's Laws," offered to the land-greedy planters a legal means of acquiring Native property as soon as it had been abandoned by them (Hening 1809-1823:II:351). Thus, if the Indians could be driven from land that had been allocated to them legally, it could be claimed by opportunistic colonists. This policy undoubtedly hastened the spread of settlement inland into what previously had been Native territory (Hening 1809-1823:II:326-328).

After the death of Nathaniel Bacon, the uprising he had led quickly lost momentum and order was restored. On May 29, 1677, a new treaty was made with the Indians, a document that ushered in an era of peace. That Fall, a law was passed authorizing officials in certain counties (one of which was Henrico) to establish marts for Indian trade. In response to that act, on February 12, 1678, Henrico County's justices of the peace "nominated the Manakin town (soe called) on the south side of the James River to be the place for the faire or mart with the Indians." In December 1679 the Grand Assembly again passed an act establishing forts on the heads of the colony's four main rivers. Each fort was to include a strongly built storehouse and magazine (Henrico County Wills, Deeds, Etc. 1677-1692: Book I; Hening 1809-1823:II:410,433-434).

The Henrico County trade mart was discontinued in 1680 and the third series of forts was abolished in December 1682, as settlement became more dense on the south side of the James River; meanwhile, the course of the boundary line between the colonists and the Indians was reaffirmed (Hening 1809-1823:II:480). In 1691

the line that ran from the head of the Blackwater River to the old Appomattocks Town fields and then continued on to the Manakin Town, was re-surveyed and clearly marked. The Virginia Assembly enacted legislation declaring as null and void the patent of any planter who had attempted to settle beyond that line. Rangers were ordered to patrol the forest as a means of keeping peace and in 1694, the law that had been passed in 1662 requiring Indians to wear copper or silver badges was repealed.⁷ Although conflict over trade flared sporadically, and the employment of Indian servants in settlers' homes generated some ill-feeling, the Native population gradually was forced to yield its land to the burgeoning number of European settlers. The records of Henrico County demonstrate clearly that during the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries, many settlers had Indian servants living in their homes and that there was a considerable amount of trade with the Natives who lived beyond the boundary line that separated their land from that of the colonists. But there also is evidence suggesting that some of the stronger, more warlike tribes that lived above the heads of the colony's rivers continued to prey upon the homesteads of settlers that lived on the fringes of the colony's frontier, including those who lived in what became western Chesterfield County (Henrico County Wills, Deeds, 1688-1697: Book V:171,532-535).

A map prepared by Augustine Herrmann (1673) in 1670 indicates that plantations were then scattered along the banks of the colony's four major rivers and across the Chesapeake Bay, on the Eastern Shore. Shown prominently was Abraham Wood's property on the lower side of the Appomattox (Figure 2). But contemporary land records indicate that settlement also had spread into Virginia's interior. It was this change that ultimately resulted in the relocation of the colony's capital from Jamestown to Middle Plantation, later known as Williamsburg (Reps 1972:141).

As the seventeenth century wore on and the colony's population increased, social distinctions between the classes

⁷However, the law was reinstated in 1711.



Figure 2: Virginia and Maryland, 1670 (Herrmann 1673).

became more apparent. Indentured servants who had fulfilled their obligation to their employers often sought to procure land of their own, but lacked the financial resources to purchase it. This led to a growing proportion of the Virginia population that was free but landless. Some of these people leased land from larger planters, while others became transient. The gap between the wealthier, more powerful families and those who had fewer opportunities became more pronounced, with the result that Virginia became a distinctly stratified society. It was an era when transportation and communication primarily were waterborne and the more affluent planters generally controlled the land closest to major rivers and their navigable tributaries (Billings et al. 1986:66-68).

In some respects, Francis Eppes I's son and namesake, Francis Eppes II, epitomized the wealthy and successful Virginia planter, for like his father, he took an active role in public life and seized opportunities to enlarge the size of his family's fortune. In 1658 he became a Charles City County justice of the peace and by 1660 he had been made captain of the local militia. In 1661 Eppes was ordered to Fort Henry with a group of armed men, who at a moment's notice were to be ready to respond to an alarm. By 1665 he had moved to Henrico County, where he served as a justice and later, as a burgess. Francis Eppes II followed another pattern that was typical of the planter elite: he married in succession not one but two wealthy widows, thereby enhancing his fortune considerably (Meyer and Dorman 1987:259). He also continued to accumulate land through the headright system.

Thanks to the increased competition for good land and growth in the colony's population, the Virginia Assembly in 1666 enacted legislation that legally defined the minimum standards that were required for planting or seating a patent. It was resolved that "building an house and keeping a stock one whole year upon the land shall be accounted seating, and that cleering, tending and planting an acre of ground shall be accounted planting, and that either of these shall be accounted a sufficient performance of the condition required by the patent" (Hening 1809-1823:I:244). It

was a relatively short time later that Francis Eppes II was granted 927+ acres of land on the north side of the Appomattox River on Swift Creek (Meyer and Dorman 1987:259),

Documentary records reveal that Virginia planters, when initially establishing homesteads on their land, constructed crude huts, which provided housing while they erected weatherproof, but insubstantial and relatively uncomplicated frame dwellings out of the abundant supply of wood that was available. Constructing a simple house enabled a patentee to legitimize his land claim while fulfilling the need for basic shelter. It also allowed him to postpone building something more substantial until time and financial resources were more abundant. As the cultivation of tobacco, a labor-intensive crop, required prospective planters to make a substantial investment in servants and/or slaves, new patentees were inclined to skimp on housing costs, putting the bulk of their limited resources into the purchase of labor. Wealthy and successful planters such as the Eppes' could rent their newly patented acreage to landless freemen who "for seven year's Lease will build themselves a convenient dwelling and other necessary houses and be obliged at the expiration of their time to leave all in good repair," thereby substantiating their landlord's claim to the new property (Carson et al. 1982:141,158,168-170). A Frenchman who visited Virginia in 1687 wrote that:

. . . the farmers' houses are built entirely of wood, the roofs being made of small boards of chestnut as are also the walls. Those who have some means, cover them inside with a coating of mortar in which they use oyster-shells for lime; it is as white as snow, that although they look ugly from the outside, where only the wood can be seen they are very pleasant inside, with convenient windows and openings. . . . Whatever their rank . . . they build only two rooms with some closets on the ground floor, and two rooms in the attic above, but they build several like this, according to their means. They build also a separate kitchen, a separate house for Christian slaves, one for the negro slaves, and several to dry the tobacco, so that when you come to the home of a person of

some means, you think you are entering a fairly large village [Billings 1975:306].

Many well-to-do planters owned several large tracts of land which they operated as subsidiary farms or quarters, placing overseers there to supervise gangs of slaves. Others simply leased their land to tenants or sharecroppers. As time went on, the shortage of workers to till the soil and raise tobacco, a labor-intensive crop, grew more pronounced, for the number of whites immigrating from England as indentured servants declined steadily, just as new lands became available for planting. Gradually a system of slave labor evolved that enabled Virginia planters to depend upon enslaved blacks who could be compelled to work. Seventeenth century Virginians generally believed that blacks were "by nature cut out for hard labour and fatigue" and found that it was not only practical but profitable to employ slaves of both sexes "in tiling [sic] and manuring the ground, in sowing and planting tobacco, corn, etc." (Beverley 1947:37). Slavery became a deeply entrenched institution by the end of the seventeenth century, as Virginia planters consciously sought to eliminate any avenues by which their black indentured servants could gain their freedom. With the passage of the black code of 1705, slavery became a legally enforceable institution that soon became the foundation for the colony's plantation economy, in the colonial period and beyond (Morgan 1975:310-314; Billings et al. 1986:124).

The Forebearers of Eppington's Builder

Francis Eppes III, as a member of one of Virginia's wealthiest and most successful planter-families, inherited a vast amount of acreage within what became Henrico, Chesterfield, Charles City, and Prince George Counties. Like his father and grandfather, he accumulated land and played an active role in public life. He lived at Bermuda Hundred, in what was then Henrico County, where he served as a justice in 1683 and became a militia captain. In 1690 he was one of the commissioners appointed to take subscriptions toward the construction of the educational institution that became known as the College of

William and Mary. Francis Eppes III also served as a Henrico County Burgess in 1691-1692, 1693, 1703-1705, and 1705-1706. He had numerous land grants and in 1704, when a quitrent roll was compiled and sent back to England, he was credited with 2,145 acres of land in Henrico County and 226 acres in Prince George. Eppes and his brother-in-law, William Randolph, were trustees of the Bermuda Hundred town on the peninsula of that name (Meyer and Dorman 1987:263-264). Generally, the social position and political power of such gentry families solidified as time went on, with the result that they tended to monopolize the most lucrative public offices and pass them down through successive generations. Although middling planters sometimes were appointed to minor political offices, such as surveyor of highways or constable, after 1680 the opportunity for newcomers to enter even low level offices became far more difficult (Wheeler 1978:99).

Toward the end of the seventeenth century an estimated 60 percent of all estates of 2,000 or more acres belonged to families of past or present officials. In each of the colony's twenty counties, a fourth of the landowners were in possession of half or more of the land (Billings et al. 1986:123). The pattern of success the Eppes family enjoyed in accumulating real estate conforms to this model. In 1680 Francis Eppes III and three other men patented 580 acres of swampy land in Henrico County that was known as Captain Martin's Swamp. During the 1680s he served as a justice of the peace and as high sheriff of Henrico County. In 1696 he purchased from John Davis 240 acres of Henrico County land known as Longfield (Henrico County Deeds 1677-1705:124,243,271,332,372,404,554). As a highly successful planter and a member of the colony's elite, Eppes' business associates included such men as William Byrd I, William Randolph, Colonel Edward Hill, and Benjamin Harrison (Tinling 1977:47,94).

In 1690 Captain Francis Eppes (i.e., Francis Eppes III), Richard Kennon, Joseph Royall and George Archer patented 2,827 acres on the north side of the Appomattox River in Bristol Parish of what was then Henrico County. The tract being claimed was in the vicinity of a "great creek to the main river" at Wortapock

(Wintapock) (Nugent 1969-1979:II:362). In August 1703 Captain Eppes and George Archer, who were joined by Eppes' sons, Isham and Francis Jr. (i.e., Francis Eppes IV), and granddaughter Elizabeth Kennon, plus the Rev. George Robertson (rector of Bristol Parish), Philip Jones, Martha Stratton and James Hill, obtained a patent for 4,000 acres at the mouth of the main Winterpock Creek. The nine investors pooled their total of 80 headrights in order to assert their claim (Nugent 1969-1979:III:72; Virginia Land Office Patent Book 9:540). As time went on, the 4,000 acre patent on Winterpock Creek became known as "the Old Survey" or "the old Winterpock Survey" and Captain Eppes and his fellow investors sometimes were identified as "Captain [or Colonel] Francis Eppes and Company." Each of the nine investors in the 4,000 acre tract was entitled to 1/9th of it or 444 acres apiece, the quantity of land attributed to them when a quitrent roll was compiled in 1704 (Wertenbaker 1922:184).

Most of the Winterpock patent's boundary lines, which were irregular, extended from tree to tree and therefore are not readily identifiable in the modern landscape. Even so, because the eastern boundary line conformed to Winterpock Creek's main branch and its southeastern corner lay just east of the creek's mouth, and because its southern boundary line extended westward from that point and followed the banks of the Appomattox River, it may be safely assumed that the 4,000 acre Winterpock patent encompassed the land upon which the Eppington mansion eventually was built (Virginia Land Office Patent Book 9:540). If the patent was laid out in accord with the surveying convention traditionally employed when "new" (previously unclaimed) river front land was patented for the first time, the Winterpock tract probably ran inland for a distance of one mile⁸ and followed the Appomattox River upstream for a distance of 6 1/4 miles.⁹

⁸That the parcel extended inland for a little more than 5,100 feet supports this hypothesis.

⁹Many of Virginia's early land patents were laid out in poles measuring 16.5 feet. According to a convention that was commonly used, a surveyor treated as his base line the banks of a river or
Continued on following page

Francis Eppes III and his partners in the Winterpock patent were obliged to fulfill certain legal requirements in order to legitimize their land claim, for according to law, anytime a tract of land was patented initially, those who held its title were obliged to see that some minimum developmental requirements were met. In October 1705 patenting criteria were upgraded beyond the standards that had been set in 1666 and legislation was passed whereby:

. . . the building of one house of wood, after the usual manner of building in this colony, being at least in length 12 foot and in breadth 12 foot, and clearing, planting and tending at least one acre of ground, shall be and is hereby declared to be a good and sufficient seating and planting of land [Hening 1809-1823:I:313].

Simultaneously, the vestries of parish churches were assigned the task of annually processioning local land so that property boundaries would remain accurately fixed. In 1713 the legal definition of planting and seating was amplified further. Those patenting land that was deemed unfit for cultivation unless it was improved or manured, were given three years in which to build "one good dwelling house after the manner of Virginia building, to contain at least 20 feet in length and 16 feet in breadth, and to put thereon three cattle and six sheep or goats" in order to preserve their claims. Those who patented arable land could secure its title by draining or clearing three acres of marsh or swamp per 50 acres claimed. Persons establishing a claim to 50 acres of barren land could maintain three neat cattle or six sheep or goats upon their property for three years in order to legitimate their title, whereas those with rocky or stony land could dig a quarry or mine, using one worker for every hundred

Continued from previous page
creek, which he viewed as a straight line. He then projected the patent's side boundaries by drawing a line at a right angle to each end of that base line. Such side lines typically extended inland for a distance of one mile. Thus, a two acre patent was equivalent to 16.5 feet of river frontage by one mile measured inland (Bruce 1896:I:537-538).

acres claimed (Hening 1809-1823:IV:39).¹⁰

The first subdivision of the 4,000 acre Winterpock patent into equal shares seems to have occurred in November 1708, at which time James Hill's heirs (John, Edward, William and James Hill, Jr.) were assigned their late father's portion of the tract. The deeds whereby 440 acres were conveyed to the Hill heirs note that the investors "did in Hill's lifetime agree to divide the land and to cast lots for the parts" (Henrico County Deeds 1706-1737:121,123,125).

After the 4,000 acre Winterpock tract was subdivided, some of the men and women who had invested in the patent began disposing of their shares. The Rev. George Robertson in 1711 sold 125 acres "called Winterpock" to George Worsham, Sr., who in 1717 conveyed it to John Worsham.¹¹ Meanwhile, Philip Jones deeded a 100 acre parcel "at Wintepock" to his daughter, Martha, and son-in-law, Samuel Goode.¹² In 1719 Elizabeth Kennon conveyed 44 acres "at Wintopock" to her son Richard (Henrico County Deeds 1706-1737:78,89,239,471). Martha Stratton Browne bequeathed her 400 acres "at Wintopock" to her grandson, Henry Cox, and George Archer did likewise, leaving his acreage to his grandsons, Peter and George (Henrico County Wills Part I:1654-1737:320,517).

Francis Eppes V (son of the investor who in 1703 was identified as Francis Eppes, Jr.) in 1717 inherited 444 acres "called Wintopock" from his uncle Isham Eppes, one of the original investors in the 4,000 acre patent (Henrico County Wills Part I:1654-1737:191). Meanwhile, in ca. 1719 Francis Eppes, Jr.

¹⁰By 1720, anyone who cleared and fenced as pasturage three acres out of his 50 acre patent, or who expended 10 pounds current money on making structural improvements or setting out trees and hedges, was considered to have fulfilled planting and seating requirements. All of these criteria were summarized in an act that was passed in 1748 (Hening 1809-1823:IV:81; V:424-425). How conscientiously these laws were obeyed and enforced is uncertain.

¹¹He, in turn, deeded it to Philip Worsham, who in 1743 sold it to John Elam (Henrico County Deeds 1706-1737:235; Miscellaneous Court Records 1738-1746:1269).

¹²The Goodes sold it to Philip Smith, who in 1740 deeded it to Frances Wilkinson, a widow (Henrico County Miscellaneous Court Records 1738-1746:1123).

(IV), who already owned 444 acres of the Winterpock patent, by 1720 had fallen heir to the 444 acre share that had belonged to his father, Francis Eppes III. Francis IV, having accumulated 888 acres at Winterpock (or 2/9ths of the patent's original 4,000 acres), set about purchasing two other investors' shares. In 1726 he bought 444 acres at Winterpock from Henry Cox, the heir and grandson of Martha Stratton Browne, and in July 1726 he procured from Elizabeth Kennon's son, Richard, her 444 acres of the Old Survey "on Wintopock Creek on the north side of the Appomattox called Wintepock." Prior to 1733 Francis Eppes IV also managed to acquire the 444 acres that his son, Francis V, had inherited from Isham Eppes. Thus, by the time Francis IV made his will in November 1733, he had come into possession of 2,220 acres (or 5/9ths) of the 4,000 acre Winterpock patent (Henrico County Deeds 1706-1737:471; Wills Part I:1654-1737:29,459; Order Book 1719-1724:176).

But Francis Eppes IV also acquired additional acreage in the vicinity of Winterpock that was contiguous to the original 4,000 acre patent. Records of the Virginia Land Office reveal that in October 1716 he patented 690 acres of "new land" that was "on a branch of the Winterpock Survey belonging to Capt. Francis Eppes and Co." and in 1717 he was allocated 1,000 acres of "new land" at the mouth of Noonung Creek. In 1724 he laid claim to 1,000 acres of "new land" that lay further inland, on the north side of the "Wintopock Main Creek" (Nugent 1969-1979:III:185,196,263; Virginia Land Office Patent Book 12:1). Others who acquired land in the same general vicinity were William Rowlet, Timothy Harris, William Trayler, and Philip Jones, one of the original investors in the 4,000 acre Winterpock tract. Francis Eppes IV's inland 1,000 acres abutted the head of a branch of Buckshorn Creek, whereas Philip Jones' patent bordered Surline Creek (Nugent 1969-1979:III:185,225,263, 291,372). Thus, the latter parcels lay somewhat north of the original Winterpock patent. Eppes' 1733 will refers to these two tracts as the "Upper" and "Lower" quarters and reveals that a black slave named Cesar was then

living at the Lower Quarter.¹³ William Kennon in 1718 claimed land to the east of the old Winterpock tract, acreage that abutted Nooning Creek, and in 1725 Thomas Jefferson, whose grandson became president of the United States, purchased a 250 acre parcel called Wintopock that originally had belonged to Richard Womack (Nugent 1969-1979:III:204; Henrico County Deeds 1706-1737:16).

