

# **LOVELY MOUNT TAVERN — THE BIRTH OF A CITY**

and something of the

## **EARLY NEW RIVER SETTLERS**

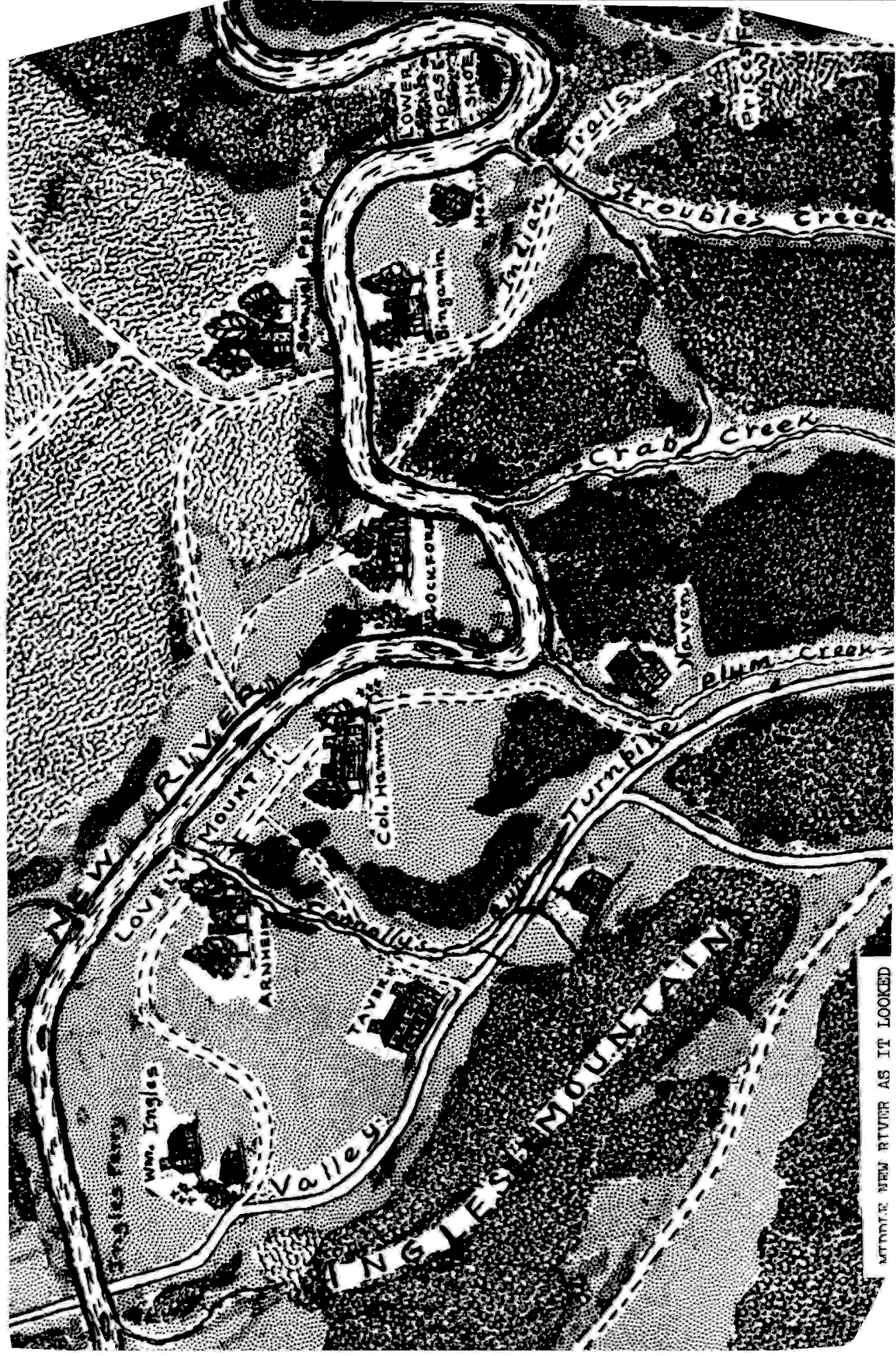
**By Daniel Dunbar Howe**

**Author of "Listen to the Mockingbird," the  
life and times of a pioneer Virginia family**



**ILLUSTRATED**

**Carr Publishing Company, Inc.,  
Boyce, Virginia**



MIDDLE NEW RIVER AS IT LOOKED

**Lovely Mount Tavern — The Birth of a City**  
**and something of the**  
**Early New River Settlers**

Printed in U.S.A. By  
CARR PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.

Boyce, Virginia



*Dedicated to the Memory of*

**CHARLES KENT HOWE, JR.**

**Mayor of Radford, 1948-1950, councilman and civic leader;  
a descendant of Joseph Howe of Back Creek one of the  
first settlers west of New River.**



## PREFACE

The writer and co-worker of this historical story, Charles Kent Howe, Sr., have made no attempt to record the modern history of Radford, since it is well known from existing records, as well as by hearsay from many of the older inhabitants.

Modern Radford began with the coming of the railroad, in 1854. The embryo settlement was aroused to considerable activity by this innovation in transportation but soon came the Civil War to retard any worthwhile development. Then followed reconstruction days with the accompanying period of "hard times" and for some years thereafter Radford, then known as CENTRAL or CENTRAL DEPOT, remained a cluster of indifferent frame dwellings close by the railroad tracks and along Norwood Street. The delapidated remains of a few are still in evidence.

The town took on new life with the boom that developed just prior to the period known as the Gay Nineties. The boom was initiated by a corporation known as the Radford Land and Improvement Company, headed by Cincinnati capitalists. Their attempt to convert a listless railroad town into a city of importance resulted in widespread improvements and considerable industrial expansion, including the Radford Pipe Works and Foundry, the Water Works and Standpipe near Rock Road, the Wagon Bridge across New River, St. Albans Preparatory College (founded by Professor George Holland Miles) and a number of municipal buildings, banks and hotels. To provide for the anticipated future growth of the city, streets were graded through the blackberry thickets and chinquapin bushes north of Dudley's ferry. The settlement around Dudley's ferry, though composed of only a few homes was given the name of Brooklyn, possibly in expectations of great things to come.

With the collapse of the boom, in 1891, Radford was again at a stand-still until the automobile age ushered in a new era. The Radford College coming almost simultaneously marked the beginning of a progressive development that has continued to the present day.

Such, in brief outline, is the history of modern Radford.

But we are concerned here with the more romantic history of the New River settlements; the little known Colonial period which began a century before the coming of the railroad, when the first white settlers started trekking into this part of the New River territory. Who were they — and from whence did they come? Why was this site selected for a settlement, and later for a town? It is of this remote epoch, marking the beginning of the City of Radford, that this historical sketch is written.