On November 7, 1733, when Francis Eppes IV made his will, he left his wife, Sarah, liferights to the home they had shared in Bermuda Hundred, plus 200 acres. He distributed the rest of his landholdings among his sons and daughters.¹⁴ To son Francis V he left his land in Bermuda Hundred, plus 908 acres called Longfield and 500 acres called Skinquarter, all of which tracts were then in Henrico County; Francis V also was to receive a 3,500 acre parcel in Goochland County. Son Richard Eppes (the father of Francis Eppes VI of Eppington)¹⁵ received 250 acres called "the Nuttree;" 280 acres on Swift Creek; 1,100 acres that were described as "part of Winterpock Old Survey;"¹⁶ 700 acres called "Winterpock Upper

¹³Court records reveal that Francis Eppes IV also owned land along Swift Creek and that he took an active role in public life, serving as a Henrico County justice, surveyor and sheriff (Henrico County Deeds and Wills 1725-1737:134,140,154,198,219,420; Court Book 1710-1724:29,58,173).

¹⁴Sarah and Francis Eppes IV were the parents of a daughter named Martha, who married John Wayles of Charles City County (Henrico County Wills Part II:10). In April 1746, when Martha Eppes and John Wayles executed a premarital agreement, she transferred the legal title to the slaves she had inherited to two trustees, although she and her future husband retained the right to use them (Henrico County Wills and Deeds 1744-1748:132). The Wayles couple's daughter, Martha, married in succession Bathurst Skelton and Thomas Jefferson. John Wayles' other daughter, Elizabeth, who was John's child by his second wife, married her cousin, Francis Eppes VI (Meyer and Dorman 1987:264) (see ahead). In 1771, when Bathurst Skelton made his will, he named his wife, the former Martha Wayles, as guardian of his son. The will was witnessed by Francis Eppes VI, who was Martha's brother-in-law through his marriage to her half-sister (Charles City County Wills 1737-1774:35).

¹⁵Although modern writers have identified this Francis Eppes as being the 5th of his line in Virginia, the Virginia Historical Register identifies him as the 6th, which agrees with the modern research of noted genealogist John Dorman.

¹⁶That is, half of the 2,220 acres he had managed to accumulate.

Quarter;"¹⁷ half of the land the testator had purchased from Henry Cox (i.e., 222 of the 444 acres that Martha Stratton Browne had left to Cox);¹⁸ and half of the land the testator had bought from Richard Kennon (i.e., 222 of the 444 acres that originally had belonged to Richard's mother, Elizabeth Kennon) (Henrico County Wills Part I:1654-1737:459). It was through Francis Eppes IV's bequest to his son, Richard, that the Winterpock acreage upon which the Eppington mansion was built came into the hands of Francis Eppes VI, the testator's grandson (see ahead).

Francis Eppes IV bequeathed to his son, William, 1,100 acres of the "Winterpock Old Survey;" 222 acres of the Cox tract; 222 acres of the Kennon tract; and the Winterpock "lower quarter where negro man Cesar lives;" plus acreage he had purchased from Thomas Tanner. Richard and William Eppes also were to receive their father's land in Goochland except for that portion of the Swan's Creek plantation which had been devised to daughters Ann and Martha (Henrico County Wills Part I:1654-1737:459).

Francis Eppes IV's son, Francis V, outlived his father by only three years. In 1737 when he made his will, he stated that he was leaving his land in Bermuda Hundred to his brother, Richard, if the latter were willing to relinquish to their brother, William, his personal interest in the Longfield tract. He left to William the land at Longfield that had been purchased from Robert Burton and he divided his Skinquarter tract between William and Richard (Henrico County Wills 1654-1737:612).

Richard Eppes, like his forebearers, enhanced the quantity of land under his control and he took an active part in public life in Henrico and the newly formed Chesterfield County. In 1753 he purchased Richard Royall's interest in the tract called Captain Martin's Swamp and in 1760 he bought the old abandoned glebe of Dale Parish. He also acquired acreage from Thomas Stratton and

¹⁷This probably was the 690 acre tract that the testator had acquired in 1716, which adjoined the original 4,000 acre patent.

¹⁸During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the Eppes' called this parcel "Old Coxes." It abutted the west side of Winterpock Creek and fronted upon the Appomattox (see ahead).

one or more lots in Bermuda Hundred. In 1750 Eppes and his kinsman, William Kennon, were designated to hire someone to build a bridge across the Appomattox River at Burton's and a year later, he was appointed have a ducking stool built at Bermuda Hundred. In 1752 he took the special oaths that were necessary in order to serve as a vestryman and a county justice (Henrico County Deed Book 1:505; 4:200,252,557; Chesterfield County Order Book 1749-1754:93,117,216,279).

Richard Eppes, who married Martha Bolling, came in possession of the Bermuda Hundred land that his late brother, Francis V, had inherited, even though he apparently failed to relinquish to his brother, William, his personal interest in their late father's Longfield tract. In 1762, when Richard made his will, he bequeathed to his wife liferights in the 500 acre tract they occupied and 400 acres they owned in Bermuda Hundred, as well as their lots and houses there. He left to his son, Richard Henry Eppes, his 908 acre tract called Longfield and a lot in Gatesville, plus half of his lands at Winterpock and in Amelia County. To son Francis VI, who was still a minor,¹⁹ he left the remaining half of his Winterpock and Amelia County land, the acreage at Bermuda Hundred to which his mother had liferights, and any other property the testator owned at the time of his death. Richard Eppes bequeathed to his son, Francis VI, slaves and half of his livestock from his Winterpock, Longfield and Amelia property, whereas son Richard Henry received slaves and the other half of his father's livestock.²⁰ Francis Eppes VI also was to inherit his father's silver tankard, seven silver spoons marked "MB," a dozen silver teaspoons marked "FE," two silver salts, and three beds with their furnishings. Son Richard Henry was to receive a silver tankard, a dozen silver spoons and two silver salts that were to be purchased by the testator's executors. In the event of one son's death, the other was to inherit the

¹⁹Francis VI was born in 1747 and came of age in 1768. Between March 25, 1762 and March 25, 1764 he was enrolled at the College of William and Mary.

²⁰The livestock consisted of cattle, horses, sheep and hogs.



Figure 3: A Map of the Most Inhabited Part of Virginia (Fry and Jefferson 1775).



deceased brother's share of their father's estate (Henrico County Will Book 1:355-358; Chesterfield County Will Book 3:673-674).

Francis Eppes VI of Winterpock (Eppington)

Richard Eppes died in 1765 and thanks to son Richard Henry Eppes' untimely death a year later,²¹ Francis Eppes VI inherited the bulk of his father's estate as soon as he attained his majority (Parks 1987:589). In November 1769 he purchased 378 acres in Lunenburg County's Cumberland Parish from David Garland, who had the entail on his land and slaves docked in order to make the sale. Eppes, himself, presented a petition to the House of Burgesses, whose permission he sought to dock the entail on the 400 acre Longfield tract in Henrico County, which had descended to him through inheritance. He proposed, instead, to attach the entail to what he claimed was a much more valuable piece of property: 400 acres of Chesterfield County land that he owned in fee simple, which adjoined his 150 acre tract that contained a brick house. Conditional approval was given to Francis Eppes VI's proposal, dependent upon the consent of the king (Hening 1809-1823:IX:442-443,450-451). By October 1773 that hurdle had been overcome and it became possible for Eppes to dispose of the Longfield property.²² It was then recorded in the court of Henrico County that Francis Eppes, great-grandson of Francis Eppes, had sold his 908 acre Longfield tract to a man named Archer Branch (Henrico County Deed Book 1767-1774:498-499). The consummation of that sale provided Eppes with L 200 pounds sterling. Around that same time, he sold 400 acres on Swift Creek to Valentine Winfrey and deeded to John Osborne lot number 15 in the town of Gatesville (Chesterfield County Deed Book 6:68-

²¹He was murdered by a slave girl on Thursday, June 12, 1766, according to two newspaper accounts that were published in New York but bore a Williamsburg date line (Headley 1987:115).

²²Longfield is shown on Fry and Jefferson's (1775) map of Virginia, as is Winterpock Creek and Bevil's Bridge, which flanked what became Eppington (Figure 3). John Henry's map (1770) indicates that wealthy families were beginning to develop plantations along the Appomattox River (Figure 4). Both maps demonstrate that by the 1770s, the area to the west of Petersburg was losing some of its backwoods character.

72;7:81-82). These transactions would have provided him with some of the funds he needed to develop his property at Winterpock into a family seat.²³

Sometime between 1768 (when Francis Eppes VI came of age) and 1771, he married Elizabeth Wayles, the daughter of John Wayles and his second wife, of The Forest, in Charles City County.²⁴ Wayles, who in 1756 was the King's Attorney in Virginia, was a wealthy planter who had accumulated a handsome fortune and was heavily involved in the slave trade (Bergh 1903:5). Although the wedding date of the Eppes' is unknown, it is likely that they married sometime prior to September 10, 1771, when Francis Eppes witnessed the will of Bathurst Skelton, the husband of Elizabeth's half-sister, Martha.²⁵ Eppes assisted in another civil-yet-personal duty that involved the Wayles/Skelton family, for he on December 23, 1771 he joined Thomas Jefferson in signing the widowed Martha Wayles Skelton's marriage bond (Boyd 1950:86-87). The couple were wed on January 1, 1772.²⁶ John Wayles, when initially making his will on April 15, 1760, named Francis Eppes and his children (all of whom were minors) as his future executors. He left his daughter, Martha, the slaves that were part of his first wife's (i.e., her mother's) marriage settlement, with the exception of two individuals who were to descend to her after his current

²³In May 1770 a Francis Eppes of Dinwiddie tried to sell a 400 acre tract in that county in order to satisfy some debts (Purdie and Dixon, March 22, 1770).

²⁴Peter Jefferson's prayer book, which contains some genealogical notations made by Thomas Jefferson, states that Elizabeth was the daughter of Wayles and a woman named Cocke and that she was born on February 24, 1752 (Jefferson n.d.). The Forest was relatively close to Westover Church. The residence, which was occupied by the Talman family during the Civil War, reportedly was burned by Union troops.

²⁵Martha, who was born on October 31, 1748 and died on September 6, 1782, was the widow of Bathurst Skelton, deceased on September 30, 1768. They had a son, John Skelton, who was born on November 7, 1767 and died on June 10, 1771. Martha was the daughter of John Wayles' first wife, Martha Eppes, and therefore was Elizabeth Wayles Eppes' half-sister (Tyler 1925:266; Jefferson n.d.).

²⁶Thomas Jefferson's account book documents his presence at The Forest during the fall and winter of 1770 and he was a frequent visitor there throughout 1771.

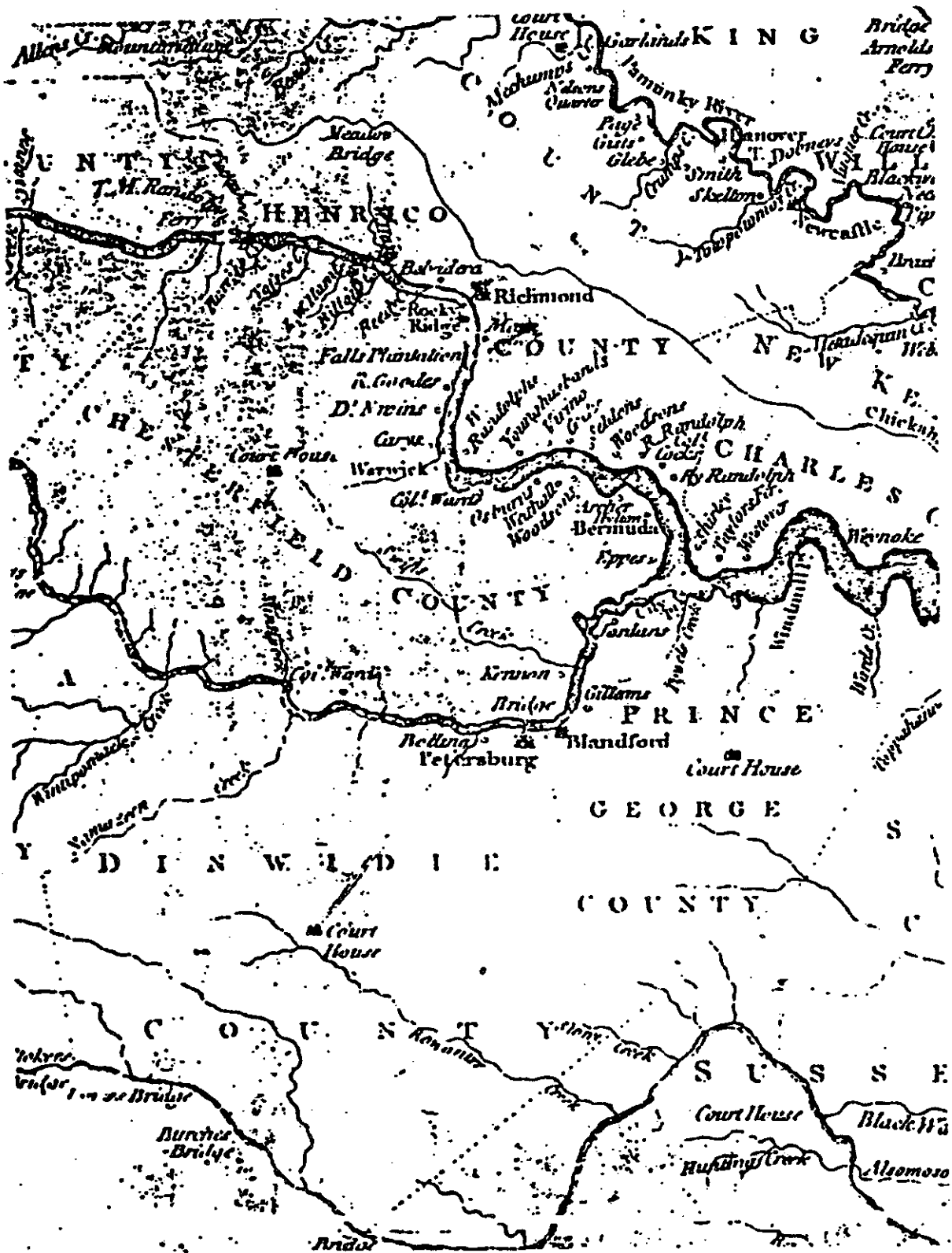


Figure 4: A New and Accurate Map of Virginia (Henry 1770).

(third) wife's decease. He bequeathed liferights to 20 slaves and his landholdings (including The Forest) to his current wife, the former Elizabeth Lomax, after whose death they would revert to the three daughters he had had by his second wife.²⁷ In March 1772 John Wayles added the name of Thomas Jefferson to his list of executors and on February 12, 1773 he made a codicil, bequeathing to his three grandchildren one female slave apiece (Tyler 1925:269-270).

John Wayles died on May 28, 1773 and on July 15, 1773, his co-executors, Francis Eppes, Thomas Jefferson, and Henry Skipwith (husband to Wayles' daughter, Anne), placed an advertisement in the Virginia Gazette, offering for sale the decedent's property in Cumberland, Goochland and Charles City Counties. The sale of Wayles' Charles City County landholdings, in which he had bequeathed liferights to his last wife, Elizabeth, confirms that she, too, was dead (Boyd 1950:I:100). Thus, all of the late John Wayles' landholdings would have descended to his daughters, who also would have inherited his last wife's share of his slaves. The proceeds of John Wayles' estate would have provided his daughters (and their spouses) with a potentially abundant and relatively prompt infusion of wealth, for in July 1773 the decedent's executors (who also were his sons-in-law) offered for sale his 2,520 acres in Cumberland County; his 1,420 acres in Goochland County; and his 1,480 acres in Charles City. The following summer, 150 of Wayles' slaves were offered for sale at Rocky Ridge near Richmond (Purdie and Dixon, July 15, 1773; June 16, 1774). But correspondence between Thomas Jefferson and Francis Eppes VI reveals that the late John Wayles' debts were numerous and his executors were still paying off his creditors

²⁷Wayles noted that his eldest daughter, Martha, had been provided with a settlement earlier on and that if she wasn't satisfied, she could relinquish that and share equally with her sisters. The Wayles sisters fell heir to all of their father's property, for his third (and final) wife died only 11 months after he'd married her.

more than 30 years after his death (Betts and Bear 1966:206).²⁸

Francis Eppes VI apparently was at his late father's plantation in the upper reaches of the Appomattox River in November 1773, when he identified himself as "Francis Eppes of Winterpock"²⁹ while serving with his brother-in-law, Thomas Jefferson, as co-executor of John Hyleton's will (Chesterfield County Will Book 2:103). By that time, Francis Eppes not only had sold his Longfield property in Henrico County and his Gatesville lot and Swift Creek acreage in Chesterfield, he also had become the father of John Wayles ("Jack") Eppes, his first child, who was born in April 1772 (Stanard 1895-1896:33:26; Parks 1987:588-589).³⁰ But Francis and Elizabeth Wayles Eppes apparently were not residing at Winterpock at the close of 1773, for Philip Mazzei, who had just arrived in Virginia, wrote of meeting the couple at their house approximately four miles from the James River and an equal distance from Williamsburg (Marraro 1942:189).

During 1775 and 1776, Thomas Jefferson several times wrote to "Francis Eppes, Esq., At the Forest, Charles City." In July and August 1775 Jefferson passed along to Eppes the latest military news and he sent his warmest regards to his sister-in-law,

²⁸This situation is reminiscent of William Byrd II's dilemma when settling the estate of his father-in-law, Daniel Parke. In that instance, Byrd assumed the decedent's assets as well as his liabilities and learned to his dismay that the latter outweighed the former.

²⁹When Eppes and his wife developed his land on Winterpock Creek into their family seat, they may have decided to give the property a new name in order to bestow upon it a distinct identity. The neighborhood generally was known as Winterpock and John Anderson, Philip Smith and George Archer, who owned nearby plantations, also used Winterpock as their "address" (Henrico County Wills 1654-1737:320,356,422).

³⁰One authority says that John Wayles Eppes was born on April 7, 1773 at Appomattox Manor (City Point), whereas another states that his birth occurred on April 19, 1773 at Eppington (Johnson et al. 1931:170; U. S. Government 1989:918). Neither provides supportive information. Both sources appear to be wrong, however, because John Wayles made reference to his grandson, John Wayles Eppes, in the February 12, 1773 codicil to his will (Tyler 1925:270). Also, Thomas Jefferson wrote in the front of his late father's prayer book that John Wayles Eppes was born in April 1772 but omitted the day of the month (Jefferson n.d.).

Elizabeth.³¹ Francis and Elizabeth Eppes (and perhaps Martha Wayles Jefferson) were at The Forest when Thomas Jefferson wrote again on October 24, November 7, and November 21, 1775. The Eppes were still there when Jefferson contacted Francis again on July 15, 1776. Jefferson, in a July 23, 1776 letter, said that when Elizabeth Eppes failed to write to him,³² he was hard pressed not to insist that his own wife follow suit. Jefferson's July 23rd letter and one he wrote the following day suggest strongly that Francis and Elizabeth Eppes and Martha Jefferson, and both couples' children, were then living together at The Forest. The Eppes were still there on August 9, 1776, when Thomas Jefferson wrote to Francis from Philadelphia, informing him that

. . . the whole glass stores of the city could not make out anything like what you desired. I did therefore get what I thought would be best, imagining you wanted the number you mentioned in any event, and that not being able to get them of that form, you would take them of any other. I therefore got 4 pint cans . . . 2 quart ditto . . . and 6 half-pint tumblers . . . all of double flint.

He also told Eppes that his "heckle is not yet come" (Boyd 1950 :1:174-175, 184, 237-238, 248-249, 251-252, 264, 459-460, 472-474, 487; 15:576).³³

In 1779 Francis Eppes VI and several other wealthy planters pooled their resources in order to transport a large cargo of cloth, dishes, glassware, and clothing from Suriname (Dutch

³¹On July 5, 1775 Jefferson informed another man that a Captain Francis Eppes and a detachment of men had been dispatched to Portobello (near Williamsburg), to check on a naval vessel that was in that vicinity.

³²Elizabeth was then pregnant or "burly," as her husband put it.

³³The Eppes, Martha Jefferson and their respective children probably moved in together so that Francis Eppes watch over both families while Thomas Jefferson was away and conditions were somewhat unstable in Virginia. That the families retreated to The Forest rather than Winterpock suggests that the older plantation was better suited to their occupancy. But Jefferson's shopping for glassware for Francis Eppes raises the possibility that Eppes was planning to furnish a personal residence. During this period Martha Jefferson also spent some time at Elk Hill, in the piedmont (Boyd 1950 :15:576).

Guiana) to Virginia. The ship, which was owned by St. George Tucker, encountered two British cruisers that chased it toward North Carolina's Currituck Inlet, where it ran aground, broke up and was lost. This episode resulted in a law suit that ended up in Virginia's High Court of the Chancery (St. George Tucker vs. Francis Eppes, 1779-1780). Although the outcome of this litigation is uncertain, it appears that Eppes and the other investors believed that the loss of their cargo canceled out any funds they might have owed St. George Tucker for transporting their goods.

Despite the fact that military activities during the Revolutionary War had no direct impact upon Eppington, the principal market cities Francis Eppes would have used (Richmond and Petersburg) were affected. Richmond was invaded by Benedict Arnold's men and at Petersburg there was a spirited battle in 1781 and the city was occupied twice by British troops. It was Petersburg's strategic importance as a seat of commerce that brought the war to the town. Thomas Anburey, a British prisoner-of-war who visited Petersburg, said that its warehouses were crowded with tobacco, which owners could not find purchasers. He observed that the planters wouldn't export it themselves because of the danger of British privateers and noted that a few merchants had made trips to Bermuda, but most of Petersburg's stores were closed. Anburey said that Richmond and Petersburg had "formerly supplied the back settlers with all manner of stores for their plantations." American General Henry (Light Horse Harry) Lee described Petersburg as "first among the commercial towns of the state." He said that the city's principal export was tobacco and that during wartime, public stores (military supplies) were concentrated there (Scott and Wyatt 1960:27). It is likely that the war's adverse impact upon Petersburg's tobacco trade and mercantile operations had serious economic implications for Francis Eppes, a tobacco-grower whose extensive landholdings abutted both sides of the Appomattox River.

Francis Eppes VI, like his forefathers, continued to actively enhance the quantity of land under his control. In June 1782 he

purchased Thomas Charleton's 32 parts interest in the tract known as Captain Martin's Swamp, adding it to the land his late father had owned there, and in 1785 he bought a 12 1/2 acre tract in Bermuda Hundred that was known as Locketts (Chesterfield County Deed Book 10:333,540). Land tax rolls for Amelia County (an area which records are incomplete) reveal that in 1782 Francis Eppes owned 3,547 acres of land.³⁴ In 1785 he purchased an acre of land from John Dodson and during the following year, he bought 400 acres from William Cousens (Cousins). It may have been during 1785-1786 that he acquired the land on the Amelia County side of Eppes Falls that he used as a mill seat, for his son-in-law later purchased additional Cousens acreage (Amelia County Land Tax Lists 1782-1788). In 1787 when Thomas Jefferson published his well known map of Virginia, he identified by name the site of Eppington (Jefferson 1787) (Figure 5). It was close to the old river road that paralleled the Appomattox, crossing at Bevil's Bridge.

In 1791 when land tax rolls become available for Chesterfield County, Francis Eppes VI was in possession of 3,441 acres of land. Only the late Thomas Mann Randolph's estate was larger, having 4,614 1/4 acres. But in 1793, when the Randolph estate was subdivided, Eppes became the county's largest landowner. He retained that distinction up until the time of his death in 1807. Eppes' land, which was assessed at 10 shillings per acre, was of middling value in a county where assessment rates ranged from 34 shillings 3 pence per acre to 4 shillings 4 pence. It is likely that the scope of his landholdings, their remoteness and perhaps a lack of intense development were reflected in the rate per acre at which he was assessed. His assessment per acre remained constant at 10/10 throughout the years 1791-1807 (Chesterfield County Land Tax Lists 1791-1807).³⁵

³⁴Land tax rolls for the 1790s also are incomplete for Amelia County.

³⁵It has been observed that many of the men who served as Chesterfield County tax assessors held office for many years. Even though an American monetary system began to develop as early as 1793, Chesterfield assessments continued to be recorded in pounds, shillings and pence through 1820, probably because the tax

Continued on following page

Personal property tax rolls for 1787 reveal that Francis Eppes VI's investment in slaves and livestock also was extensive. Simultaneously, the tax assessors in Cumberland County credited him with 19 slaves over the age of 16 and 27 younger slaves, plus 11 horses, asses and mules and 49 cattle. In Amelia County Eppes had 32 slaves who were over age 16 and 38 who were younger, plus 14 horses, asses and mules and 102 cattle. His Amelia acreage apparently was entrusted to a free white male aged 16 to 21, upon whom Eppes paid poll tax; this suggests that the male in question was an overseer or farm manager. In Chesterfield County Francis Eppes of Eppington paid taxes upon one free white male over the age of 21 (himself), 42 slaves who were over the age of 16 and 45 younger slaves, plus 13 horses, 64 cattle and a four-wheeled carriage. He also was credited with a modest-sized herd of livestock at Bermuda Hundred (Schreiner-Yantis 1987:331,355,380). Although the state of Virginia tabulated its heads of households in 1784 and 1785,³⁶ no list for Chesterfield County seemingly has survived. Even so, Francis Eppes' listing for Amelia County is helpful in understanding how he managed his subsidiary farms, for in 1785 he was credited with seven whites, three dwellings and seven other buildings (Jackson 1908:83). Thus, he apparently placed tenants or overseers upon his property.

The responsibility of maintaining one's slaves was considerable and slaveowners, whether motivated by humanitarian or economic reasons (or a mixture of the two), were obliged to see that their slaves were adequately fed, clothed and housed, and that their health was maintained. In fact, agricultural publications of the early-to-mid nineteenth century addressed

Continued from previous page
assessors (and those who were being taxed) thought in those terms. The change may have been precipitated in 1820 by the need to assign separate values for whatever buildings then stood upon a piece of property.

³⁶The lists of Heads of Households are a singular records group, for they include the number of whites that were attributed to a particular landowner, the number of dwellings on his/her property and the number of other buildings. Unfortunately, such lists exist for fewer than half of the counties that were then in Virginia.

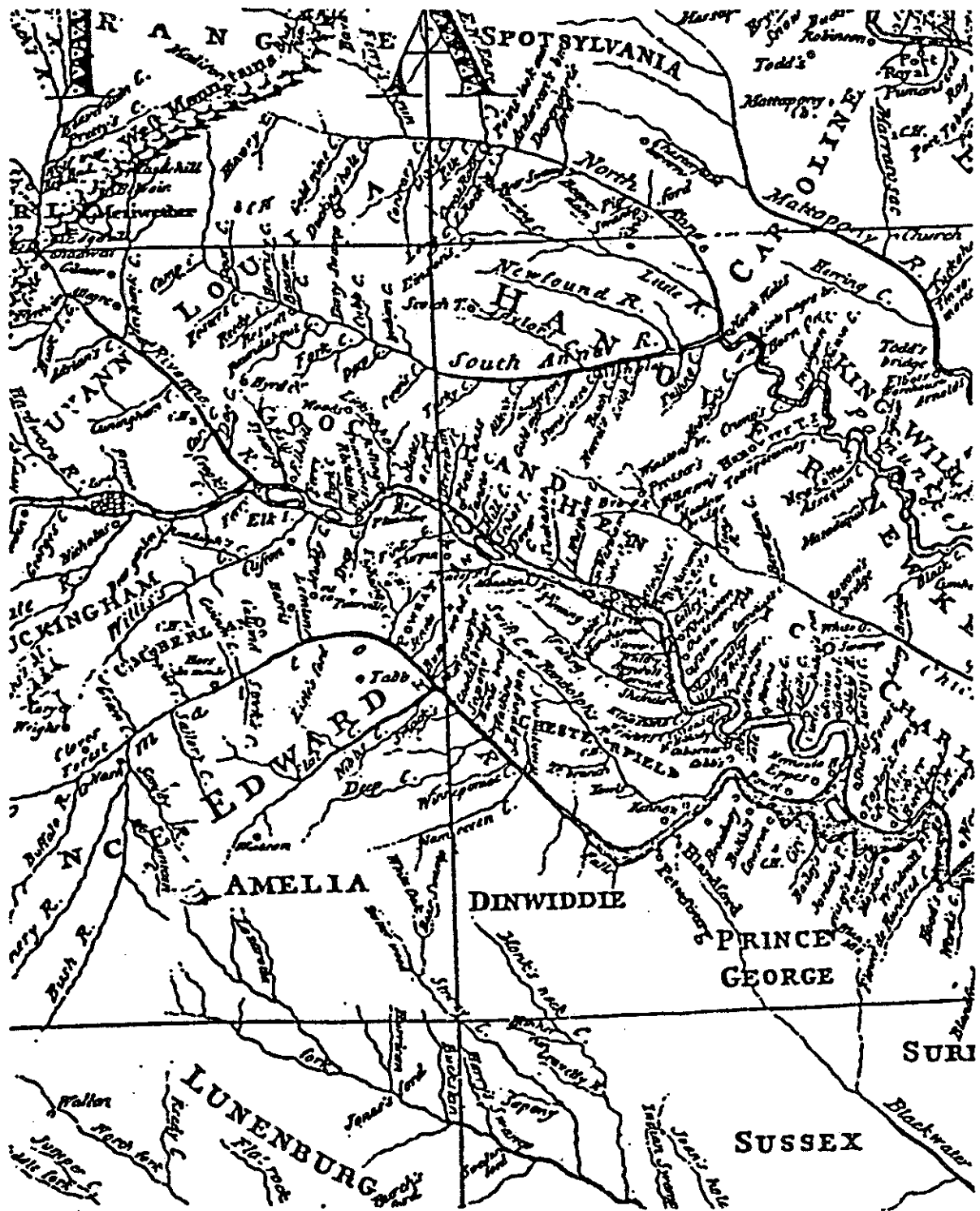


Figure 5: A Map of the Country between Albemarle Sound and Lake Erie (Jefferson 1787).

these issues, making specific recommendations. It was generally agreed that a sick slave was not only unprofitable, but also a financial liability. Therefore, by taking adequate care of their slaves, planters were protecting a substantial financial investment (Breedon 1980:163).³⁷ Archival research has shown that a typical slave quarter contained a minimum of nine and a maximum of 20 to 30 slaves. Individual dwellings within the quarters (sometimes as huts or cabins) usually housed nuclear families, whereas unmarried adults lived in small, attached additions. Although field laborers usually were housed close to their owners, if nearby fields were under cultivation, slaves working the outlying acreage of very large plantations often lived in distant quarters that were convenient to the ground they worked. Planters sometimes provided their slaves with garden plots in which they could grow some of their own food (Colonial Williamsburg Foundation 1985:II:35).³⁸

When a census of the United States was compiled in 1790, Francis Eppes of Chesterfield County was credited with 124 slaves, or approximately twice as many as those upon which he paid personal property tax (Jackson 1790:50). This discrepancy is attributable to the fact that slaves below the age of 12 were excluded from the tax rolls.³⁹ In 1790 Chesterfield County's population then consisted of 14,214 persons, 1,652 of whom were free white males aged 16 and over; 1,557 of whom were free white males under the age of 16; 3,249 of whom were free white females;

³⁷This point was not lost on Mrs. Frances Trollope, who visited the United States in 1827. She not only found slavery a mockery of the Americans' claim that "All men are born free and equal," but wrote that the "kindly attention bestowed upon the health of slaves [is rendered because] a valued piece of property would be endangered. Unhappily the slaves, too, know this, and the consequence is, that real kindly feeling very rarely can exist between the parties" (Trollope 1949:245).

³⁸Maps of Shirley Plantation in 1820 and ca. 1866 show planting beds that were 15 feet wide and were located directly behind each of seven slave cabins. Each garden plot was separated from neighboring ones by a ditch (Anonymous 1820, [1866]).

³⁹It is important to remember that not all of Francis Eppes' slaves were on his property at Eppington. Rather, some would have been on his land at Bermuda Hundred and Captain Martin's Swamp.

7,487 of whom were black slaves; and 369 of whom were other free persons of undescribed ethnic affiliation (University of Virginia 1983:16-17).

Between 1791 and 1796 the Chesterfield County tax assessor charged Francis Eppes for 50 to 52 slaves who were over age 16, between 6 and 9 who were aged 12 and 16, and 28 to 30 horses, asses and mules. He was credited with a four-wheeled coach or chaise and a two-wheeled riding chair.⁴⁰ Eppes paid poll taxes upon himself and three other free white males who were aged 16 or older. These individuals likely included himself, his son and two farm managers or overseers that helped him with his agricultural operations in Chesterfield County (Chesterfield County Land Tax Lists 1791-1796). At a time when only 62 percent of Chesterfield County households had slaves and the overwhelming majority of slaveowners had from one to five slaves, Francis Eppes owned far more slaves than anyone else in the county. Likewise, his investment in livestock greatly exceeded that of his peers (McCartney 1988).

The Jefferson Family's Association With Eppington

Numerous letters that Thomas Jefferson exchanged with Francis and Elizabeth Wayles Eppes reveal that both households placed an exceptionally high premium on family life and enjoyed a mutually beneficial relationship. Francis and Elizabeth Wayles had at least six children, one son and five daughters. The birth of John Wayles Eppes in 1772 was followed by that of Lucy Elizabeth, who died in 1784. A second daughter named Lucy Elizabeth was born to the Eppes in 1786. Next came Mary, who was born in 1788, along with a twin that failed to survive. Afterward came Martha Bolling (born in 1790) and then Sally and Matilda, whose birth order is uncertain (Stanard 1895-1896:33:26; Parks 1987:588-589). Thus, the Eppes household at Eppington would have been teeming with children.

Martha Wayles Jefferson's death on September 6, 1782, a few months after the birth her sixth child, Lucy Elizabeth, left her

⁴⁰This was at a time when only 8.7 percent of county taxpayers owned taxable wheeled-vehicles.

husband, Thomas, so deeply immersed in grief that he resolved to retire from public life. He took his three daughters to Ampthill in Chesterfield County, for he found at Monticello too many memories of his late wife. In early October, Jefferson wrote to his sister-in-law, Elizabeth Eppes,⁴¹ assuring her that his daughters were in good health. He said that taking care of his children provided him with a welcome distraction from his grief, but closed by saying that he was still too sad to avoid casting "a damp on the cheerfulness of others." He said that he was looking forward to a visit from Jack (John Wayles Eppes) in a few days and that he would keep the Eppes informed about him. On October 3, 1782 Thomas Jefferson noted in his account book that he gave a slave named Jupiter funds "to pay ferrges [ferriages] by Eppington to Richmond" (Boyd 1950:6:198-200).⁴²

It was while Thomas Jefferson was staying at Ampthill that Congress appointed him minister plenipotentiary to Europe. Responding reluctantly to the demands of public service, Jefferson left his younger daughters, Mary and Lucy Elizabeth, at Eppington and with elder daughter, Martha, proceeded on to Philadelphia, in order to make plans for their journey to France. More than a year and a half passed before Jefferson and his oldest daughter set sail for Europe. On March 3, 1783, Thomas Jefferson wrote to "Francis Eppes, Esq., Eppington," conveying to him the latest news. He closed his letter by asking Eppes to convey his love to Mrs. Eppes and the children. He also said "I hope Mrs. Eppes has recovered better health." In early November 1783 Jefferson dispatched a letter to Francis Eppes in which he provided a military update and made a few comments upon women's fashion. He asked Elizabeth Eppes to deliver half-a-dozen kisses to his daughters and said that he had not been able to arrange safe transportation that would enable them to join him. In late

⁴¹Jefferson also wrote to Francis Eppes on January 14, and February 15, 1783.