DANIEL DUNBAR HOWE

San Antonio, Texas.

September 27, 1963.

# CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. The Virginia Frontier moves westward .....	1
II. The coming of the Dunkards .....	3
III. The French and Indian War of 1753 marks the ..... beginning of the Indian hostilities along New River	7
IV. Something of the lower New River settlers .....	13
V. Pepper's ferry established .....	19
Further growth of the lower river settlements	
VI. LOVELY MOUNT .....	23
Its delayed development	
VII. LOVELY MOUNT TAVERN .....	31
VIII. Further development of the Lovely Mount .....	43
settlement. The coming of the railroad	
IX. Comes the Civil War. After three years of conflict ....	47
the fighting reaches Southwest Virginia.	
Roster of Co. "E", 4th Virginia Volunteers .....	49
Farm boys from Pulaski, Giles and Montgomery Counties who joined the Confederacy at Blacksburg, Va. April '61	
Something of the earliest families at	
X. CENTRAL DEPOT .....	53
XI. The first schools and churches and the .....	65
early business establishments	
XII. CONCLUSION .....	69
Index .....	73



## LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Lovely Mount Tavern .....	Frontispiece
	Prior to Page
Stone Chimneys at Dunkard Bottom Place .....	5
Home of William Ingles, near Ingles Ferry, 1755 .....	10
Scene of Same Area, as of 1890's .....	10
The Bingamin House at Pepper's Ferry .....	16
Christiansburg as it Appeared in 1850's .....	26
Rockford .....	28
"Arnheim" - Home of Dr. John Blair Radford .....	30
Home of William Haven on Plum Creek .....	36
Lovely Mount Church .....	41
Radford Depot of the Gay Nineties .....	56
West Radford Circa, 1890 .....	56
The Curved Bridge .....	58
Opening of the Wagon Bridge, 1891 .....	63
Wagon Bridge and West Radford Circa, 1892 .....	63
Dedication of New Memorial Bridge .....	63
Memorial Bridge Opening Parade .....	63
Central Depot, Circa 1885 .....	67
Charter Committee for the City of Radford .....	71

### MAPS AND SKETCHES

U. S. Geological Survey Map .....	34
Site of Radford and Environs .....	34







**LOVELY MOUNT TAVERN**



## CHAPTER I

### THE VIRGINIA FRONTIER MOVES WESTWARD DRAPER'S MEADOWS & THE NEW RIVER SETTLEMENTS

When John Heavin built Lovely Mount Tavern on the Stagecoach Road near the crossing of Connolly's Run, in 1796, it marked the beginning of a city. It was some 60 years later, with the coming of the railroad, before this came to full realization.

As far as is known this river region was first seen by white man in 1654, when Colonel Abram Wood was granted a concession from the governor of Virginia to explore the country to the west. Colonel Wood's home was at the falls of the Appomattox River, the present site of Petersburg. Colonel Wood was convinced that he would find a great river which flowed into the Pacific. The immense expanse of the new country was not known at this time.

Prior to this Indian tribes had roamed this territory for 300 years or more. The Cherokees finally attained supremacy but they had only lived here a year when the Confederacy of Six Nations conquered the resident tribe. They found that the climate was so healthful and the game and fish were so plentiful that no tribe including the Six Nations was willing to allow the other to permanently occupy the rich valley territory. By arbitrary agreement they decided to preserve this as common hunting ground. Until the coming of the first white man the New River region had been uninhabited except for the roving bands of Indians.

It is supposed that Colonel Wood's expedition came over the Alleghanies at a place known as Wood's Gap in the present county of Floyd. They encountered the upper reaches of what is now known as Little River near the present site of the town of Riner. They passed down this to where it flows into New River. Seeing the current flowing in a different direction from the course of the streams he had just travelled, he took it to be a new river and gave it the name of Wood's River for himself.

The lower section of this stream was known as the Kanawha, for the tribe of Indians of that name. When and why the upper part

of this same river came to be called New River is not altogether agreed. David E. Johnston, in his History of the Middle New River Settlements, advances several theories. He states that one authority claims it was an Indian name meaning "New Water". But the late Major Jed Hotchkiss of Staunton, Virginia, attributed the name to a man by the name of "New" who at an early day kept a ferry at or near where Ingles Ferry was afterwards established.

This writer, however has been unable to find an early settler by this name in any of the Southwest Virginia Histories examined. In discussing this riddle with the late Dan Cannaday, professor of history at Radford College and a recognized authority on the history of Southwest Virginia, he could not agree with any of the reasons advanced for the name of "New River". He had a theory of his own, in the absence of any other acceptable reason for the name. He mentioned that the first settlers along the river were Germans. It is probable that in their initial meeting with the Indians found roaming the river valley here, among the first questions they asked was the name of the river. Naturally the communications between the Germans and the friendly Indians was very difficult and had to be carried on with many signs in explanation of the strange words used. They no doubt pointed to the river and said, "Kanawha". Kanawha has a sound similar to the German word "Neue", pronounced "Noya" and meaning "New". Hence the Germans assumed the name given them was "Noya River" or the "New River". The name "New River" was accepted and handed down to the white settlers that followed.

If this assumption can be taken as a fact, and this seems altogether logical, it might be said that with the first meeting here of the early German settlers and the Kanawha Indians, the Wood's River, as well as the upper reaches of the Kanawha River, as of this historical moment (Circa 1748) passed out of existence and New River was born.

The first permanent white settlement in or near the river valley was that at Draper's Meadows made by the Drapers and Ingles who came into the area by way of the Catawba. The settlement was made on the high plateau east of New River. It was during that same year, of 1748, that the intrepid German pioneers trekked several miles further to establish independent homes along the eastern banks of the river, when they made this first contact with the Indians.

## CHAPTER II

### THE COMING OF THE DUNKARDS

The Dunkard Bottom settlement west of the river, however, preceded the Draper's Meadows colony by some eight years.

The Dunkers, or Dunkards, as they are called, were German Seventh Day Baptists from the Ephrata Society of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The Society was founded in Germany. Suffering from religious persecution, they fled to Holland, and later to America. In 1740 a group of them came to Virginia and established themselves on New River a few miles above Ingles Ferry. They flourished here from 1740 until after the French and Indian War period. The colony was later broken up by the continuous Indian depredations. The members gradually scattered to safer havens and lost their identity as the individual families were assimilated by the more secure frontier settlements.

Tradition has it that some of the ruins still in evidence above Ingles Ferry (before being obliterated by the Claytor Lake) were the remains of the Dunkard Bottom settlement. Some interesting facts in regard to these ruins and the present home now standing on the northern bank of the lake are given in a manuscript prepared by Mrs. Thomas Farrow (nee Mary Cloyd Howe) on the early history of the Cloyd and Howe families. Mrs. Farrow, a daughter of Haven Boyd and Catherine Cloyd Howe, and a great granddaughter of Thomas Cloyd, the first of the Cloyds to settle here on the river, states, in part:

"The river bottom farmland, commonly referred to as the Dunkards Bottom farm, included a vast tract running along the Stagecoach Road and up the river for several miles. The lower end of the tract bordered on the land of William Ingles. This acreage was originally owned by William Christian\* who had acquired it some years after the disappearance of the Dunkards. The fact that this settlement had existed here accounted for its being designated

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\* Colonel William Christian, famous frontiersman and Revolutionary War hero, and for whom Christiansburg was named.



### **STONE CHIMNEYS AT OLD DUNKARD BOTTOM PLACE**

Log house on the right was the home of Colonel William Christian, and his successor, James McCorkle. The brick house far left was the home of Thomas Cloyd. The twin chimneys near center were presumedly built by the Dunkards.

(Courtesy of Kegley's Virginia Frontier.)

the Dunkards Bottom farm. The first home here was built by William Christian. There were subsequent renovations by his heirs.

"Thomas Cloyd acquired the Dunkards Bottom farmland from William Christian (or his heirs) and built a new home here near the then abandoned Christian home. Thomas Cloyd died here in 1866. David C. Cloyd was to have inherited the property but he died in 1863. Catherine Cloyd and sister, Lucy Barton, then became the heirs. That portion which included the Dunkards Bottom farm later came into the possession of Catherine Cloyd.

"Haven Boyd Howe of 'Sunnyside' on Back Creek married Catherine Cloyd, in 1873, and they began their married life in a temporary cottage on the Dunkards Bottom farm. Their home was located in the vicinity of the old deserted William Christian and Thomas Cloyd homes. That year they began building their new house. The site picked was somewhat further from the river than the former old homes. Haven Howe, a young farmer, was also an able builder and a man of versatile talents and initiative. He designed and built the brick structure, supervising the work and doing a considerable part of the construction himself. The bricks were moulded and kilned on the place and most of the materials came from his own sawmill. The work progressed through the years of 1873 to 1879. When Haven and Katie Cloyd Howe moved into their new home they named it "Crescent Falls" for the crescent shaped water falls in the river nearby. It stands today on the west (or northern) edge of Claytor Lake and is used as a guest center for the lake visitors."

In further clarification of the ruins at Dunkard Bottom, Mr. F. B. Kegley, author of *Kegley's Virginia Frontier*, the greatest known authority on Virginia Frontier history, to whom the writer is indebted for the Dunkard Bottom reproduction shown elsewhere, said in explanation, "I understand that the log house seen at the right was the home of William Christian, and also his successor, James McCorkle (presumed to be one of his heirs). The high brick house seen in the rear was the home of Thomas Cloyd who developed a large estate here, adding extensive acreage up the river and along the Valley Turnpike. The twin chimneys in the center belonged to the original cabins presumedly built by the Dunkards."





### CHAPTER III

#### THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR OF 1753 MARKS THE BEGINNING OF THE INDIAN HOSTILITIES ON THE VIRGINIA FRONTIER

The first signs of wide spread Indian hostility that came with the outbreak of the French and Indian War of 1753 reached this country two years later. On the fateful Sunday of July 8, 1755, came the tragic massacre at the Draper's Meadows settlement. By mere chance on that Sunday Colonel James Patton, and his young nephew, William Preston of Tinkling Springs were on a social and business visit at the Draper's and Ingles' homes in the frontier settlement. It was mid morning. Colonel Patton was writing at a table in the Draper's living room. He had removed his sword and placed it beside him. William Preston had been sent early that morning to the Harmons on the river to secure help for the Monday's harvest. William Ingles was working in a distant field. The community presented a peaceful scene. The attack came without warning. Colonel Patton, a powerfully built man well over six feet in height, jumped up and dispatched two Indians with his broad sword before he was overcome by a horde of savages and killed. Many of the settlers, including women with babies in their arms, were ruthlessly slain and their homes burned. Mary Draper Ingles, wife of William, was carried off with other prisoners to the Ohio River. The epic story with all of its tragic details, and the miraculous escape and return of Mrs. Ingles, has so often been told and written that it is not necessary to repeat the events in further detail.

Following the massacre William Ingles, his family broken up by the tragedy, his home burned and his wife in captivity, re-established himself on the upper reaches of New River, securing land on both sides of the crossing that was later to be known as Ingles Ferry. He built a log house in the river bottom selecting a site near a large spring. Later a sort of fort or stockade was built near the river crossing. This served as a rendezvous for travelers

The Residence of Mrs. Ingles, at New River  
 Montgomery County, crossed by a Bridge, it have been  
 at one time the old Ferry — July 5<sup>th</sup> 1856.



Land of beauty fondled by the circling stream, in whose calm depths  
 the beautiful and pure glances are mirrored, how lovely how sweet  
 is in a fair soul to feel ourselves as holy things enshrouded; to know our  
 spines another cheek both kindle, our trouble both another bosom swell  
 our sorrow fill with tears another's eyes.

**LOG HOUSE CENTER FOREGROUND WAS BUILT BY  
 WILLIAM INGLES, IN 1755.**

The cable leading from the spring house to John Ingles home above for  
 supplying water by pulley can be seen. From a painting by Ed Beyer, German  
 painter, Dusseldorf on the Rhine.



The Ingles Ferry area from the same viewpoint as seen in previous artist's sketch. The photograph was taken around the early nineties. The small log house (center) was the home built by William Ingles, in 1755. John Ingles home can be seen on hill to left. Young man in foreground is identified as John Lewis "Nig" Ingles, famous VPI football player of the late nineties.

over the Stagecoach Road.

Mrs. Ingles, after months of hazardous living with the Indians managed to make her escape. Her baby that had been born while in captivity had to be left behind. After weeks of near starvation on the trail up the Kanawha and New Rivers she was finally reunited with her husband at Dunkards Bottom, where she was taken when found in the vicinity of the Lower Horseshoe. It was then December of 1755 and cold weather had set in.