⁴²This reference to the Eppes' plantation at Winterpock as "Eppington" is the earliest dated reference to that name. Afterward, the name Eppington was in frequent use by both the Eppes and Jefferson families.

December, Francis Eppes wrote to Thomas Jefferson that his wife Elizabeth (or "Betsy" as he called her) had given birth to "a fine Girl" on November 7th. He also said that he was uncertain what to do about his son's education and welcomed Jefferson's advise. He said that "As great an objection as I have to keeping Jack at home I wou'd at present do it provided I cou'd git [sic] a man who cou'd be depended on and wou'd give generous wages to such a one who wou'd undertake him and half a dozen others" (Boyd 1950:6:252-253,349-350,415-416).⁴³

Thomas Jefferson was generous with his advice to his daughters on how to proceed with their education and the importance of presenting a good appearance. In an almost lecturing tone, on December 22, 1783 he chided his daughter, Martha, for not writing to him weekly and sending copies of her schoolwork.⁴⁴ He stressed the importance of being neat, clean and properly attired at all times of the day and told her that "A lady who has been seen as a sloven or slut in the morning will never efface the impression she then made with all the dress and pageantry she can afterwards involve her self in." He also said that he had dispatched a letter to Martha's sister, Mary, at Eppington (Boyd 1911:6:416-417).

On April 1, 1784 Mary Jefferson wrote to her father from Eppington, asking when she would see him and her sister again. She also said that she appreciated the sashes he had sent her and that she was almost able to read. On May 9, 1784, Thomas Jefferson gave Francis Eppes and Nicholas Lewis his power-of-attorney, authorizing them to manage his property while he was living abroad. Toward the end of the year, he made arrangements for two barrels of brandy to be sent to Eppes, whom he asked to send him a dozen or so hams from Monticello. He also requested specimens of cypress, cedar, magnolia and myrtle (Boyd 1911:7:58,239,501).

⁴³This statement raises the possibility that the school house at Eppington was constructed to accommodate the teacher that Eppes proposed to hire.

⁴⁴Jefferson was then in Annapolis, but his daughter was in school in Philadelphia.

On September 16, 1784 Francis Eppes dispatched a letter to Thomas Jefferson, in which he told him that both families' children had come down with whooping cough. Eppes said "Your little Lucy, our youngest, and Bolling⁴⁵ are I think very ill. Polly [Mary] has it badly but she sleeps well and eats heartily, tho she is not fallen off in the least. Doctr. Currie is here attending on your children and ours. He promises to write you very particularly by this opportunity." But on October 13, 1784, little Lucy Elizabeth Jefferson, who was age 2, succumbed to whooping cough, as did little Lucy Elizabeth Eppes. Both children were buried at Eppington in what became a family cemetery. Although Elizabeth Eppes immediately dispatched a letter to her brother-in-law in Paris, he did not receive it until May 1785 (Boyd 1950:15:615-616).

On November 20, 1784, Dr. James Currie transmitted a letter of condolence to Thomas Jefferson in Paris. He said that he was sincerely sorry to tell him of the death "of poor Miss L. Jefferson, who fell a Martyr to the Complicated evils of teething, Worms, and Hooping Cough, which last was carried there by the Virus of their friends without their knowing it was in their train." Currie said that he "was call'd too late to do anything but procrastinate the settled fate of the poor Innocent, from the accounts of the family, a Child of the most Auspicious hopes and having among other early Shining qualities an ear nicely and critically musical." He said that "Mr. Eppes lost his own youngest child from the same Cause" and that it was with difficulty that the Bolling child's life was saved. He said Mary Jefferson "got early over it and is now in good health" (Boyd 1911:7:538-539).

Jefferson, upon learning of Lucy's death, wrote to Francis Eppes, saying that his anguish over the loss of his daughter was indescribable and that to discuss the matter "would pour balm

⁴⁵Thomas Jefferson's sister, Mary, had married into the Bolling family, who also were related to the Eppes. Numerous references to the Eppes, Bolling and Jefferson children at Eppington suggest that the young cousins were good friends and congregated there frequently.

neither into your wounds or mine." He said that he had received Francis's September 16, 1784 letter, saying that the children were ill, and then gotten Doctor Currie's, written on November 20th. He closed by sending his love to his sister-in-law and asked her to kiss his daughter for him (Boyd 1950:7:635-636). Afterward, Mary Jefferson, then age 6, settled into life at Eppington, where she was comforted by the companionship of her aunt Elizabeth and uncle Francis Eppes and their several children, who were near her own age (Weaver 1969:32).

The loss of daughter Lucy compelled Thomas Jefferson to insist that Mary (or Polly, as he called her) join him and her sister, Martha, in Paris. In late August 1785 he wrote the Eppes that he longed to see his daughter and wanted her to be sent to him the following summer (Boyd 1950:8:451-452). But Mary had developed a strong attachment to the Eppes, especially Elizabeth, and resisted the idea of going to Paris. On September 20, 1785, Jefferson wrote Mary that he and her sister, Martha, "can not live without you." Tactfully, he said he knew "how sorry you will be, and ought to be, to leave them [her aunt and uncle] and your cousins," but he promised that "after a while we will carry you back again to see your friends in Virginia." In Paris, he said, she would learn to play the harpsichord, to draw, to dance and to become fluent in French. He said that "above all things, by our care and love of you, we will teach you to love us more than you will if you stay so far from us." He also offered a bribe of sorts, for he said "When you come here you shall have as many dolls and playthings as you want for yourself, or to send to your cousins." But Mary stubbornly and very directly replied "I hope that you will send me a doll. I am very sorry that you have sent for me. I don't want to go to France. I would rather stay with Aunt Eppes." Later, when Jefferson grew more insistent, she wrote "I want to see you and Sister Patsy [Martha], but you must come to Uncle Eppes's house."

Mary Jefferson's 13-year-old cousin, John Wayles Eppes, interceded on her behalf. He penned a letter to his Uncle Thomas in Paris, saying that "not withstanding your great desire to have

Cousin Polly with you, it cannot be effected without forcing her, for she seems very much adverse to it." But Thomas Jefferson pressed on with his plans. Well aware of the risks involved in a young girl's making a trans-Atlantic crossing, he asked Francis Eppes to make arrangements for her to be transported on a ship that had made at least one voyage but was no more than four or five years old and he insisted that she only make the trip during April, May, June or July. He said that ideally, she would be accompanied by "some good lady" or "a careful gentleman" or even a female slave who had had the smallpox (Boyd 1950:8:451-452).

At the end of August 1785 Jefferson wrote to Francis Eppes, saying that two Mr. Fitzhughs, who were heading for Virginia, were going to bring him a packet of seeds "for both the kitchen and flower garden." He said that as he was unfamiliar with the French names, he'd gotten a good seedsman "to pack up a few of what are deemed the best kinds in this country" and that there is only enough of each to begin a stock with." He observed that "You will soon see whether any of them are preferable to what you already have. . . . The Peach Apricot is one of the most valuable fruits in this country and very lately known." He said that he was enclosing a list of the seeds he wanted and reminded Eppes that earlier on, he had asked him for specimens of cypress, cedar, magnolia and myrtle. He also reiterated his requirements for the type of vessel that should be used to transport his daughter, Mary, to France. Jefferson's letter already was on its way to Virginia when Francis Eppes wrote that he understood Jefferson's need to be reunited with his daughter, but pitied her when he thought of the length of the trip and that she'd be among strangers. He also said "Her attachment to her Aunt is so great I am certain that it will be a very difficult matter to persuade [sic] her to leave this place with anyone except yourself," but noted that he had someone suitable in mind to accompany Mary to Paris. Eppes closed by saying "In one of my letters I requested you wou'd indeavour to procure me a tutor for our children if such a one as I described can be got or anyone who you think will answer the purpose. I cou'd wish to have him here as soon as

possible" (Boyd 1950:15:621-624).

On September 22, 1785, Thomas Jefferson sent a letter to Elizabeth Eppes, in which he expressed his uneasiness about Mary's crossing the Atlantic, but said "She must come." He stated that he'd been weighing his desire to see her against his concerns about the dangers of the trip and ultimately concluded that the advantages to her coming would be considerable. Jefferson said he had sent by Mr. Fitzhugh some garden and flower seeds and bulbs that "will fall in your department," and noted that he would have preferred to send more but didn't want to impose upon Fitzhugh's kindness. Less than three months later, Jefferson dispatched another letter, in which he asked Francis Eppes to send Mary to him in Paris with Mr. Berkeley (Barclay), the American consul, and expressed his concern over the Barbary pirates' threat to travelers. Close on the heels of this letter came one recommending that Mary be sent aboard a French or English vessel that had a Mediterranean pass. He said that he knew Elizabeth Eppes dreaded being separated from Mary and that his greatest comfort was his certainty of her kindness to his daughter. He concluded by saying that he had sent the Eppes a little package with anchovies, oil, fruit and other things that would be a special treat for them (Boyd 1950:8:539-540;9:91-93,159,211-212; 15:624-625).

On April 11, 1786, Francis Eppes informed Thomas Jefferson that everyone at Eppington was well and that Mary was "in as high health as ever you saw her." He also forwarded a lengthy letter from Colonel Lewis, who was managing Jefferson's property in Albemarle. The following month, Eppes wrote again, saying that he was

. . . sorry you are so desirous of having Polly sent to you as I am certain nothing but force will now bring it about. We have try'd every argument we are capable of in order to enduce [her] to agree to it. I have told her you wou'd meet her in Philadelphia and that I wou'd accompany her to that place. This however had no affect except distressing her. She is in tears whenever its mentioned. I shall not send her until I

hear farther from you unless Mr. Berkeley shou'd call for her [Boyd 1950:8:517].

During Spring 1786 Thomas Jefferson went to London on business. He wrote to Francis Eppes that he had found "a light neat pattern of chessmen" which he had sent to him and spoke of his and Eppes' role in settling John Wayles' estate. He said that he had recently informed two people he saw in London that in his absence Eppes was handling his (Jefferson's) part of the estate as well as his own. The tone of Jefferson's letter suggests that the debts against the Wayles estate were considerable and that a settlement wasn't anticipated until a much later date (Boyd 1950: 9:395-396).

Meanwhile, Thomas Jefferson pressed on with his plans to transport his daughter to Paris. In July 1786 Elizabeth Eppes wrote him that his sister, Martha Carr, had become so dear to Mary that she had consented to visit her alone. Although Mary's departure for the Carrs' was delayed by a rash on her arms "occasion'd by eating too freely of butter'd Muffins," she was to go in about three weeks "by way of preparing her for a separation which my heart saddens at, though I will say no more." Elizabeth Eppes concluded her letter by saying that there was no other news that would be of even the slightest interest to him and teasingly added "You did not recollect I am sure the neighborhood we live in, or you would not expect sheets of paper filled" (Boyd 1950:15:625,628-629).

In August 1786 Francis Eppes informed Thomas Jefferson that the Fitzhughs had brought him a letter and a packet of garden seeds "which I declin'd taking after knowing its contents." He said that the postage had been 12 pounds and asked Jefferson not to go to such expense on his behalf in the future. He said that the necessity of inoculating Isabel (the slave woman who was to accompany Mary to France) would delay his daughter's trip until next Spring, but that he had found a ship which met all of Jefferson's criteria. In reference to an earlier request to Jefferson, whom he asked to find the children a tutor, Eppes said he had hoped to procure "a man or Woman not younger than forty and

capable of teaching our girls French, English, erethmatick and musick." He said that in light of Jefferson's comments about the "expectations and dissatisfied dispositions of the French," he had asked someone else to send to Britain for a tutor, which he expected to arrive at Eppington early in the Spring. That fall, Eppes wrote to Jefferson again, informing him that he had sent along a bushel of Virginia magnolia cones and seeds. He said that he'd send the other plant materials Jefferson wanted as soon as he could and commented that he had an abundance of cedar berries on his own plantation but that procuring the myrtle he wanted had proven difficult. He thanked Jefferson for the chess set, which he pronounced "very handsome," and noted that he had to refresh his knowledge of the game (Boyd 1950:15:621,632).

When Francis Eppes wrote a letter to Thomas Jefferson in October 1786 he told him that he was sorry that the summer had passed without an opportunity to send Mary, in accord with his instructions, but that he could be assured of her arrival the following summer. He said that Mrs. Eppes was delighted with the gift of anchovies, oil and other items and that he had received four boxes of claret, some of which he'd use soon to drink a toast to Jefferson's health (Boyd 1950:9:395-396;10:483).⁴⁶

In early January 1787 Martha Jefferson Carr wrote her brother in Paris that last summer she had spent five or six weeks at Eppington, where she had observed the loving attention Elizabeth Eppes lavished upon the children. She said that little Mary loved Elizabeth dearly and that according to Elizabeth, Mary's aversion to going to France "Increases daily and that she fears she must at last be dragged like a calf to the Slaughter." Martha Carr said that the slave Isabel was not due to deliver her baby until April, which had prevented her from being inoculated with smallpox, and that the French consul's wife, who was planning to return home, would be a suitable traveling companion for Mary. She said that

⁴⁶Thomas Jefferson also enjoyed occasional gifts from the Eppes. In September 1787 he told a friend that he intended to ask Francis Eppes "for a particular kind of cyder which he makes" that he would like to have sent to Paris (Boyd 1950:12:132-133).

the Eppes had planned to bring Mary to Monticello to visit the Carrs, but the illness of the youngest Eppes child had kept everyone home but Francis Eppes himself (Boyd 1950:15:6332-633).

On March 30, 1787 Francis Eppes, in a letter from Eppington, told Thomas Jefferson that his daughter was well "and will sail by the first good opportunity." He said that a friend of his had written to the French Consul, whom he had heard was going to France with his wife, and expressed his hope that Mary Jefferson would be able travel with them. Eppes also informed his brother-in-law that he'd sent him a box containing a bushel of cones and holly berries and that he was forwarding some cedar berries with his current letter. He said that thus far he had been unsuccessful in his attempt to procure him some myrtle berries. He reported upon a visit he'd made to Monticello earlier in the year and gave an estimate of the quantity of tobacco he might expect to be produced. He added, however, that the men to whom Jefferson had entrusted his properties were in a much better position to advise him on the productivity he could expect. In the same packet with Francis Eppes' letter was one from his wife, Elizabeth, who urged Jefferson to countermand his orders for Mary to be sent to France. She said that "We have made use of every stratagem to prevail on her to consent to visit you without effect. She is more adverse to it than I could have supposed." She closed by saying that her children would gladly take Mary's place "for the number of good things she is promised." Mary herself penned a note that was short and to the point: "Dear Papa, I should be very happy to see you, but I can not go to France and hope that you and sister Patsy are well. Your affectionate daughter. Adieu." On another occasion she wrote "I want to see you and sister Patsy, but you must come to Uncle Eppes's house." Mary's notes' abruptness said much about her resistance to the idea of leaving Eppington and the Eppes kin she had grown to love (Boyd 1950:11:255-261). But Thomas Jefferson's desire to be reunited with his young daughter overruled her own wishes and those of her Eppes relatives, who ultimately acquiesced.

On December 14, 1786, Thomas Jefferson wrote to Elizabeth

Eppes, expressing his joy at her news that Mary would join him the following summer. He acknowledged that "She is better with you, my dear Madam, than she could be anywhere else in this world, except with those whom nature has allied still more closely to her." But he said he feared that the lengthy separation ultimately would diminish the love that should bind him and his daughters together and he frankly admitted that that was his main reason in sending for her. He apologized to Elizabeth for the condition of the garden seeds he had shipped her via Mr. Fitzhugh and expressed his concern that some of the other parcels he'd dispatched from various places had failed to arrive safely. Jefferson enclosed a letter to Francis Eppes, giving him additional instructions on his daughter's upcoming trip to Paris (Boyd 1950:10:594-595).

On May 7, 1787 Elizabeth Eppes wrote Thomas Jefferson from Osborne's, on the James River, to say that she hoped Mary would be handing the letter to him, personally. She also begged him to let her know that Mary had arrived safely. She closed by stating that she and the children would spend a day or two aboard the ship that was to convey Mary to France (Boyd 1950:11:356). The implication was that the Eppes would slip away while she was napping. Toward the end of May 1787 Jefferson wrote Francis Eppes that he had sent him six dozen bottles of 1784 vintage Bordeaux wine from the vineyard of Obrion. He said that he was omitting all references to Mary, whom he hoped was then enroute to France (Boyd 1950:11:378-379).

On July 2, 1787, Thomas Jefferson wrote the Eppes that Mary had arrived safely in Paris. He said that she had become very much attached to ships-captain Andrew Ramsay, who had been extremely kind to her during the voyage, as had Mrs. Adams, and he said that it was painful for Mary to bid them adieu. Elizabeth Eppes responded promptly, expressing her appreciation for the good news she had received. She modestly brushed aside Jefferson's praise for the training she had given Mary and said "You have almost made me vain." Jefferson, in turn, complimented her on Mary's ability to read and write and on her good manners. He said

that Mary's

. . . face kindles with love whenever she hears your name, and I assure you Patsy is not behind her in this. She remembers you with warm affection, recollects that she was bequeathed to you, and looks to you as her best future guide and guardian. . . We love you both sincerely, and pass one day in every week together, and talk of nothing but Eppington, Hors-du-monde and Monticello.