Mary Draper Ingles was destined to escape death again by a miracle of chance before she was able to settle down to a long tranquil life. Soon after her return to the Ingles Ferry home rumors came of more Indian massacres. William Ingles decided it best to seek a safer retreat for the time being. Fort Vause, the last word in frontier safety, had recently been built by Captain Ephraim Vause on his large estate including the area where the town of Shawsville now stands. The fort and rectangular stockade were considered ample protection for his family and all of the farm neighbors around the community. Here William Ingles took his wife for security. After a few days when the situation in this section looked more threatening William decided they should move further east to the neighborhood of Bedford which then appeared out of the danger zone. The day after they departed the Indians swooped down on Fort Vause, killing and taking prisoner everybody present. The fort and stockade were burned to the ground. Captain Vause and some members of his family were absent at the time and their lives were saved.

By the late summer of 1756 the Ingles were able to return permanently to their new home in the river bottom.

William Ingles died at the home he had built near Ingles Ferry, in 1782. He was only 53 years old at the time of his death and still in the prime of his life.

Mrs. Ingles lived alone in the river bottom log house for many years. She retained her physical vigor, meanwhile taking care of the home chores, riding horseback and attending religious meetings and social gatherings around the neighborhood. During the later years of her life one of her sons, Colonel John Ingles, built a modern home beside the Stagecoach Road. The spring near the log house was utilized by Colonel Ingles in a cleverly designed piece of construction. He arranged a pulley with water buckets attached so that they could be pulled up one after another from the spring below. This ingenious invention saved a long tedious carry by hand up the steep slope. It was a marked advance in hydraulic engineer-

ing for this period when labor saving devices were in their infancy. (The pulley device can be seen in the reproduction of the German artist's painting shown elsewhere).

It was the desire of her son to provide a more comfortable home for his mother in her old age. Sentiment and love for the old place, however, were too strong to permit her to leave and she continued to live in the home she had shared so long with her husband. Death came to her here in February, 1815, at the ripe old age of 84. She was laid to rest beside her husband in the family burying ground nearby. Some of the ancient headstones can still be seen here but river floods through the years have almost obliterated the cemetery.

In recent years stones from the chimney of the log house were used to erect a monument in the West Radford cemetery dedicated to her memory. The commemorative inscription on the bronze plate tells of the great bravery displayed by this remarkable woman during the harrowing ordeal of her capture and escape from the Indians and the unprecedented trek through the desolate wilderness back to her homeland. Mary Draper Ingles proved herself to be one of the most heroic women of the early American frontier.

Ingles Ferry was established as a state licensed operation in 1762. The covered bridge, built here by Thomas Ingles, in 1840-'42, was destroyed by Confederate troops during the Civil War to retard the advance of the Union invaders.



## CHAPTER IV

### SOMETHING OF THE LOWER NEW RIVER SETTLERS

It has been noted previously that the first white families to settle along the lower reaches of New River were Germans and also some were of Scotch-Irish ancestry, and that they came about the time Draper's Meadows was settled. It appears, however, that some of the Scotch-Irish came by way of Hans Meadow (later named Christiansburg) and not up the Catawba, the route of the Drapers and Ingles and their companion settlers. It is known that Howard Heavin and the Shells lived at Hans Meadow for some years before moving on to the east bank of New River. Among the first of the families along the river were the Heavins, Shells (Shull), Bingamins, Bargers, Lybrooks (Leibroch), Harmons, Harlesses and the Prices of Price's Forks. The Bingamins settled near what was later known as Pepper's Ferry. Howard Heavin built his log house some three miles further down the river and the Shells settled on a farm near Strubles Creek, a couple of miles below the Heavins. The location of the homes of the other settlers is not definitely known but it is known that they dwelled along the route from Draper's Meadows down the river along the trail from whence the Indians came for their depredations in this section and their treks to and from the Ohio Valley.

Michael Price was driven from his home by the Indians on their withdrawal from the Draper's Meadows massacre. He happened to be reading a German Bible when an Indian appeared at the door. Seeing the Indian in the act of hurling his tommyhawk Price instinctively threw his hands before his face still clutching the Bible. The act saved his life. The tommyhawk hit the Bible as he jumped backwards out of the door and fled into the brush. The badly mutilated Bible remained in the family for several generations, until it was eventually destroyed by fire.

On the further retreat the Indians passed the place of Philip Barger, an elderly man. His head was cut off by the marauders who carried it in a sack to the house of Philip Lybrook at the mouth of

Sinking Creek. They put it on the porch leaving word for Mrs. Lybrook to look in the sack and she would find a friend.

Why the Indians did not molest the families of Adam Harmon and Philip Lybrook cannot be explained. It is said, however, that some of the German settlers had more friendly relations with the Indians. Adam Harmon, whence William Preston had been sent for help with the Monday's harvesting, lived near Gunpowder Springs, the site of the present town of Eggleston. It was Adam Harmon who first saw Mrs. Ingles near the Lower Horseshoe that cold day in December, on her return from captivity. She was wandering about near death from exposure, fatigue and starvation. It was he who carried her by horseback up the river to the Dunkards Bottom settlement where she was re-united with her husband. Mr. Harmon took her there because this was considered the most secure place in the region.

The Bingamins at Pepper's Ferry was another of the German families along the river who up to this time had carried on friendly relations with the Indians. From the beginning of the uprisings of 1755 the mood of the Indians drastically changed, due to the conniving of the French.\* There was more than just the Draper's Meadows raid along New River in July, 1755. William Preston's list of dead and wounded gives in addition to the raid on Draper's Meadows wherein Colonel Patton was killed, the casualties of a prior raid along New River, July 3, 1755 numbering 21 dead and wounded. Among these were listed John Bingamin, New River, killed; Mrs. Bingamin, New River, killed; Adam Bingamin, New River, killed; Mrs. Bingamin, New River, wounded.\*\*

It is apparent that William Preston, only 25 at this time, assumed the responsibility for making the necessary report to the state authorities regarding the conditions in the New River settlements. He was early displaying the qualities of leadership that were to make him one of the prominent figures of the time.

John Bingamin, Jr., according to Augusta County records, lived on and owned the land on the east side of the river opposite the Samuel Pepper home.

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\* The French encouraged the Indians by offering a bounty for the scalps of their enemies. Those Indians friendly with the French wore a brass tag attached to their nose (or ears). Joseph Howe of Back Creek had one of these tags he had taken from an Indian slain in battle. It was retained in the family for many years.

\*\* Excerpts taken by the late Professor Dan Cannaday from the Draper's collection of Virginia Historical documents now in the possession of the Historical Society of Wisconsin.





The Bingamin house (later Eskeridge), on the east side of Pepper's ferry, as it looks today. The log house (lower view), was built by John Bingamin, in 1755, following the massacre and burning of the first house. The frame addition, by subsequent owners (upper view) included a new front facing north.

Harry Bingamin, not mentioned in the report on account of his absence at the time of the tragedy, was head of the clan. His wife was taken prisoner and carried off to Ohio with those who were captured at Draper's Meadows. Mrs. Ingles and Mrs. Bingamin made their escape after months in captivity and together started the historic trek back to civilization, following the Kanawha and New River as their only guide line. It is said that this was the "old Dutch woman" mentioned in the story, who when both were near starvation, threatened to eat Mrs. Ingles, causing her to seek refuge on the opposite side of the river from whence she continued the journey alone.

Of the Pepper's Ferry raid of July 3 1755, Charles W. Crush, in his Montgomery County Story, says further, "Henry Bingamin's two sons, John and Christian, and one daughter escaped. Christian Bingamin crossed the river and took refuge in a house on the old Taylor farm later owned by Mr. Yancy. Christian Bingamin barred the door to the old house, thinking himself safe. After a short time five Indians came to the building and broke in but were killed by Bingamin. The first he shot, and then killed the other four with the stock and barrel of his gun. Two other Indians came up who had been in pursuit of two white men whom they killed, but seeing the fate which their comrades had met they fled in great haste. A young white maid jumped out of the door over the dead Indians and waded New River in her night clothes in order to represent the state of affairs concerning Mr. Bingamin and the Indians on the other side of the river."

In the Crush story the name of Henry Bingamin, head of the clan, appears. This further confirms the fact that he was absent at the time of the massacre and the burning of his home.

John Taylor came here in 1765, ten years after the Indian raid at Pepper's Ferry. He acquired all of the land in the Upper Horse-shoe. It is probable that the log house to which Mr. Crush refers was built by an earlier unknown settler and was occupied by John Taylor at the time of his coming, and that he later renovated it to a more substantial home. The presumption is made because the John Taylor site fits the locale of the episode, and it is the only log house west of the river and near the Indian ford known to exist at this early period.

The Bingamins who survived the Indian massacre of July 3, 1755, later extended their holdings to Plum Creek. Records disclose that the land on Plum Creek was originally a part of the vast land grants of Colonel James Patton. It was sold by Colonel Patton's

heirs to Henry Bingamin of Pepper's Ferry, in 1796, who that year built a log house and grist mill on the creek a half a mile up the stream from its mouth.

Henry Bingamin sold the Plum Creek property to William Pepper, in 1797, and the court deeds refer to the "Bingamin Mill-dam". This entry in the record books discloses the name of the builder of the log house and grist mill as well as the period of construction, circa 1796.



## CHAPTER V

### PEPPER'S FERRY ESTABLISHED FURTHER GROWTH OF THE LOWER RIVER SETTLEMENTS

Pepper's Ferry was established by Samuel Pepper in 1780. However, this does not mark the year of the coming of Samuel Pepper to Southwest Virginia. It is known that the Pepper family was living here as early as 1770. It was at least a decade after he built his log home on the west bank of the river before he managed to secure a franchise to open a ferry to travel at this new crossing. The Indian ford further up the river was considered entirely adequate and innovations such as paid ferry service was not easily accepted.

The History of the Middle New River Settlements by David E. Johnston states that Samuel Pepper who married Matilda Pearis came to New River Valley prior to 1770 and located at the place where he later established a ferry. His two brothers-in-law George and Robert Pearis, came with him on or about the same time.

The Pearis family were Huguenots who had come to the new country by way of Barbados and thence to South Carolina, first settling on the coast on an island at the mouth of the river. It was later named Pearis (Parris) Island for these early settlers. Parris Island is now the location of the United States Marine training base.

The Pearis brothers after seeing the beautiful New River country decided they would make their permanent home in Southwest Virginia. Soon after coming to Pepper's Ferry the brothers became acquainted with the family of Joseph Howe on Back Creek. This led to the courtship of his two daughters, Eleanor and Ann Howe. The courtship culminated in the marriage of George Pearis to Eleanor Howe, in 1771. The marriage of Robert Pearis, two years younger than George, to Ann Howe followed in 1772.

It proved to be a very happy union for each couple. Both brothers took an active part in the affairs of the community and soon attained a high degree of prominence in Giles and Pulaski

Counties. With the coming of the Revolutionary War George Pearis who had remained in the vicinity of Pepper's Ferry was made a captain in one of the militia battalions commanded by Major Joseph Cloyd.

On the advance of the British army into the Carolinas and the Tory uprisings occurring simultaneously to assist them and add to the dangers on that front, Major Cloyd with his three companies of militia marched southward below the Carolina line to join with the American forces there. In an engagement at the Shallow Ford of the Yadkin Captain George Pearis was seriously wounded by a rifle ball through the shoulder. Soon after his return home to recuperate from his wound he had the misfortune to lose his wife. Eleanor Howe Pearis died on November the 14th, only a few days after his return. Two years later he moved down the river and bought an extensive tract of land. Four years after making the change he married Rebecca Clay. When a settlement began to develop here he gave the land for the court house and set aside land for other municipal purposes. The town was later named Pearisburg in his honor.

Eleanor Howe Pearis, his first wife, was buried in the Pepper burying ground, near the Pepper home on the west side of the river. She was the first of the Howe progeny to die in Southwest Virginia. The burying ground is now overgrown with shrubbery and honeysuckle but many of the old headstones are in evidence although they are so eroded by time that the epitaphs and dates are illegible.

Captain George Pearis died in Pearisburg in 1810. He was buried in the cemetery on the side of the hill above the town. It is said that the remains of Eleanor Howe Pearis were brought here for reburial after the death of George Pearis, and that the bodies of both wives now rest beside him in the unmarked graves that are plainly in evidence.

Robert and Ann Howe Pearis immigrated to Bourbon County, Kentucky, in 1790. They settled at what was to become the county seat. It has been said that this town, Paris, Kentucky, takes its name from these early settlers. This claim has never been confirmed. In any event they were very prominent in the early affairs of Bourbon County. They raised a large family here and one son was in the Kentucky legislature for a number of years. Robert and Ann Howe Pearis both lived to an advanced age.

The Bourbon Whiskey known to commerce originated in the county whose name it bears. There is no indication that the Pearis

family had any connection with the initial distilling of this famous liquor.

The old Pearis house where the Pearis brothers first came for a social visit still stands on the west side of the river. The ferry toll-bell that once hung from a sturdy low tower by the roadside, and a similar one by the road on the eastern bank, both used to warn the ferryman that travellers were waiting, have long since disappeared. The house to outward appearance is modern due to remodelling through the years. Some years ago the owner at that time, Mr. Flannagan, showed the writer some interior exposures of log walls that he described as hand-hewn and fitted in place by the original builder, Samuel Pepper, almost two centuries ago.