Jefferson said that his oldest daughter, Patsy (Martha), was anxious to return to America, and that he would need to call on Elizabeth Eppes to teach her about domestic economy (housewifery). Jefferson congratulated Elizabeth upon "the double blessings of which heaven has just begun to open her stores to you" and said "Polly is infinitely flattered to find a namesake in one of them. She promises to teach them both French." Thus, Elizabeth Wayles Eppes had given birth to twins, one of whom was named Mary (Polly), after her Jefferson cousin.⁴⁷ George Gilmer, a family friend, had written Thomas Jefferson in December 1787 that Francis Eppes had visited the piedmont but "was anxious to return to nurse his twins, two little Girls." Jefferson sent a separate letter to his nephew, John Wayles Eppes, congratulating him upon obtaining his degree, and offering him advice on the course of his future education (Boyd 1950:11:524-525,634-635;12:454,497-498;13:347-348).

But as the months passed, Thomas Jefferson grew increasingly uneasy about the political instability in France and in April 1789 he began making plans to set sail, so that he could escort his daughters to Virginia. He wrote Elizabeth Eppes that he intended to take a leave of absence in order to spend time at Monticello and he expressed his hope that the Eppes would visit him there for a while. He indicated that he had kept his daughters in France a year longer than he originally had intended, so that Mary could become proficient in French. But the July 14, 1789 storming of the Bastille led Jefferson to hasten his plans to remove his

⁴⁷The other child's name is unknown. She apparently didn't live to maturity.

daughters from France. At the end of August he wrote Francis Eppes that he and his daughters expected to depart in late September or early October and that they looked forward to seeing him and his family at Eppington in November. The Jeffersons set sail for Norfolk, Virginia, and upon arriving there, obtained a wagon and embarked upon a circuitous journey to Monticello, taking time to visit with friends and family along the way. In December, while Thomas, Mary and Martha Jefferson were stopping over at Eppington, he received a letter from President George Washington, who informed him that he had been appointed Secretary of State. Jefferson dispatched a response and then set out for Monticello, to check on conditions there. On December 17th he wrote to Francis Eppes from Hors du Monde, reminding him to send the wild cherry trees and ray grass. Jefferson also took the time to send a letter to George Wythe, asking him to make recommendations that would benefit the education of his young nephew, John Wayles Eppes. He said that Eppes' father wanted him to study law, but that he also should be prepared for "the equally respected occupations of agriculture and domestic life." In March 1790 Jefferson wrote Elizabeth Eppes that he would like to leave his daughters at Eppington, where they could learn "many things of the most useful in life." He said that Mary⁴⁸ needed help with her penmanship and Spanish and that he had given her detailed instructions on how to proceed with her studies. He planned to continue on to New York, then-capital of the new nation, but hoped to return to Eppington and Monticello before too long. Jefferson later wrote to Mary at Eppington, reminding her to "Love your aunt and uncle, and be dutiful and obliging to them for all their kindness to you. What would you do without them and with such a vagrant for a father?" On May 23, 1790 Mary Jefferson drafted a letter to her father, outlining her educational routine. She said that she read Don Quixote to her aunt daily and practiced her Spanish and English grammar. She also wrote daily and read in Robertson's America, usually working until dinner-time and then

⁴⁸Mary took on the name "Maria," the French equivalent of "Mary," while she was living abroad.

resuming her studies. She closed her letter by saying that her aunt had given her a hen and chickens to look after. Thus, she had begun her training in housewifery (Boyd 1950:14:355,357-358;15:370; 16:34-38,208,435-436).

When the nation's capital was shifted from New York to Philadelphia later in 1790, Jefferson was obliged to follow. Immediately before his departure he wrote to Elizabeth Eppes, again expressing his appreciation for her taking care of his daughters. He noted, however, that he'd always found "that you disputed with me the first place in [Mary's] affections" and said that although he'd like to have her join him, his life was too unsettled then. From Philadelphia Thomas Jefferson wrote to Mary, chiding her for not having written. He pummeled her with questions about her progress with her Spanish, how many chickens she'd raised, what the crops and weather were like and how the Eppes were doing. He also asked her to remind him what books had he had promised her at various times. On July 25, 1790, Jefferson wrote to Elizabeth and Francis Eppes, saying that he expected to leave for Monticello in September and hoped they would visit him there. He told Elizabeth that Martha, too, had mentioned needing a maid and said that he would see to it while he was in Virginia. He also expressed his desire to situate Martha in Albemarle County and proffered that it might induce the Eppes to visit more often. Elizabeth Eppes responded that she'd like to visit Monticello in the Fall, but that Francis "will at that time be so engag'd in manufacturing, it will be impossible to leave home." Instead, she suggested that Jefferson visit Eppington and said that she continued to do everything in her power to see that his daughters were happy and well cared for. She also expressed her disapproval of Martha's moving to Albemarle, where they would see her less frequently. Mary Jefferson in mid-August wrote her father that while visiting in Cumberland, she'd heard some excellent singing masters at church, who had been invited to Eppington to teach her cousins how to sing. She said "I know you have no objections to my learning anything I am [can] to be a scholar and hope to give you the pleasure of hearing an anthem." She mentioned that they

had had a harvest of peas on May 14th and strawberries on the 17th, but that she'd failed to note when the whippoorwills and martins arrived. She said that she and her cousin Bolling were involved in raising their chickens, but that they'd lost half of them. She said that she was "determined to write to you every day till I have discharged my debt," implying that she was somewhat annoyed by her father's insistence that she communicate so often and in such detail (Boyd 1950:16:489,599;17:265-266,331-332).

Thomas Jefferson wrote to Francis Eppes in October 1790, saying that the brevity of his stay in Virginia had not permitted him to visit Eppington. He offered to do whatever he could to assist in the education of his nephew, John Wayles (Jack) Eppes and indicated that the colleges in both Princeton and Philadelphia were good. He said that if Jack wanted to attend school in Philadelphia, he could live with Jefferson. He noted, however, that if Jack preferred to stay at Eppington, he would provide him with law books and ample instructions on what to read. He also offered to let Jack work in his own office, but said that he felt that it would be the least advantageous way for him to become educated in the law. Francis Eppes responded to Jefferson on October 14, 1790, thanking him warmly for his kindness toward his son. He said that he would rather his son live in Jefferson's household than anywhere else and would leave it to him to choose the best course for him to pursue in his education. Significantly, Francis Eppes added that he had been unable to see Jefferson in Richmond, "being at present confined by workmen who are repairing [sic] our houses." He said also that their "horses are so worn down with wheat treading and other drudgery that they are unfit for so long a journey" as a trip to Monticello (Boyd 1950:17:579-582,592).

At the end of October 1790 Thomas Jefferson wrote Francis Eppes that he was setting out for Philadelphia and hoped to be there soon to receive his nephew. He said that as soon as his house was ready, he would send for Jack. In a separate letter to Elizabeth Eppes, he told her that he was planning to leave both of his daughters at Monticello, at least through the winter, and that

he intended to send for Martha in the spring. He urged Elizabeth to caution her son "not to give his heart to any object he will find" in Philadelphia, for he knew of "no such useless bauble in a house as a girl of mere city education" who "would keep him there and ruin him" (Boyd 1950:17:656-658).

The workmen who were remodeling Jefferson's house in Philadelphia fell behind schedule and in January 1791 he wrote Francis Eppes that it would be March before he could send for his son. John Wayles Eppes made the journey to Philadelphia that spring, where he took up residence in Thomas Jefferson's home and commenced his studies at what became the University of Pennsylvania. He reportedly attended classes for two to four hours a day, spent four hours reading law, and then worked as a copyist an hour or so to learn "the stile of business and acquire a habit of writing." He also was supposed to read history and government texts daily. The compliments the young man received from his uncle reveal that he was an apt and devoted pupil. In March 1791 Jefferson wrote Francis Eppes that he hoped to see his wife, Elizabeth, when he made his annual trip to Virginia, but said that "she seems to consider herself as immovable" in her reluctance to leave Eppington. A month later Eppes replied that he was entrusting his son totally into Jefferson's care and asked him to keep a watchful eye upon his behavior. He said that "Jack is fully appris'd of my circumstances and he will be unpardonable if he exceeds the bounds of moderation in his expenditures" (Boyd 1950:18:578-579;19:549,555).

The unanticipated debts against the late John Wayles's estate and the troubled economy apparently continued to be a problem to Francis Eppes, for he told Jefferson that the situation was growing more dismal. He said, "For Gods sake indeavor to impress on [Jack's] mind the necessity of his qualifying himself in some profession which will inable him to git his bread, for shou'd this business go against us it will not be in my power to do much for him."⁴⁹ Jefferson in April wrote to his daughter, Mary, chiding

⁴⁹On June 9, 1793 Eppes wrote to William B. Giles, one of his
Continued on following page

her for not apprising him on the weather and crops in Virginia. But he softened his rebuke by sending along two veils for her use in decorating hats. Jefferson also dispatched a letter to Mr. William Smith in Philadelphia, describing the strengths and weaknesses of John Wayles Eppes' education prior to entering college and he said that whenever the curriculum offered something redundant, he (Jefferson) would set him to work studying something he needed. A month later, Jefferson reassured Francis Eppes that his son was studying diligently and was a good pupil. He enclosed a note to Elizabeth, which said that he intended to bring his daughter, Mary, to Philadelphia as soon as he could find a suitable situation for her. He explained that he had left her in Albemarle so that she would be near her sister, thereby strengthening the bond between them (Boyd 1950:20:250; 21:152;23:323).

During the winter of 1791 Mary Jefferson left Eppington and joined her father and cousin in Philadelphia, where she was enrolled in Mrs. Pine's School. It was likely during that those months that the friendship between Mary Jefferson and John Wayles Eppes began to evolve into something more romantic. Meanwhile, daughter Martha Jefferson, who had remained behind in Albemarle County, had married Thomas Mann Randolph, Jr., on February 23, 1790 and in the spring of 1791 presented Jefferson with a granddaughter (Weaver 1969:34; Boyd 1950:20:157,413;21:313; Tyler 1925:267).

At the close of 1793 Thomas Jefferson resigned as Secretary of State and withdrew to Monticello in order to put his personal affairs in order. John Wayles Eppes completed his education and in 1794 began practicing law in Richmond, where he quickly attained prominence in his profession (Johnson et al. 1931:170).

Continued from previous page
creditors, to say that he had a payment ready for him (Francis Eppes to William B. Giles, June 9, 1793). Some of the correspondence between Eppes and Jefferson indicates that the unsettled condition of overseas markets after the Revolution put American tobacco-growers on an uneasy and disadvantageous footing.

As time went on, the relationship between Mary Jefferson and John Wayles Eppes grew to the point that the young couple began discussing marriage. When the young couple made their feelings known to their kin, an elated Thomas Jefferson informed his daughter, Martha, that Mary "could not have chosen more so to my wishes, if I had the whole earth free to have chosen a partner for her." He also indicated that he was thinking of giving Mary and Jack his Albemarle County plantation known as Pantops (Weaver 1969:34).

In March 1797 Francis and Elizabeth Wayles Eppes of Eppington executed a deed of gift in which they deeded to their son, John Wayles Eppes, 750 acres of land at Bermuda Hundred, plus some slaves and a lot in the Bermuda Hundred town. They also gave him 131 acres on the James River that adjoined the land of David Mead Randolph and Francis's share of the tract known as Captain Martin's Swamp.⁵⁰ The following October, the Eppes couple made a new deed whereby they conveyed a joint interest in the 750 acre and 131 acre parcels to their son, to Thomas Jefferson and to his daughter, Mary.⁵¹ Jefferson, in return, conveyed to Mary "from natural love . . . and for her advancement" fee simple ownership of 819 1/4 acres of land on the Rivanna River called Pantops, plus 31 slaves, livestock and some plantation utensils. The document noted that "marriage is now intended to be made between Thomas Jefferson's daughter, Mary, and John Wayles Eppes" (Chesterfield

⁵⁰Providing their son with land and a means to financial independence is a reflection of the Eppes' socio-economic status. In less affluent families, male parents often retained legal control of a sizeable portion of their holdings until death, in an effort to protect their own financial well-being in old age and to ensure the economic security of their widows. James A. Henretta concluded that in pre-industrial America, to be young generally was to be landless or without enough land to support a family. At a time when external markets were relatively underdeveloped, except for the exportation of tobacco, there were few alternatives to subsistence or semi-subsistence production. William Byrd II of Westover lamented "for want of navigation and commerce the best estate affords little more than a coarse subsistence" (Henretta 1978:6-8,14).

⁵¹Mary (Maria) Jefferson was born on August 1, 1778 and was five years younger than her husband-to-be.

County Deed Book 14:32,258-259). According to a contemporary newspaper account, the young couple was wed on October 13, 1797 (Headley 1987:115).⁵² Francis and Elizabeth Eppes' gift to their son was reflected in the real estate tax rolls for the late 1790s (Chesterfield County Land Tax Lists 1796-1800). Despite their generous gift, the older couple still owned more land than any of their contemporaries in Chesterfield County.⁵³

John Wayles Eppes and his wife, Mary, made lengthy visits to Eppington during the early years of their marriage and sometimes, Thomas Jefferson joined them there. Eschewing Pantops, John and Mary settled in Chesterfield County, where they alternated their time between Mount Blanco (near Petersburg) and Bermuda Hundred. Mary Jefferson Eppes returned to the familiarity of Eppington for the birth of her first child, a son who lived for only two weeks. In April 1798, while she was visiting there, Thomas Jefferson wrote, asking her to "tell Mr. Eppes I will make a visit from Monticello rather than lose the colonnade and octagon. So he will not get off from his purpose by that excuse." Thus, it appears that Jefferson had prepared a set of plans for Eppes to implement, seemingly at Eppington. Jefferson's tongue-in-cheek remark about Eppes' excuses suggests that the latter had a limited amount of enthusiasm for the proposed project (Weaver 1969:35; Betts and Bear 1966:154,158-159,171,178-179,204,206,231).

In 1797 John Wayles Eppes' name was listed in Chesterfield's personal property tax rolls, at which time he was credited with two free white males who were age 16 or older (perhaps himself and a farm manager), 14 slaves who were 16 or over, one who was aged 12 to 16, and seven horses, asses and mules. Young Eppes, unlike

⁵²Thomas Jefferson maintained a close and affectionate relationship with his daughter and son-in-law, which is evident in his correspondence (Boyd 1950:I:264-265; Jefferson to Maria Eppes, April 25, 1803).

⁵³In 1796 only 11 percent of Chesterfield County landowners were in possession of 751 or more acres. By 1800, that percentage dropped to 6 percent. In fact, in 1862, when Eppington passed out of the hands of the Eppes' and their kin, Eppington's new owner automatically qualified for that elite group (McCartney 1988:Table 6).

his father, owned no taxable wheeled vehicles. Between 1797 and 1802 John Wayles Eppes showed very little variation in the number of slaves and quantity of livestock he owned. In 1800 he paid taxes upon a four-wheeled riding chair, his first passenger vehicle that was deemed taxable. It was likely the chariot that Thomas Jefferson had offered to the young Eppes couple when he wrote to them in April 1798 (Betts and Bear 1966:158-159). During the late 1790s and early 1800s the number of slaves and quantity of livestock in John Wayles Eppes' possession remained relatively constant. But in 1807 there was a dramatic decline in the amount of his taxable personal property, suggesting that he had moved the bulk of his slaves and livestock out of the county (Chesterfield County Personal Property Tax Lists 1797-1807).

John Wayles Eppes was elected to Virginia's House of Delegates in 1801 and served in that capacity until he was elected to the United States Congress in 1803. He was a Congressman until 1811 when he moved to Buckingham County. Throughout his political career, he was a strong proponent of Thomas Jefferson's ideals (U. S. Government 1989:916; Johnson et al. 1932:171). In 1801 Mary Jefferson Eppes gave birth to the couple's second child, Francis Wayles Eppes, who was born while she was staying at Monticello.⁵⁴ In late 1802 then-President Thomas Jefferson persuaded his daughters to visit him at the White House, which was then under construction. Afterward, Mary apologized at length to her father for the great expense her visit had caused him. A second trip was planned for the following spring, but Mary's third pregnancy and generally poor health made that impossible. In 1803, when John Wayles Eppes went off to serve in Congress, she returned to Albemarle County where she took up temporary residence at her sister's home, Edgehill. It was there that she was living on February 15, 1804, when her baby daughter and namesake, Maria Jefferson Eppes, was born. But Mary Jefferson Eppes failed to recover from childbirth and her condition gradually deteriorated. She was transported by litter from Edgehill to Monticello, where

⁵⁴He was her only child that lived to maturity.

she died on April 17, 1804 (Weaver 1969:35).⁵⁵

Francis Eppes VI's Business Interests

Francis Eppes VI of Eppington, like many of his Chesterfield County contemporaries, may have felt that there was money to be made through exploiting the coal belt that ran through the county. The black mineral was discovered in Chesterfield during the early 1700s and commercial coal mining got underway in the Midlothian area by 1730. During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries Midlothian had the largest concentration of mines in the Richmond Coal Basin, a geological formation that traverses several counties to the west of the James River's fall line and not far from Eppington, at Clover Hill. After the Revolutionary War, coal mining quickly emerged as Chesterfield's most important industry, which enabled the county's citizens to lobby successfully for internal improvements, such as turnpikes, canals and railroad lines (O'Dell 1983:84-85).

These schemes likely were seen as the way out of the economic stagnation that fell like a pall upon Virginia planters during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, for wartime debts, westward migration, and changes in foreign and domestic trade patterns had exacted a heavy toll. One nineteenth century writer observed that "the influence of the ancient families has in large measured disappeared with their great landed possessions." A contemporary said that "a large proportion of the families who composed [the gentry] and who remained after the Revolution in the country . . . have since passed in all their branches through a poverty-stricken period." Eventually, some enlightened planters recognized the need for a new type of agriculture and began implementing changes that brought economic improvement (Kuroda 1972:197).

⁵⁵In 1809 John Wayles Eppes remarried and within two years, he relocated to Buckingham County. On June 5, 1812, Thomas Jefferson wrote that he had just learned that he intended to sell Pantops. He told Eppes that he would like to purchase the estate, since it was in his own neighborhood, and that he would expect to be able to buy it upon the same terms that were being offered to other prospective purchasers (Randall 1865:III:369).

Leaders in the field of agriculture ridiculed the tobacco farmer who would begrudge the application of a bushel of manure on a garden plot that would grow an abundance of Irish potatoes, preferring instead to feed his insatiable tobacco crop (Robert 1938:28).⁵⁶ Farmers adjusted to changing market conditions by reverting to a system of mixed agriculture and produced a variety of grain and vegetable crops as well as fruit, livestock and grasses. Although these changes in farming practices served to strengthen local economic development and self-sufficiency, it was not until overland transportation systems became more sophisticated, linking rural areas to urban markets, that farm production and agricultural specialization began to expand on a large scale (Schlotterbeck 1980).

Given Francis Eppes VI's ingenuity, diverse interests, and acumen as an agronomist, it is not surprising that he took an active interest in the development of internal improvements in Chesterfield County, especially projects that could be expected to benefit him and his family.⁵⁷ In October 1792 he was appointed a trustee of the group that was charged with the task of opening and extending the Appomattox River's navigation.⁵⁸ The trustees collectively had the right to condemn, buy and sell land, in accord with regulations that were established by law (Hening 1809-

⁵⁶It may have been in response to hard times that Chesterfield County's population declined from 14,488 in 1800 to 9,979 in 1810. Some of these people may have sought better opportunities in the city or migrated westward (University of Virginia 1983:16-17). Chesterfield's land tax rolls demonstrate that during the early nineteenth century the number of middle-sized farmsteads grew significantly, as did those that were small. These changes occurred as some of the county's largest farms were subdivided and sold off. This trend continued until 1830, though it did not accelerate. Remarkably, the Eppes landholdings stayed intact.

⁵⁷Curiously, Francis Eppes VI, unlike his forebearers, never held a political office through either election or appointment.

⁵⁸The Lower Appomattox Canal, which was 10 miles long, made it possible to navigate the tidewater islands below Petersburg. The Lower Appomattox Company by 1788 had diverted water into a main channel that was five miles long. The Upper Appomattox Navigation was begun in 1795 and completed in 1807. It provided a 123 mile long sluice that accommodated bateaux and extended from Petersburg to a site 23 miles east of Farmville (The American Canal Guide Part 5:28).

1823:XIII:568-570). Eppes, as the owner of land that abutted both sides of the Appomattox, was in an excellent position to reap some personal benefits from the project, which was intended to give those who lived near the river's head and beyond access to urban markets, especially Petersburg, which already was a well established flour-milling center and port. There also was the potential to develop new mill seats within what had become a major wheat-growing area. In November 1795, when an act was passed that summarized several earlier pieces of legislation regulating the extension of the Appomattox River's navigation, Francis Eppes again was named as a trustee of what was called the Upper Appomattox Company. This time the trustees were authorized to extend the navigation as far above Banister's Mills as they judged it practical "so as to have a sufficient depth and width of water to navigate boats, batteaus or canoes capable of carrying eight hogsheads of tobacco." The company was authorized to charge set fees for use of the canal they were building and to apply such funds toward "cutting canals, erecting locks, and other labour for opening and extending the navigation of the said river . . . as well as keeping the same in repair" (Shepherd 1970:I:390-394).⁵⁹

In June 1796 the esteemed architect Benjamin Latrobe, who had ventured up the Appomattox with some friends that were involved in the canal company, wrote that "Mr. Eps [sic] has a charming estate about 4 miles below Watkins mill on the North bank. Here we met with . . . a hearty welcome, an excellent breakfast, and provisions for the day. We took in Major Eggleston⁶⁰ whom we

⁵⁹This legislation provides a considerable amount of information on the canal's construction and the types of goods and produce that could be hauled. The fee schedule set the rates that could be charged for transporting wine, rum, and other spirits; tobacco; linseed oil; wheat, peas, beans, flax seed, Indian corn or other grain; salt; pork and beef; flour; hemp; flax; potash; bar or manufactured iron; pig iron or castings, copper, lead or other ore; stone or iron ore; lime; coal, pipestaves, hogshead staves and headings; barrel staves and headings; plank, scantling or other timber; and other commodities.

⁶⁰The man Latrobe and his party accommodated was Joseph Eggleston, one of Francis Eppes' fellow trustees of the Upper Appomattox Company. He had been named a trustee of the company in 1796 and in 1801 became its president.

found here, and about 2 o'clock arrived at Moore's Mill." Benjamin Latrobe during his visit to Eppington made a sketch of the house and its environs, depicting it from the land side. In his "Essay on Landscape," he reflected upon his visit to Eppington, "the seat of Mr. Francis Eppes," and said, "Here all is good humour, kindness and mirth. We breakfasted with him and his charming family, and forgot ourselves so far as to stay almost till noon. During the day we passed two more Milldams, dined on stores given us by Mrs. Eppes and in the evening arrived at the Falls." John Epperson (1797) made a map on which he showed many of the sites along the Appomattox that Latrobe's group visited. Prominently identified was the site of Eppes Falls near Eppington (Latrobe 1977:I:153; II:529,540) (Figures 6 and 7).

Francis Eppes VI was an acknowledged expert on horticulture and agronomy and Thomas Jefferson was said to consider him "the first [foremost] horticulturist in America." In 1856 Eppes' grandson and namesake, Francis Wayles Eppes,⁶¹ the son of Mary Jefferson and John Wayles Eppes, described to Thomas Jefferson's biographer, Henry S. Randall, the appearance of Eppington during his grandfather's lifetime.⁶²

The mansion house itself, an old-fashioned, two-story building, with hipped roof in the centre and wings on the sides, with a hall or passage in front running from one wing to the other and opening on the offices, and with piazzas front and rear, was placed at the extreme side of a large level or lawn, covered with green sward, extending to a considerable distance in front and in the rear to the low grounds of the Appomattox, a mile off. In front, over the neighborhood road which skirted the lawn, was situated the garden, long famous in the vicinity for its fine vegetables and fruit; and to the right of the lawn, as you entered, was

⁶¹Francis Wayles Eppes (the seventh Francis Eppes in his line) was born on September 20, 1801. He would have been nearly seven years old when his paternal grandfather died.

⁶²Eppes said "You ask me for a description of Eppington, but such an impression as I can now give must be considered an imperfect sketch."

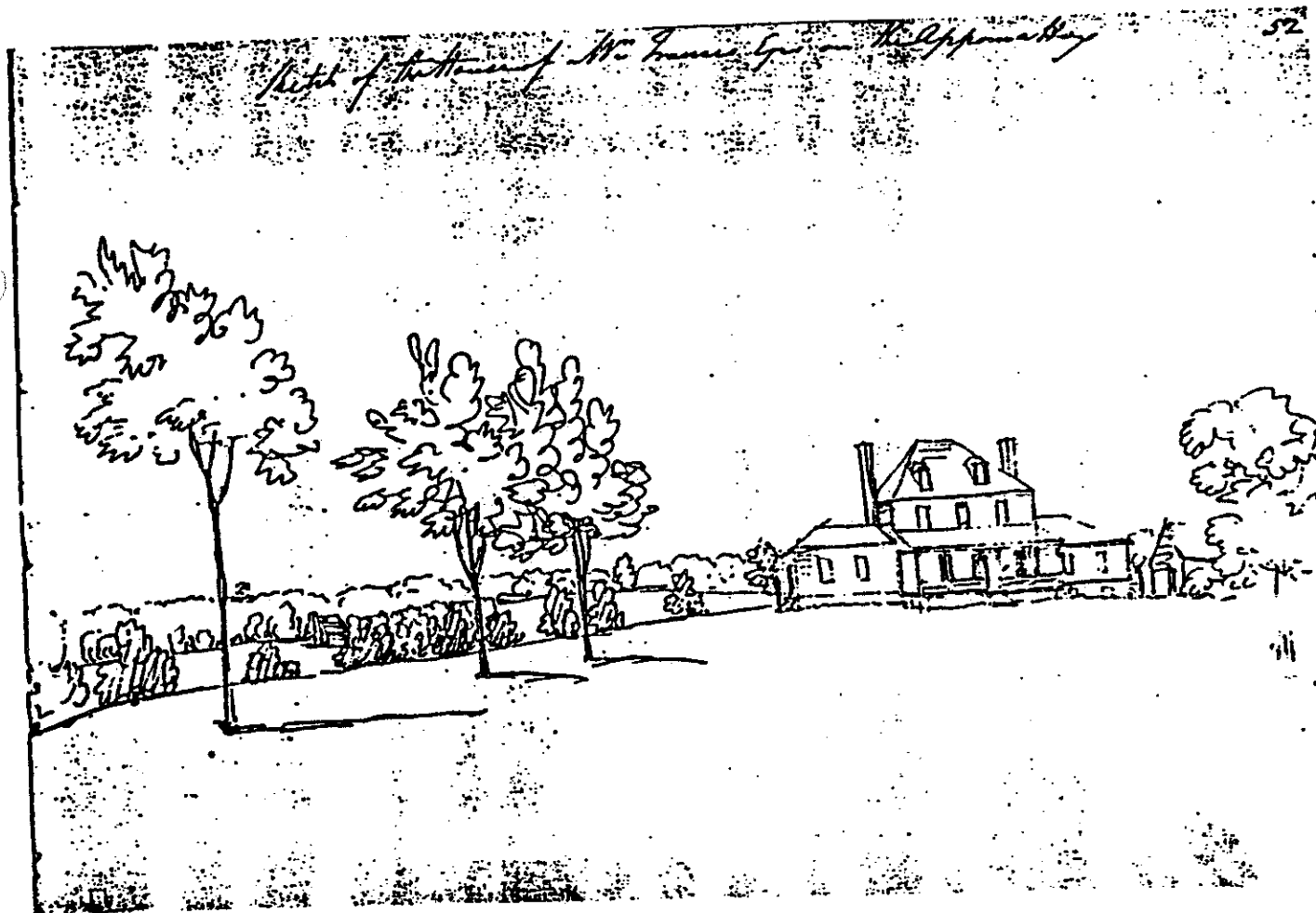


Figure 6: Sketch of the House of Mr. Francis Eps [sic] on the Appomattox [1796] (Latrobe 1977).

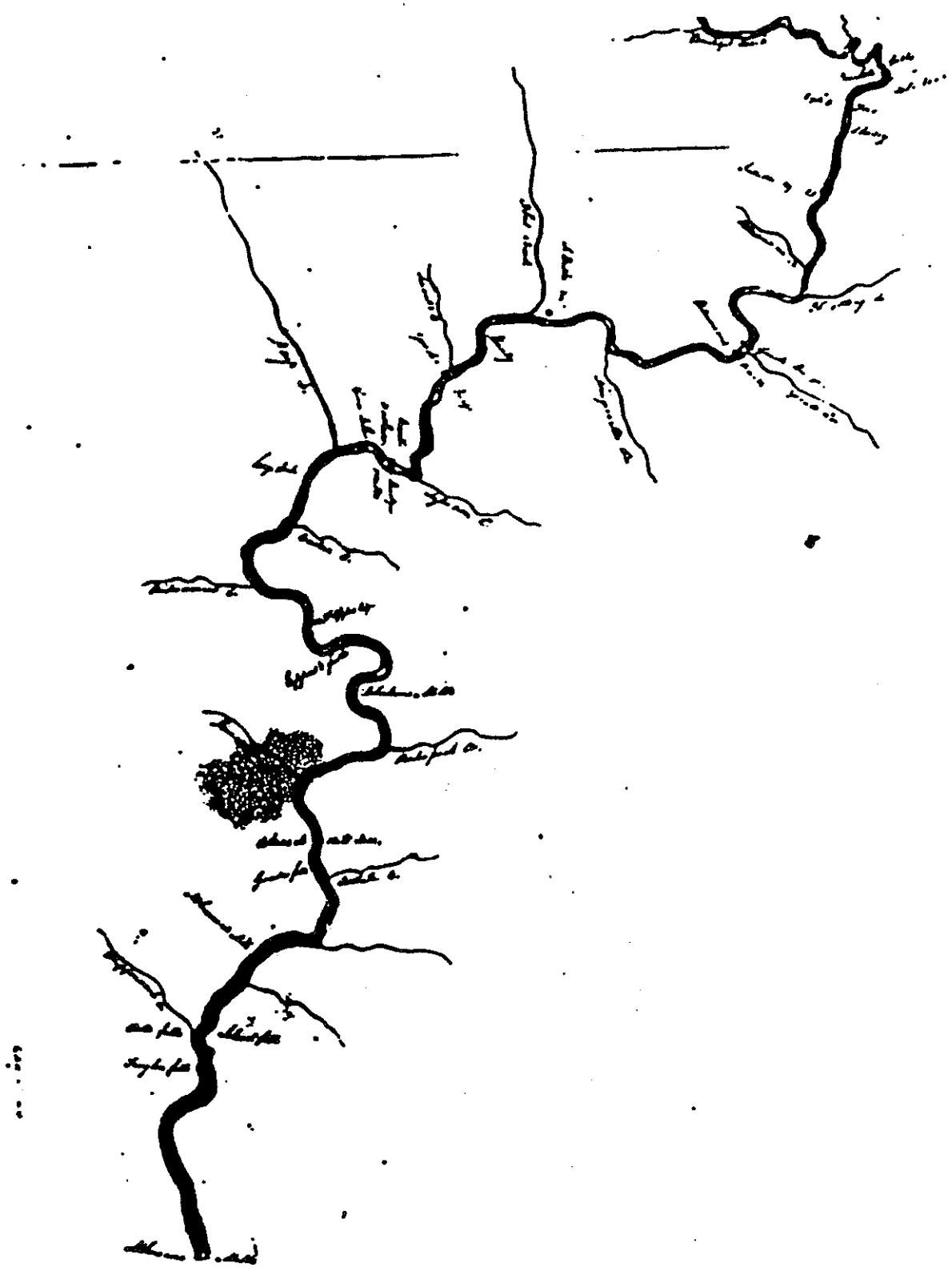


Figure 7: Map of Dinwiddie County (Epperson 1797).

an extensive orchard of the finest fruit, with the stables between, at the corner and on the road. The mansion, painted a snowy white, with green blinds to the windows, and its rows of offices at the end, was almost imbedded in a beautiful double row of the tall Lombardy poplar - the most admired of all trees in the palmy days of old Virginia - and this row reached to another double row or avenue which skirted one side of the lawn, dividing it from the orchard and stables. The lawn in front was closed in by a fence with a small gate in the middle and a large one on either extremity, one opposite the avenue of poplars, and the other at the end of the carriage-way which swept around it.

The plantation was quite an extensive one, and in the days of my grandfather, Francis Eppes, sen., was remarkably productive. Indeed it could hardly have been otherwise under such management as his; for he was eminent for his skill both in agriculture and horticulture; and I have heard Mr. Jefferson, who knew him intimately, say of him, that he considered him not only "the first horticulturist in America," but "a man of the soundest practical judgement on all subjects that he had ever known" [Randall 1865:II:359-360].

Francis Wayles Eppes described both of his paternal grandparents lovingly. Of Francis Eppes VI, he said:

Well do I remember his venerable appearance - his grave and dignified demeanor; his serious, thoughtful, loving look, so expressive of the mingled firmness and kindness of his character; and from these boyish impressions can well credit what I so often heard in after life of his inflexible adherence to principle. Sure I am that he, beyond most men, was a man who could not be easily turned from his purpose; that he was calm and deliberate in counsel and resolute in action - worthy of the poet's praise, "Justum et tenacem propositi virum," etc. And yet my own boundless love for him, the love of his children, his wife, his friends, his neighbors, his domestics, shows that the sterner features of his character were softened and subdued by the possession of a

heart overflowing with love, and a constant and active solicitude for the happiness of all around him. Never, I believe, was there a husband, father, master, friend, more truly and justly beloved while living and mourned when dead [Randall 1865:II:359-360]..

As for Elizabeth Wayles Eppes, he said

. . . it is but a just need of praise to say that she was entirely worthy to be the companion of such a man [as his grandfather]. Full of love and gentleness, she won and held not only the heart of her husband, but the affections of all who approached her; while her well-ordered household and excellent management made her long famous as a "housekeeper" in that part of Virginia. Endowed with a mind of superior order, she soon perceived the excellence of the outside economy of her husband, and felt and understood that it was her part and duty to present a perfect parallel within doors; and with a vigor and determination of spirit only equalled by its uniform kindness, she set herself to the work, and most effectually did she accomplish it to the entire satisfaction of her husband, and the admiration of her children and friends [Randall 1865:II:360].

In closing, Francis Wayles Eppes said:

Such were the Heads of the House, and such was Eppington itself as seen through the vista of bygone years! Here were reared a family of one son (my father, John W. Eppes), and six daughters,⁶³ all happily married and settled in the world. And here was the abode of a hospitality only known in the happiest days of the "Old Dominion" - when friends and even acquaintances would visit each other with their carriages, horses, and servants and sojourn for months and months, always

⁶³The writer made reference to Lucy Elizabeth (Mrs. Archibald Thweatt), Mary (Mrs. Richard N. Thweatt), Martha (Mrs. Jerman Baker), Matilda (Mrs. Richard Field), and Sally (Mrs. John W. Lane). The Eppes' eldest daughter, also named Lucy Elizabeth, died in 1784, during childhood. A seventh daughter, Mary Eppes Thweatt's twin, born in 1787, also was omitted and presumably died at a young age.

sure of and always receiving the kindest welcome. Here too, under the tuition of my grandmother, who taught me to read, and in the society of my grandfather, whose constant companion I was in his daily rides over the plantation, were spent the earliest, happiest days of my life. Here I remember but one sorrow, the death of my loved playmate and only sister, Maria. Never can I forget the picture of loveliness and innocence of which she was to my mind the fairest type! Never the grief which seized upon my young heart when they told me she was dead! In the garden at Eppington repose her mortal remains, and by the side of those of my beloved grandmother [Randall 1865:II:360].

In September 1798 George Markham, a neighboring landowner, conveyed to Francis Eppes the right to "cut a canal through my lands in order to convey the waters of Winterpock and Surline Creek into his [Eppes] mill pond on Buckham Branch." Eppes also had the right "to raise the dam on Winterpock and Surline in order to turn the waters into the said canal to the height of the bank" (Chesterfield County Deed Book 14:310). Although the location of Eppes' mill is uncertain, a reference to the mill pond and old mill road in an 1817 deed raises the possibility that the mill was on the lower part of Winterpock Creek, southwest of topographic benchmark 172, at a site that was inundated when Lake Appomattox was constructed.