While the Pepper family has disappeared from the lower river, as did the Bingamins, Heavins and others; unlike the others who disappeared entirely, many of the Pepper descendants are well known throughout Southwest Virginia.

James McChesney Prickett of Rural Retreat who used to write an occasional interesting historical sketch for the Wytheville paper and other newspapers in that section, related a story concerning Dr. Charles T. Pepper (of a younger Pepper generation) whom he had known in his youth. The episode is quoted, in part:

"Dr. Charles T. Pepper was reared in Christiansburg. Pepper's ferry was named for his forebears. He married Isabella Howe,\* a schoolmate and one of six sisters. Soon after marriage he started his medical practice in Bristol. Some years later Dr. Pepper moved with his family to Rural Retreat and opened the first, and for many years the only, drug store there. The kindly doctor whom I well remember when I was a barefooted lad, wore smoked glasses due to poor eyesight. The Pepper sons, three of them and only one daughter, always dressed in the height of fashion. His youngest son, Louis (called 'Louie') was a young man of talent, many new ideas, and a desire at times to 'gallop off' far and wide into the open spaces. There would be times when he would have the 'wander lust' and take off with the Barnum and Bailey circus. He was both an actor and a musician. When the glamor would become a bit old he would come back to Rural Retreat and be the erst while Editor of the Rural Retreat Times. The newspaper was owned by his older brother.

"Louis was much of a dandy even when editing the local paper where ink spots are likely to splatter. Regardless of this hazard he

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\* Daughter of William Howe. William was one of the three sons of Captain Daniel Howe of the Revolutionary War.

would have on white vest, well creased trousers patent leather shoes, derby hat and sporting somewhat of a handlebar mustache that he took pride in stroking while engaged in conversation.

"Louie once took the wanderlust and became an optometrist and travelled the nearby counties fitting glasses on the country folks. From that time on he was known as 'Dr. Pepper'. It has been said that he fitted 'spectacles' with precision and accuracy. Inasmuch as his father owned the drug store and his brother the Rural Retreat Times, he worked either place that happened to strike his fancy at the moment.

"One day while working at the drug store he remarked to some of his cronies standing about that he had fixed a formula for a new drink. One of those present was the young drug clerk for whom Louie had mixed the drink on several occasions and he endorsed it highly. In fact, he had taken such a liking to it that Louie had given him the formula.

"Later on the drug clerk decided to give up his job at Dr. Pepper's and seek his fortune in the west. He was next heard from working in a drug store in Waco, Texas. Here he introduced Dr. Louie's favorite drink to a number of his friends. One day while serving the drink to several of these friends he went on to tell them how he had been given the formula by 'Dr. Louie' of Rural Retreat, Virginia, while working there in his father's drug store; adding numerous anecdotes about 'Dr. Louie's varied talents and versatile accomplishments. He then said, 'I'd like your honest opinion of this as a soft drink as I'm thinking seriously of putting it on the market'. There was general approval all around, when some one inquired, 'What do you propose to call your new drink?' Possibly having in mind the interesting story of the talented 'Dr. Louie', some one promptly proposed, why not call it 'Dr. Pepper'? Some of the others seemingly of the same mind and, also, mindful of the beneficial and health-giving properties such a name would suggest, were in hearty agreement. So 'Dr. Pepper' became the name of the new drink on the spot."

Today whenever any one of the New River folk happen to indulge in this popular soft drink they will be reminded of one of our most historical landmarks, Pepper's Ferry — the place of its genesis.



## CHAPTER VI

### LOVELY MOUNT ITS DELAYED DEVELOPMENT

The activities of the settlers of the lower river valley, as well as those near Ingles Ferry and beyond at Dunkards Bottom, went on apace for more than a decade before the first landseekers started trekking into that scenic rich land area along the river in between, first known as "Lovely Mount".

The reason for the retardation of Lovely Mount should be apparent. The lower area of the river was on the well traveled trail from Draper's Meadows and near this well-established settlement. The upper reaches of the river at Ingles Ferry and Dunkards Bottom were crossed by the main artery of communications through the Southwest, the Valley Turnpike or Stagecoach Road. These features made both the lower and upper reaches of the river area conducive to settlers.

The section of the river valley in between however, was virtually inaccessible. Starting in the vicinity of Pepper's Ferry, a steep rocky mountain ridge dropping abruptly to the water's edge, extended along the eastern shore of the river for six or seven miles up stream. There were few accessible passes through this formidable mountain range. The first appeared at a gap whence flowed a small stream known as Crab Creek. This gap led through the ridge into rugged virgin territory — and to "no where". The next break in this impassable mountain chain was at Plum Creek. Here a trail leading up the narrow creek valley made connection with the Stagecoach Road a mile distant. At this early period this was the only suitable means of access to this little known middle New River section.

From Christiansburg along the Stagecoach Road and down the trail at Plum Creek came the first land seekers to this area of the river. At the mouth of Plum Creek they found themselves at the narrow end of the rich bottomland which gradually widened into broad fertile fields stretching to the rolling hills to the south and

west. A verdant low mountain range a mile further west rose abruptly from Connolly's Run and extended eastward furnishing a scenic backdrop to the river front. It had given the place the name of "LOVELY MOUNT."

The oldest United States Geological Survey sheets of the country available bear this nomenclature.

The first pioneers to come into this area and take up land of which there is a record were from around the settlement of Hans Meadow, later to be named Christiansburg. It appeared that they had no definite idea of making their homes here at this time. The first of these was John Wylie who secured 400 acres of land in the eastern section, in 1756. John Wylie conveyed this land to Peter Wylie, in 1765. He later sold it to John Taylor, in 1780. John Taylor sold 170 acres to Abram Trigg some ten years later. The court deeds described the land as being called the "Racepaths". The name was derived from the fact that these men had for some time been using the flat river bottom for training and racing horses.

These small deals may appear inconsequential but it is necessary to recount them in order to provide a record of the first acquirement of property in this New River section, as well as to record the names of the pioneers who first manifested an interest in this then-considered out of the way area of the river front.

James Craig who resided on a large estate at Hans Meadow at the headwaters of Crab Creek acquired all of these tracts, in 1794. Christiansburg was established in 1792, on 180 acres of land donated by James Craig. It was named in honor of Colonel William Christian, famous frontiersman and Revolutionary War hero.

It appears that it was not the intent of any of these first land buyers to establish homes here due to the inaccessibility of the river area, as well as their desire to dwell within the safe environs of a well established settlement.

James Craig, however, apparently had a special zest or an obsession for acquiring vast tracts of property, and so he did not cease his activities after securing the various small farms around the "Racepaths". By subsequent deals in the decade to follow he came into the possession of virtually all of the land lying in the area of Lovely Mount, from Connolly's Run eastward to Plum Creek.