On June 8, 1802, Francis Eppes purchased from the Mutual Assurance Society his first insurance policy on Eppington, which was described as being situated in Chesterfield County between the plantations of Mrs. Moore and Maria Ward. The men who issued the policy indicated that the dwelling-house had an estimated worth of \$3,010 and that two buildings identified as a school house and a kitchen/weaving-house were worth \$220 apiece. They noted that "it would cost \$4,000 to build the same and is now (after the deduction of \$550 for decay or bad construction) actually worth \$3,450." A sketch that appears at the bottom of the insurance policy depicts the house from the front, describing it as "a wooden Dwelling house 36 by 24 feet. Two stories high,

underpinned with brick." This central block had "a wooden gallery [porch] on each side." "A wooden wing 28 by 20 feet, one story high, underpinned with brick," was attached to each end of the dwelling-house. A structure that was identified as "a schoolhouse &c" was said to have "walls built of wood, one story high, underpinned with brick, 40 by 16 feet" and was shown with a central chimney. The other outbuilding, which was identified as "a wooden kitchen and weaving house, 40 by 16 feet, one story high, underpinned with brick," also had a central chimney (Mutual Assurance Society Policy 1802) (Figure 8).

On March 26, 1806, when Eppes' insurance policy was updated, his three buildings were listed at precisely the same values they had been assigned in 1802. However, the insurance agent noted that it would take \$4,600 (rather than \$4,000) to replace the buildings and that \$1,150 had been deducted to arrive at their actual worth of \$3,450. The 1806 insurance policy, unlike the 1802 version, shows in outline-form the parameters of the "Dwelling house of wood, two stories, 36 by 24 feet, covered with wood," to which ends were attached a "wing of wood, one story 28 by 20 feet, covered [with] wood." Seventeen feet from the dwelling was a "School house of wood, one story, 40 by 16 feet, covered [with] wood" and at a distance of 27 feet was a "Kitchen of wood, one story, 40 by 16 feet, covered [with] wood." A chimney was shown at each end of the dwelling-house's central block and a central chimney was shown in both the kitchen and the schoolhouse (Mutual Assurance Society 1806) (Figure 9).⁶⁴

In 1806, shortly after making his will, Francis Eppes deeded to his widowed son, John Wayles Eppes, 200 acres called "Old Coxes" that adjoined Eppington and abutted "a corner on the road to the new spring." Father and son made a private agreement whereby John had the right to retain the property rent-free for a given period of time, before purchasing it outright or deeding it

⁶⁴At the head of this policy is the statement that it is a "Revaluation of the buildings Insured per declaration #694," the policy that dates to 1802. Both insurance policies were signed by Francis Eppes.

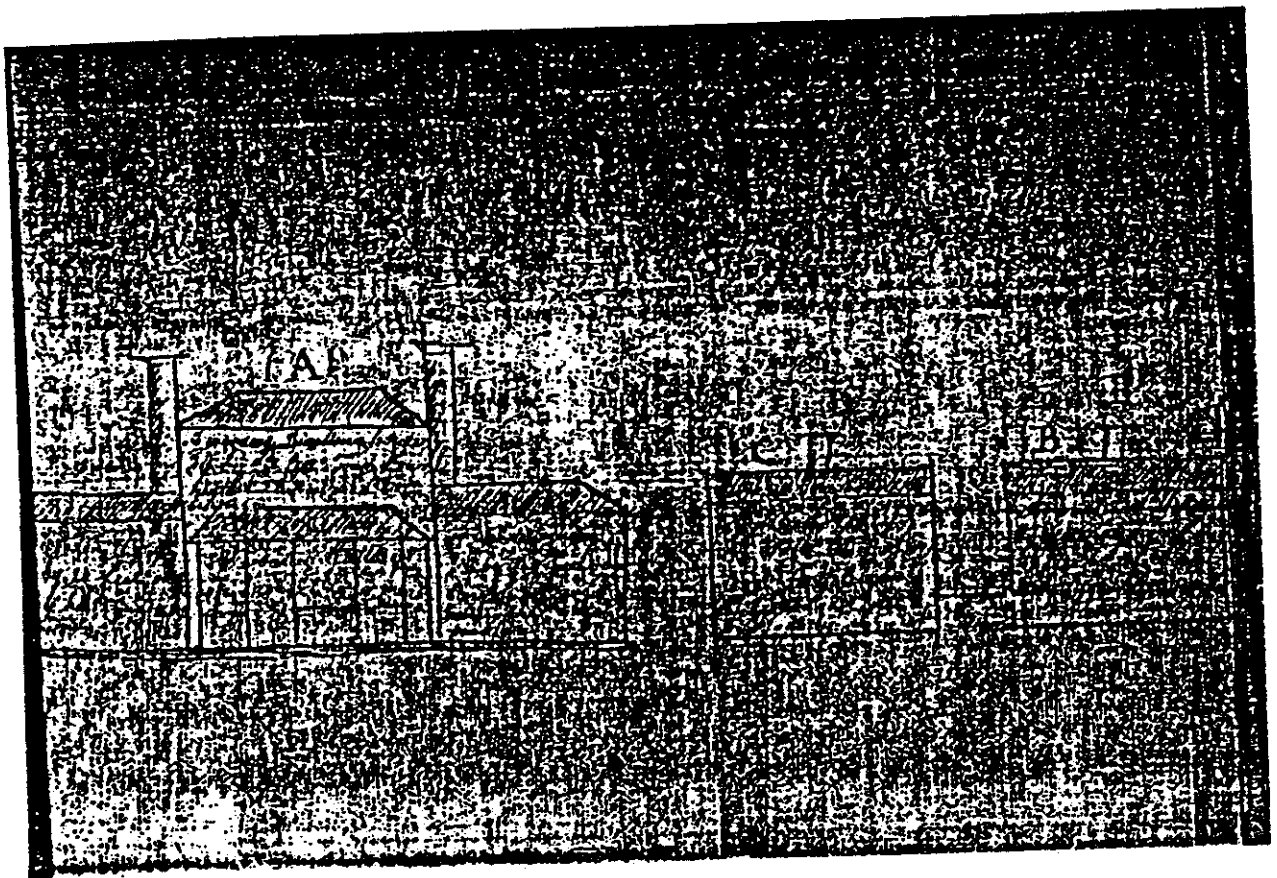


Figure 8: Sketch of buildings at Eppington that were insured by Francis Eppes in 1802 (Mutual Assurance Society 1802).

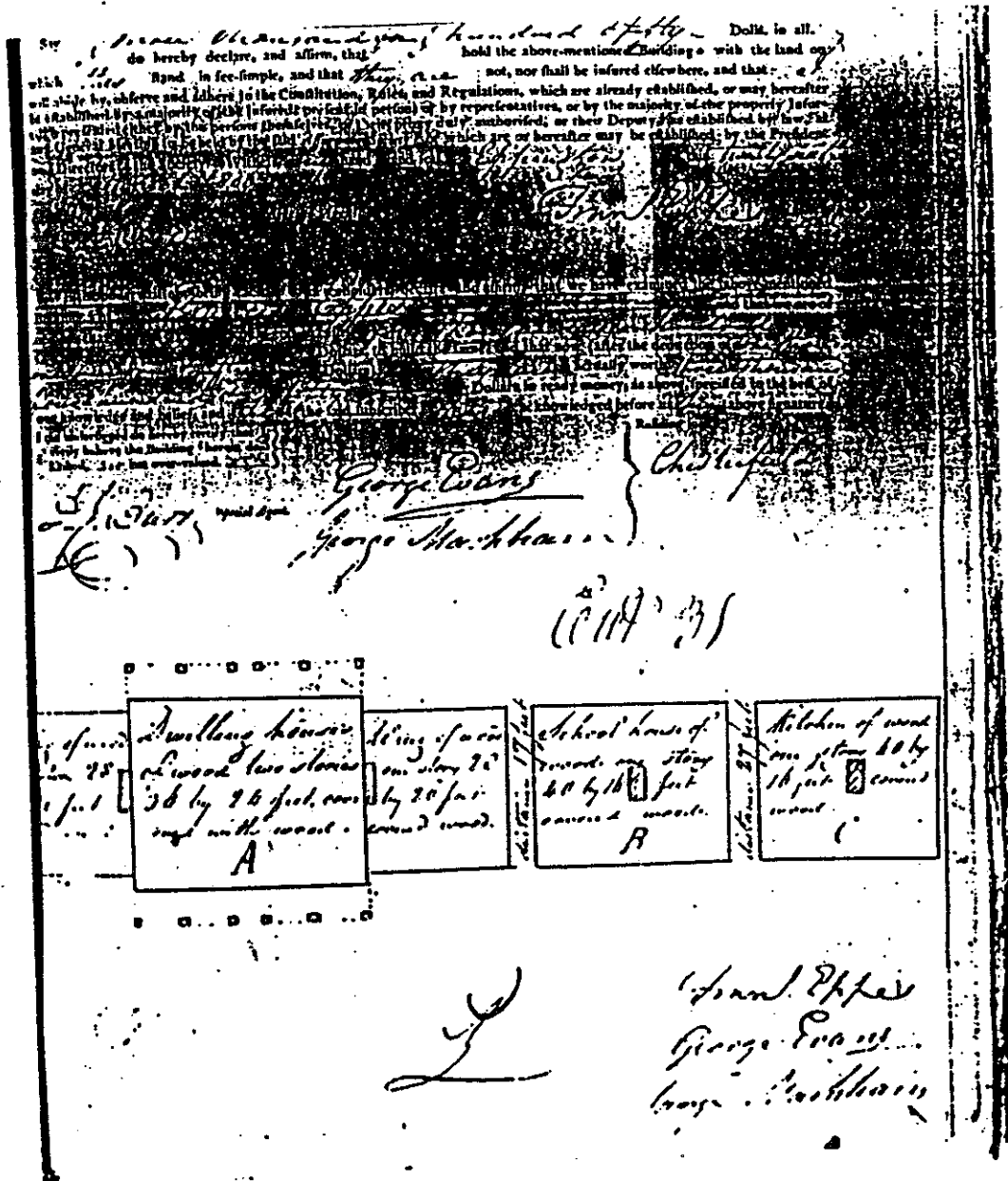


Figure 9: Sketch of buildings at Eppington that were insured by Francis Eppes in 1806 (Mutual Assurance Society 1806).

to his father or his estate.⁶⁵ Subsequent land transactions reveal that the "Old Coxes" parcel abutted the west side of Winterpock Creek (Chesterfield County Deed Book 17:282;19:463; Order Book 1805-1807:341). Francis Eppes VI died on July 4, 1808 and in 1809 the county tax assessor attributed his 2,513 acres of land to his estate (Chesterfield County Land Tax Lists 1809-1812).⁶⁶ John Wayles Eppes apparently made no attempt to develop his property at "Old Coxes," for later dated deeds reveal that he exercised his option of letting it flow back into his father's estate. Moreover, he remarried in 1809 and in 1811 established a home with his new wife in Buckingham County.

John Wayles Eppes' son, Francis Wayles Eppes, later recalled that:

At the age of sixty-three, my grandfather, who until three years before had enjoyed uninterrupted good health, died, and was buried at the Sweet Springs, in Virginia, wither he had gone in company with my father, in the hope of being relieved of a chronic disease; and in a few short years my grandmother followed him to the spirit world. The establishment at Eppington passed into other hands, and I went forth with my father to his new home [Randall 1865:II:360].⁶⁷

After Francis Eppes' death, John Wayles Eppes and Jerman Baker set about settling his estate. He instructed his executors to see that his will, which was dated March 6, 1806, was recorded in the Richmond District Court and Henrico County Superior Court

⁶⁵Perhaps Francis Eppes, who by 1806 was in failing health, hoped that his son would settle nearby, take care of his mother, and oversee Eppington.

⁶⁶No real estate tax rolls are available for Virginia in 1808.

⁶⁷Elizabeth Wayles Eppes, who died on June 10, 1810, was buried at Eppington, along with her granddaughter/great-niece, Maria Eppes. Her remains would have joined those of Elizabeth's first daughter named Lucy Elizabeth and Thomas and Martha Wayles Jefferson's daughter, Lucy Elizabeth, who succumbed to a fatal case of whooping cough in 1784, as well as one of the twins born to Elizabeth Wayles Eppes in 1787. The writer's grandfather, who was born in 1747, actually died at age 61. His widow outlived him by approximately two years.

(Chancery), rather than the court of Chesterfield County.⁶⁸ Even so, the will's contents are inferred by many of his executors' actions. Eppes apparently told them hire a surveyor⁶⁹ to lay off 1,000 acres surrounding the Eppington mansion, which comprised the house tract that was allocated to his widow, Elizabeth. He also had them subdivide the remaining 1,500 acres of the Eppington tract into three 500 acre lots that were assigned to his daughters. Daughter Matilda (who wed Richard Field) was assigned Lot 1; Mary (the wife-to-be of Richard N. Thweatt) was allocated Lot 2;⁷⁰ and Sally (later, the wife of John W. Lane) received Lot 3 (Chesterfield County Deed Book 19:265-267,463,538-540).⁷¹ As neither John Wayles Eppes nor his sister, Lucy (the wife of Archibald Thweatt) received an allotment of land, they may have collectively been the ultimate heirs of the 1,000 acres upon which the family home was situated.⁷² It may have been for that reason that Archibald and Lucy Eppes Thweatt later deeded to her brother, John Wayles Eppes, her interest in her father's land in Buckingham and Cumberland Counties in exchange for his interest in their parents' house tract (Chesterfield County Order Book 1805-1807:558) (see ahead).

On September 8, 1808, only two months after Francis Eppes VI's decease, nine horses were auctioned off at Charles Randolph's tavern in Holcomb, in Amelia County. Most of the animals sold were identified as progeny of mares that lived at Eppington.

⁶⁸Unfortunately, the records of the Richmond District Court and Henrico Superior Court were destroyed during the burning of Richmond, whereas those of Chesterfield County are intact.

⁶⁹They hired Willis Pillar, who conducted numerous surveys in Henrico County, where several examples of his work are on file.

⁷⁰Richard N. Thweatt married Mary (Polly) Eppes on November 16, 1809 (Chesterfield County Marriage Register 1771-1854).

⁷¹A January 1812 deed to one those 500 acre lots reveals that surveyor Willis Pillar prepared a plat that reportedly was not recorded in the Chesterfield County courthouse (Chesterfield County Deed Book 19:265-267).

⁷²It also should be recalled that in 1791 Francis and Elizabeth Eppes gave a substantial quantity of land to their son, John: their property at Bermuda Hundred, Captain Martin's Swamp and the 131 acres of land adjoining David Mead Randolph.

Therefore, it is uncertain whether the animals were transported to Amelia especially for the sale or whether they normally lived upon Francis Eppes' property there. That they were the offspring of the Eppes' riding-horses suggests that Francis Eppes, like many of his peers, practiced selective horse-breeding (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644). The decedent may have wanted some of his livestock sold to cover any debts that were outstanding, in order to preserve the rest of his estate for the use of his widow and children.

An estate sale account, which was compiled in October and November 1810, after Elizabeth Eppes' June 10th decease,⁷³ reveals that Francis Eppes had instructed his executors to liquidate his personal estate after his widow's decease by offering virtually all of his possessions for sale at their appraised value. But before anything was sold, his unmarried daughters (Matilda and Sally) were allowed to choose household items which value was equivalent to what had been given to their sisters who'd already wed. Next, all of Eppes' children were given an opportunity to purchase whatever they wanted at its appraised value, before the sale was opened to the public. Items, which value was listed, were distributed to Archibald Thweatt (on behalf of his wife, Lucy);⁷⁴ Matilda; Sally; John Wayles Eppes; and Jerman Baker (on behalf of his wife, Martha) during this preliminary "intramural" sale. Conspicuously absent from this list of buyers were Mary (Polly) Eppes and her husband, Richard N. Thweatt. Later, however, when the sale was opened to the public, Richard N. Thweatt joined John Wayles Eppes, Archibald Thweatt, Jerman Baker and others in making purchases (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644).

An account of the sales and distribution that occurred during

⁷³Little is known about the approximately two years that elapsed between Francis's and Elizabeth's deaths. Elizabeth presumably continued to stay on at Eppington with her three unmarried daughters. It was during this period that son John married for the second time and daughter Mary wed Richard N. Thweatt.

⁷⁴Some of these items were mentioned in Lucy Thweatt's will, which was presented for probate in 1860 (see ahead).

October and November 1810, reveals that all of the late Francis and Elizabeth Eppes' household furnishings, slaves, agricultural equipment, livestock and produce at Eppington were sold. Both of these sales occurred on the premises of Eppington, with the result that only those items acquired by Archibald Thweatt and his wife would have been left on the property. An examination of Francis Eppes' estate sale reveals much about his family's material culture and socio-economic status. When his possessions are grouped categorically, it can be ascertained that his household had use of ten beds (three of which were curtained), plus a trundle bed, a cradle, two marble slabs, and four extra mattresses. The family owned 17 counterpanes, four pair of blankets, 14 pair of sheets, six pillow cases, 35 towels, 31 breakfast napkins (some of which were old), and eight table cloths. Also on the premises were a portable writing desk, a mahogany press, a sideboard, two card tables, two toilet stands, three toilet tables, three chests of drawers, two mirrors, an easy chair, a set of dining tables, 66 chairs (20 of which were Windsors), two old tables, five pine washstands, a small table and 46 other chairs. Silver flatware and serving vessels included 18 teaspoons and 19 tablespoons, two cans or tankards, six silver salts, a soup ladle, a toddy ladle, and sugar tongs.

Two boxes which each held a dozen knives and forks were on hand, along with a pine box that contained "old knives and forks." The Eppes' books included volumes about history, geography, and religion and there were two Bibles, one of which was described as a family Bible. Vessels for food service and consumption included tea china, covered cream pots, a plate warmer, glass goblets, table china, brandy snifters and decanters, casters, and other specialty items of glass or china. Miscellaneous household furnishings included twelve pair of window curtains, a "large family clock," seven carpets (three of which were small), and a copy of Madison's map.⁷⁵ Also present were utilitarian items,

⁷⁵This is especially interesting, as Bishop James Madison's map of Virginia, which first was published in 1807, identifies
Continued on following page

such as andirons, candlesticks and snuffers, candle molds, and bread trays (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644) (see Appendices A and B).

On October 10, 1810, when the Eppes children and their spouses were allowed to purchase whatever they wanted, Archibald Thweatt bought a silver cross; six silver salts; a gold watch; a bed, pillows, bolster and mattress; two dimity counterpanes; and a pair of blankets. The total value of the items he acquired was \$193.00. John Wayles Eppes expended \$487.76 and purchased 18 silver teaspoons and 19 tablespoons; two silver cans (or tankards); a silver soup ladle; a toddy ladle; silver sugar tongs; a sideboard; two card tables; a mahogany bedstead, a common bedstead; a trundle bed; two beds with pillows and bolsters; a marble slab; three pair of white sheets and three pair of brown sheets; two pair of blankets; a lot of bed curtains; three pair of window curtains; 19 breakfast napkins and 35 towels; a bell metal skillet; a gun; a 30-gallon coffee boiler; tea china; nine decanters; a plate basket; four brandy sliders; and a broken set of table china. He also acquired an "old Bible," three books and a copy of "Madison's map." Miss Matilda Eppes bought a mahogany press; a bedstead and curtains; a dimity counterpane; and a pair of blankets, for a total of \$86. Her sister, Sally, procured a mahogany bureau; a bedstead and curtains; a mattress; a pair of blankets; two counterpanes; two history books (Marshall's Washington's Life and Winterbotham's History of America) and the family Bible, all for a cost of \$193.00. Jerman Baker (Martha Eppes' husband) purchased an easy chair; a bed, pillows, bolsters, six pillow cases and a mattress; a marble slab; two pair of brown sheets; two counterpanes; a portable writing desk; seven window curtains; a copy of Blair's Sermons; and 100 pounds of bacon, all for an expenditure of \$162.50 (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644).

Continued from previous page
Eppington by name (Figure 10). Madison and a near-contemporary indicate that the River Road (which crossed the Appomattox River at Bevil's Bridge) was a main thoroughfare that provided access to the county courthouse (Cary 1814) (Figure 11).

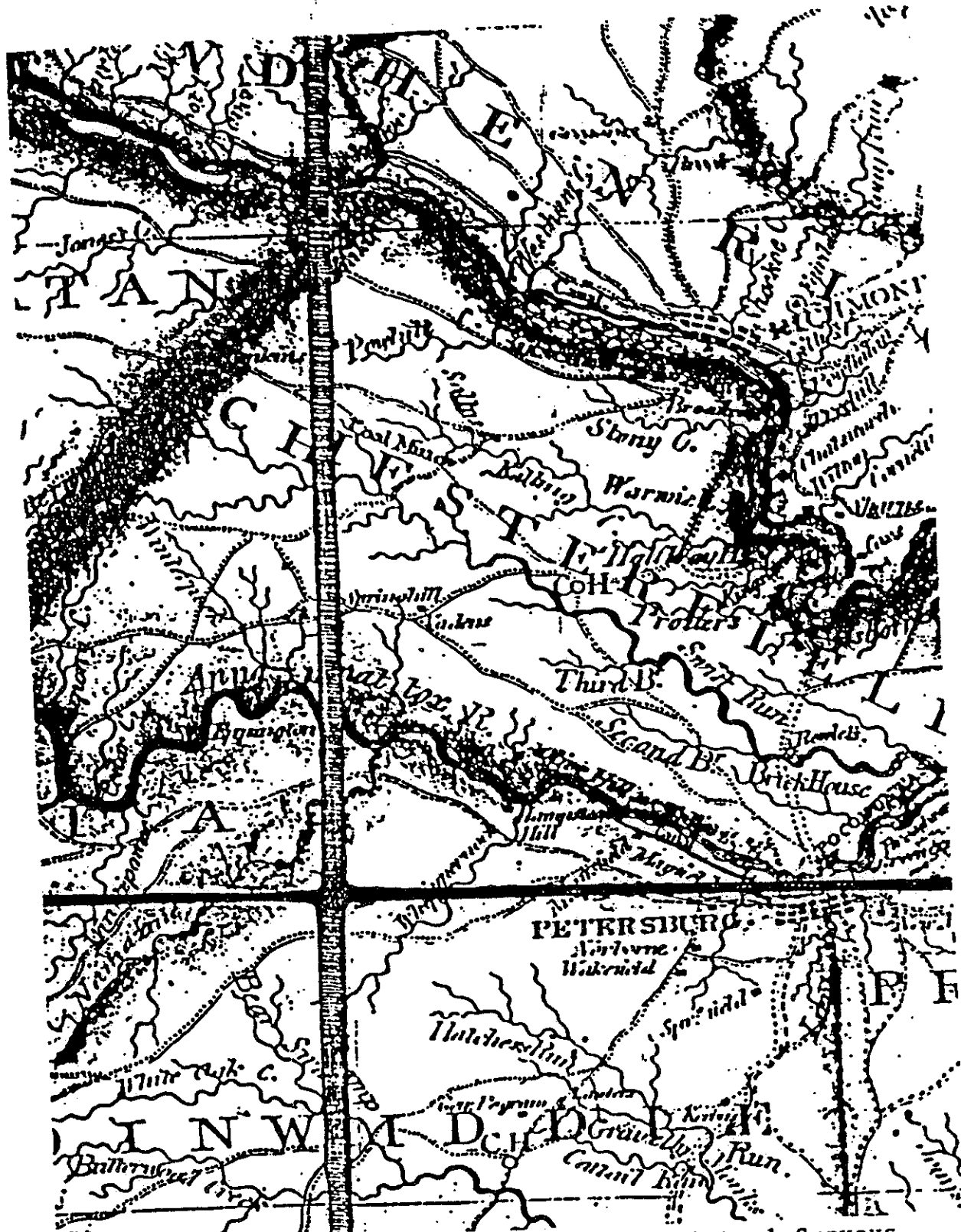


Figure 10: A Map of Virginia Formed from Actual Surveys (Madison 1807).



Figure 11: Map of Virginia (Cary 1814).

On October 10, 1810, when the first of two public sales was held, Eppes family members bought most (or all) of the old slaves at Eppington, for Archibald Thweatt purchased Old Sampson and his wife, Nancy, and John Wayles Eppes acquired Old Jacob, Old Joe and his wife, Mary, and Sheppard. Richard N. Eppes procured Samuel-the-Carpenter and Jack, as well as Coachee. Jerman Baker took Old Captain, Little Captain, and Gorn.⁷⁶ Billy Fisher and his wife were sold to William Belcher and Colonel Pelam Godin bought Quent and his family. Two other slaves (Peter and Order) were acquired by John Robertson and Samuel Moody, Sr., both of whom lived in the neighborhood. Jerman Baker bought the bay mare named Dare Devil and her colt, whereas John Y. Tabb purchased the gray mare named Mary Gray, both of which the Eppes had used as breeding stock. Willis Pillar, who had surveyed the Eppington tract into large lots, bought the family's gig and harness (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644).

Family members also bought a variety of household furnishings and utilitarian items at the October 10th sale and a final sale that was held on November 29, 1810. Archibald Thweatt acquired a set of dining tables, three pine wash stands, a flax wheel, three old cotton wheels, some old scythe blades and cradles, a lot of ploughs and four oxen. John Wayles Eppes purchased 20 Windsor chairs, two toilet stands and two toilet tables, counterpanes, a cradle, some water glasses and goblets, a toddy glass, glass salvers and a carpet. Richard N. Thweatt acquired sheets and a bed, but no other household furnishings. Neither of the unmarried Eppes daughters made purchases (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644).

Besides the horses that were sold, Eppington's livestock included oxen, mules, sheep and young ewes, a substantial herd of beef and dairy cattle and a couple bulls. Agricultural products that were sold off included 4,032 lbs. of pork, 206 barrels of corn, seven casks of brandy, plus nine gallons of peach brandy.

⁷⁶Virginia planters traditionally provided food, clothing and shelter to elderly slaves who no longer were able to work.

The presence of a cotton gin and cotton wheels implies that cotton was being raised on the property. The absence of swine is inexplicable, unless all of the family's hogs had been slaughtered and converted to cured pork or disposed of in another sale. A signed statement at the end of Francis Eppes' estate sale indicates that the accounts "was made out immediately after the sale on the 29th Nov. 1810." It was noted, however, that "There are some more [items] in addition and including some of the animals" (Chesterfield County Will Book 9:637-644).

Eppington Under the Thweatts

On October 10, 1810, John W. Eppes and his second wife, the former Martha Burke Jones,⁷⁷ joined Miss Sally Eppes, Mary and Richard N. Thweatt, and Martha and Jerman Baker in deeding their interests in Mrs. Elizabeth Eppes' "1,000 acres called Eppington" and all of the tract's improvements to Archibald Thweatt of Petersburg, the husband of Francis and Elizabeth Eppes' daughter, Lucy. The deed noted that Mrs. Eppes had died without assigning her land to anyone, with the result that it had reverted to her children (Chesterfield County Deed Book 18:484-488; Order Book 1810-1811:368). Less than two years after Archibald Thweatt bought the 1,000 acre Eppington house tract, he purchased Lot 3, the 500 acres that had been set aside for Sally Eppes Lane. Lot 3, which abutted the Mill Road and part of Winterpock Creek, was located in the eastern part of the 2,500 acre plantation, but was west of Lot 2 and inland behind the 200 acres known as "Old Coxes" (Chesterfield County Deed Book 19:265-267). Archibald Thweatt appears to have moved to Chesterfield during 1810, for the county census-taker listed him as a free white male head of household between the ages of 16 and 26. However, his wife, Lucy, appears

⁷⁷Martha was the daughter of Willie Jones of North Carolina. John and Martha Jones Eppes were married in 1809 (Stanard 1895-1896:396). In 1811 John Wayles Eppes and his new wife left Chesterfield and relocated to Buckingham County, where he purchased an estate known as Saratoga. He built a home at Millbrook, which was a few miles away, and ran for Congress against John Randolph, an opponent of Thomas Jefferson's foreign policy (Johnson et al. 1931:171).

to have stayed behind in Petersburg, for no one else was attributed to Archibald's household (Chesterfield County Census 1810).

In December 1812, Francis Eppes' executors sold to Archibald Thweatt an additional tract: the 200 acres called "Old Coxes" which Eppes in 1806 had agreed to sell to his son, John W. Eppes. "Old Coxes" abutted the Appomattox River and the 1,000 acre Eppington tract that Thweatt had purchased in 1810; Lot 3, Sally Eppes Lane's 500 acres that she had her husband had sold to Thweatt earlier in the year; and Lot 2, the 500 acres that Mary (Polly) Eppes Thweatt had inherited and then sold to John Robertson (Chesterfield County Deed Book 19:538-540). In April 1813 John W. Eppes executed a quitclaim deed in which he relinquished any potential interest he might have in "Old Coxes" and the 500 acre lots that his sisters had been assigned (Chesterfield County Deed Book 19:463; Order Book 1812-1814:481).

Through the series of purchases described above, Archibald Thweatt came into possession of the 1,000 acre Eppington house tract, Sally and John W. Lane's 500 acres (Lot 2), and the 200 acres traditionally known as "Old Coxes." Meanwhile, the plantation was reduced in size, for Lots 1 and 2 were sold out of the family. Mary (Polly) and Richard N. Thweatt conveyed Lot 2, her 500 acres on the east side of Winterpock Creek that fronted on the Appomattox, to John Robertson. Matilda and Richard Field, on the other hand, deeded her 500 acres abutting Winterpock Creek (Lot 1) to Francis Patram and James Moody, who sold part of the acreage to another man. But because Patram and Moody defaulted on their mortgage to Matilda and Richard Field, Lot 1 ultimately reverted back to the Fields. During July and August 1817 Richard and Matilda Field joined Francis Patram, James Moody, and Peter Moody in deeding their respective interests in 90 acres of Lot 1 to Archibald Thweatt. One deed noted that the transaction was critical to keeping open the right-of-way to the road that ran from Richmond to Petersburg. In a separate (but related) transaction Richard and Matilda Field conveyed to Archibald Thweatt "a small piece of land formerly owned by Francis Eppes of

Eppington on the opposite side of the Appomattox River in Amelia County," his mill seat. It was noted that the land in Amelia was supposed to have been encompassed by a previous deed but accidentally had been omitted (Chesterfield County Deed Book 21:571-584).

Chesterfield County real estate tax rolls reflect the transactions made by Archibald Thweatt during this period, for in 1813 he was credited with 1,500 acres (the 1,000 acre Eppington house tract plus Sally Eppes Lane's 500 acre lot) and in 1815 he was credited with the 200 acre tract called "Old Coxes." The land attributed to Archibald Thweatt was said to abut the Appomattox River and the property of John Robertson (Chesterfield County Land Tax Lists 1810-1824).⁷⁸ Later, the 90 acre purchase Thweatt made from the Fields, Moodys and Patram was included. Eppington, though somewhat reduced in size, still was one of Chesterfield County's largest plantations and Archibald Thweatt was one of the county's largest landowners.

One of Archibald Thweatt's sources of income was raising sheep, some of which were purchased at his late father-in-law's estate sale in 1810. On December 3, 1815, he expressed his appreciation to a man in Staunton, who had had Thweatt's wool yarn made into cloth. Thweatt said

I regret living in a part of the country where we are so backwards in improvements. We have not even a fulling mill within 70 miles of us. Our flocks of sheep have considerably increased and improved. The merino sheep I have raised are superior to those from Spain. They are larger, the wool equally fine and longer. The best shepherds admit that they flourish here better than they do to the north.

I lately compared some of my wool of the 3/4th blood and it was allowed to be equal in quality to the wool of the whole blood direct from old Spain. I could furnish about 200 a year (3/4) and should be glad to take broad cloth for my own use and coarse woolens for my negroes in exchange, or to have it

⁷⁸Robertson, it should be recalled, had purchased Lot 2 from Mary and Richard N. Thweatt.

all manufactured in[to] good cloth.

If the manufacturers would establish agents at Petersburg and Richmond, they might collect immense quantities of wool, merino and common, in exchange for coarse woolens and blankets - provided they would do us justice. Our domestic manufacturers and mechanics are unjust and oppress the planter. They are not content with a reasonable profit. A bootmaker will ask you for a pair of boots \$16 to 20 - new leather, shoe thread, provisions and house rent are cheaper here than in any European country, and \$16 would buy materials enough to make eight or ten pair of boots. A saddler asks \$20 to \$25 to \$30 for such a saddle as ten years ago we gave \$8 to 12 when saddles were imported. Yet the materials for saddles are cheaper in this country than in Europe. I have changed one of my old political opinions. I would only lay duties for the purpose of revenue. If domestic manufacturers cannot, with the raw materials at hand at prime cost free of every duty or tax, undersell the Europeans who are burdened with so many charges, freights, insurance, commissions, duties, etc., the former do not deserve encouragement.

Archibald Thweatt closed by saying

I should be very glad to present you with a merino ram next summer of fall, if you can find a conveyance. I could lodge him in Richmond, if you have any friend there who would receive him [Thweatt 1815].

On April 22, 1815, several months before he contacted his associate in Staunton, Archibald Thweatt insured his home with the Mutual Assurance Society. The policy he purchased described the Eppington dwelling as having a value of \$3,010. It was depicted just as it had been in 1806, when Francis Eppes had insured the property, and it was insured for the same amount. But there was at least one important difference between the 1806 and 1815 policies. Whereas Eppes' 1806 policy included a 40 foot by 16 foot wooden kitchen (that was 17 feet from the house) and a 40 foot by 16 foot wooden school house (that was 27 feet away), both of which structures were worth \$210 apiece, Thweatt's 1815 policy

cited only a 40 foot by 16 foot wooden kitchen that was 15 feet away from the dwelling and worth \$300. John Kelso, the insurance company's agent, wrote and then struck through the words "school house," suggesting that that building had been razed or destroyed (Mutual Assurance Society 1815) (Figure 12). The kitchen's elevation in value suggests that it may have undergone some improvements between 1806 and 1815.

In 1817 Archibald Thweatt of Chesterfield County was credited with 300 acres of Amelia County land on the Appomattox River that he had purchased from Robert Cousens (Cousins), Jr. It was situated in the same vicinity as the mill seat to which he had just obtained an unencumbered title from Richard and Matilda Field. By 1821 Archibald Thweatt had disposed of almost all of the land he had purchased from Cousens and retained only two acres. Thus, it appears that he was obliged to buy the 300 acres in order to enlarge his mill seat and that upon doing so, he disposed of the excess Cousens land. Archibald Thweatt and his heirs were credited with the two acre lot in Amelia for the entire time they remained in possession of Eppington. In 1862, when Eppington changed hands, the mill seat stayed with the property (Amelia County Land Tax Lists 1817-1861) (see ahead).

In 1820 when Virginia's tax assessors commenced including in their estimates the aggregate value of the improvements that stood upon each landowner's property, he noted that Archibald Thweatt's acreage in Chesterfield County contained buildings which collective worth was \$3,500. That value placed him in the top 10 percent of Chesterfield County taxpayers, in terms of his improvements' worth.⁷⁹ It was in 1820 that Thweatt first was credited with the 90 acres he had bought from the Fields, Moodys and Patram, which land lacked structural improvements. Tax records for 1824 reveal that \$1,000 worth of buildings on Archibald Thweatt's core acreage at Eppington were destroyed by

⁷⁹When the fair market value of Chesterfield County real estate, as expressed in the 1850 and 1860 censuses, is compared with the sums attributed to the same properties in land tax rolls, it is evident that assessors typically listed total value of an owner's real estate at roughly half its fair market value.