The John Taylor acquisition in the area near the "Racepaths", referred to above, introduces another pioneer who, like James Craig, left his imprint on the river settlement. But unlike the former, he came here to establish his home — and to become the



**CHRISTIANSBURG, VA., AS IT LOOKED IN THE EARLY 1850's**

From an oil painting by Ed Beyer, a German painter from Dusseldorf on the Rhine. The settlement (the initial settlers were a mile to the east) was known as Hans Meadow. It was incorporated as a town on this land given by James Craig, in 1792, and named "Christiansburg" in honor of Colonel William Christian, Revolutionary War hero. From here came the first settlers to Lovely Mount on the New River front.

first permanent resident in this river area.

John Taylor, born in Ireland, came from Tinkling Springs near Staunton, Augusta County, in 1765.\* He had recently married Elizabeth Campbell, sister of General William Campbell, hero of King's Mountain. In addition to the land dealings with Wylie and James Craig, he secured an extensive tract extending from Connolly's Run westward to the estate of William Ingles and southward to the Valley Turnpike. He also secured a large acreage on the north side of the river which included all of the loop of the river known as the Upper Horseshoe.

John Taylor built his home in the Upper horseshoe beside the Indian Trail that led from Draper's Meadow and crossed the river at the ford nearby. The crossing was known as "Rock Ford" due to a large rock that could be seen when the river was low enough for fording. John Taylor took the name of the ford for his estate.

When John Taylor died, in 1813, he left to his son, John McCandless Taylor, the home estate of Rockford and all of his other land on the south side of the river west of Connolly's Run.

John McCandless Taylor married Jane Kent, April 3, 1813, and they continued to reside at Rockford and raised a large family there. He lived to an advanced age, dying in 1856, in his 77th year.

Around 1800 and the years to follow a number of distinguished scholars came to this part of the country. Among these intellectuals was Colonel Edward Hammet. In making reference to this, Charles W. Crush in his *Montgomery County Story*, says, "\*\*\*\*\* They gave both the old and the young the Three R's as well as the classics and foreign languages." \*\*\*\*\*

Colonel Hammet was happy to live and remain here for in addition to the many advantages the new country offered, the comely daughter of James Craig was an especial attraction. Edward Hammet was married to Clementina Venable Craig on April 14, 1831. Soon after marriage they built a substantial home on the river front — the first residence to be established in Lovely Mount. It was a two-story log house situated in the midst of a grove of majestic oaks overlooking the river valley. This wooded hillside

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\* Tinkling Springs was also the home of Colonel James Patton who likewise came from Ireland. It is probable that the families were neighbors. Colonel Patton's wife was buried in Tinkling Springs churchyard. His last will and testament states, in part: "\*\*\*\*\* and my body I commit to Providence but if convenient to where I resign my last breath I desire to be buried at Tinkling Springs in the churchyard where my wife now lays." \*\*\*\*\* Fate, however, decreed that he lose his life in action against the Indians on a distant frontier. Under these circumstances it was not possible to carry out his wish. He was buried near where he fell in the massacre at Draper's Meadows.



**"ROCKFORD"**

**Built by John Taylor, circa 1765.**

**This was also the home of John McCandless Taylor, his son. Dr. John Blair Radford and Elizabeth Taylor were married here on May 31, 1836.**

**(Courtesy of Mrs. Radford Adams)**

was to be known by later generations as "Heth's grove". All of the extensive land holdings of James Craig east of Connolly's Run came into the possession of Colonel Edward and Clementina Craig Hammet during the immediate years to follow.

When Doctor John Blair Radford of Bedford came here in 1836 that part of Lovely Mount west of Connolly's Run was uninhabited. It is probable that the young doctor's coming was on account of his previous friendship with the John McCandless Taylor family of Rockford, and that he became enamoured of their pretty daughter Elizabeth. This probability is suggested by the fact that Doctor Radford and Elizabeth Taylor were married that same year, on March 31st, 1836.

The couple began their married life in a log cabin located on the hillside immediately west of Connolly's Run overlooking the river. The house had been formerly occupied by one of Mr. Taylor's farm managers who had looked after that part of the Taylor land on the south side of the river. It was to be a temporary abode pending the building of a new home nearby.

When Doctor Radford began his practice here he was the only physician in this part of Southwest Virginia. His patients were scattered over such a vast area it is certain that he was on the country roads by horseback or in buggy day in and day out, as well as often throughout the night.

The building of the new home began soon after marriage but it progressed at a slow pace. The bricks had to be moulded and kilned by the family slaves. They used the red clay, ideal for the purpose, just south of the building site. The nails used were hand-wrought and the beams were put together with hand-made wooden pegs. Two years elapsed before the house was ready for occupancy. By the time the doctor was ready to carry his young wife across the threshold their first son had been born in the log cabin they had occupied over this period.

Because of the beautiful high view and the pride the young couple took in the place they decided to call it by the German name, "ARNHEIM" — the home of the eagle.

At this time, 1838, in addition to ARNHEIM and the log cabin, the only other residence in Lovely Mount was that of Colonel Edward Hammet, to which reference has been made. There were, according to Mrs. Wharton, a great granddaughter of Colonel Hammet, a few log buildings in the eastern area but which had never been occupied by a permanent settler. There was a log house in the river bottom near the ferry, probably one that had been used



**"ARNHEIM"**

The first home to appear in West Radford, built by Dr. John Blair Radford in 1836-1838.

by the men at the racepaths, and there was a sort of log fort and stockade on the high ground above the river bottom. At this place was located the old burying ground that can be seen there today. The first body interred here was said to be that of a negro slave killed in a riding accident at the racepaths. Old headstones still standing mark the burial place of some of the Hammet descendants.



## CHAPTER VII

### LOVELY MOUNT TAVERN

At this early period in the development of Lovely Mount the only business or social contact with outside civilization was through the Valley Turnpike at Lovely Mount Tavern. The only place of religious worship was also to center here when the church was built on the turnpike east of the tavern. The route to and from the river front and this main artery of communication with the outside world was over an ungraded wagon trail that followed the contours of the hills. There were no graded roads in the vicinity at this time.\*

John Heavin, the owner of the tavern, was the second son of Howard and Ruth Hall Heavin, who had settled on the river below Pepper's ferry at the time of the establishment of the Draper's Meadows settlement.

Howard Heavin died in 1787, leaving besides his wife, four daughters and two sons William and John. William married Barbara Shell, daughter of Jacob Shell, a neighbor. He bought the grist mill and home on Plum Creek, in 1819, and went there to live. John married Mary "Polly" Pepper, daughter of Samuel Pepper of Pepper's ferry. Nancy, the youngest daughter, married Captain Daniel Howe of Back Creek following a romantic episode of the Revolutionary War.

The younger son, John, some years after marriage, eager for new horizons, saw the possibilities of a trading post and wayside inn on the Stagecoach Road. He bought 737 acres of land along the upper reaches of Connolly's Run from Abram and Susanna Trigg for this tavern and farm enterprise. The purchase was completed, according to court records, on December 9, 1795. When the tavern

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\* The U. S. Geological Survey Map shown elsewhere indicates two unimproved roads connecting the Valley Turnpike with the river settlement: One from Lovely Mount Tavern to the river front and the other along Plum Creek. It is believed that these indicate trails that were then in use or, at best, rutted ungraded wagon roads that followed the contours of the hills. The graded roads that were constructed later were at different locations.



1. Lovely Mount Tavern
2. Lovely Mount Church
3. Haven home and mill on Plum Creek
4. "Rockford"
5. Howard Haven farm  
Central was later named "Radford"
6. Lovely Mount. The embryo settlement originally bore this name.

(Photostate of U. S. Geological Survey, 1884 to '87)

LEGEND

- (1) William Ingles, 1765
- (2) John Ingles, Circa 1800
- (3) Lovely Mount Tavern, 1796
- (4) Lovely Mount Church, 1805
- (5) Gen. G. C. Wharton, Circa 1870
- (6) Dr. John Blair Radford, 1836
- (7) Lovely Mount
- (8) Colonel Edward Hammet, 1831
- (9) Judge George Caswell
- (10) Henry Bingerman, 1794  
William Hixon, 1819
- (11) John Taylor, 1785
- (12) Samuel Pepper, 1780
- (13) Henry Bingerman, Circa 1745  
Edgar Eskeridge
- (14) Church built by Rose-  
Flanagan, 1870
- (15) Howard Neavin, Circa 1745
- (16) Jacob Shell, Circa 1745



SITE OF RADFORD AND ENVIRONS

Showing location of homes of pioneer settlers of the area during the early period and some of the important historical landmarks. (See LEGEND for ref.)

was ready for occupancy the following year John Heavin moved there with his family, including his son-in-law, Anderson Matthews and wife, Naomi, and children. The tavern and farm activities were soon developed into an active and profitable business.

The two-story log structure located by the well traveled turnpike immediately west of Connolly's Run was convenient for travelers passing through the region. It was given the name of "Lovely Mount Tavern" for the same scenic wooded hills near the river that had given this place its name.

This route, once a buffalo trail, was of vital importance since it was the only means of travel from the Valley of Virginia and the north through Southwest Virginia. Later the white man with his ox carts and covered wagons developed it further and it became the Wilderness Road. With the heavier travel and the responsibilities of handling the United States mail it became more generally known as the Stagecoach Road or Valley Turnpike.

The name "turnpike" is of English origin as related by Harold B. Stabler in his historical booklet on *Some Recollections and Tales of Old Times*. In England he states, in the early times the sections of the main highways in more general use were surfaced with rock for all-season use. These stretches of the highway were made toll roads. In order to enable the toll keeper to collect from rough customers who might try to go through without paying, he was armed with a pike. As is generally known, this was a long spear often used by foot soldiers in ye days of old. The gate keeper customarily kept the pike across the road as a barrier, supported on posts or stakes on either side of the highway. When a traveler came along and paid the required toll the pike was turned aside, allowing him to pass. So such roads came to be known as turnpike roads. — And at times it was simply "the pike".

The Valley Turnpike was macadamized in 1850.

From the earliest frontier days the pioneers constantly trekked by foot, packhorse caravan and covered wagon over the Wilderness Road. As the settlements advanced this flow increased by driven herds of cattle and other livestock, including the regularly scheduled stagecoach run. It was said that in the early days of Ingles ferry there was always a line of vehicles on both sides of the river waiting their turn to cross.

The travelers of that era found Lovely Mount Tavern a welcome stopping place on the long journey through the sparsely settled territory. It was considered a comfortable hostelry for this period when public taverns were to be found only at intervals



Home of William Haven (later John Haven) on Plum Creek as it looks today. It was from here he migrated to Indiana, in 1827. Plum Creek is in the foreground, just below the margin. The mill and mill dam once stood around the bend of the creek 100 yards to the right.

of many miles and with nothing in between except an occasional log cabin.

Something of the life and times of the people here during the later years of the occupancy of the wayside inn by the Heavin clan is told by Mrs. Bernice Bassett Wyman, a Heavin descendant, in her historical sketch of the tavern. She says in part:

"The family that lived at Lovely Mount Tavern was one of those rare groups composed of three generations who had lived happily under one roof for a number of years. There was John Heavin, 63, head of the clan, who was owner of the tavern and the surrounding farm land. The commodious log structure had been built by him in 1796 as both a home and a tavern. Later stables and other subsidiary buildings had been added on the opposite side of the road. The inn with auxiliary buildings was imposing for its day and frontier location. On the south side of the road was the general store, 40 stalls for horses, blacksmith shop and bar; all essentials in a region barren of the customary needs of migratory settlers. On the hillside at the rear of the tavern were the slave quarters that house those family servitors who were always considered members of the family group and, as such, were loved devotedly by the children. A covered porch across the front of the tavern provided a comfortable resting place for weary travelers, as well as a convenient place to get acquainted and exchange the news with fellow guests. About the deal tables were accustomed to gather, not only the transients, but people of consequence in this part of the state, and in such numbers that the inn became the very center of social life of the community.

"Just why John and Polly Heavin's daughter, Naomi, had continued to make her home under the parental roof after marriage to Anderson Matthews is one of the unanswered questions. Naomi's sister, Ruth, had married John McCluer and had established her home near Christiansburg. Perhaps the answer is in the untimely deaths of John's and Naomi's three babies who were buried somewhere on the extensive acres surrounding the tavern.\*

"It was indeed an unusual thing for this large family group to live and work together in the harmony that existed between the Heavins and the Matthews at Lovely Mount. The arrangement was

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\* Some hundred yards north of the tavern site over the crest of the hill is a burial plot. In the center of the plot is an old weather-beaten monument bearing an epitaph relating to the Baskerville family, subsequent owners of the tavern. There are no headstones marking the imprints of several other graves. Some of these outlines are small indicating that they could be the burial place of children.

of mutual advantage. There was so much to do in connection with both the farm and tavern enterprises that it required that all work in the most harmonious cooperation — and they did so.”

Of the other members of the Heavin clan who lived in the neighborhood but were often a part of the tavern life, Mrs. Wyman mentions the elderly widow of Howard Heavin. She tells of her frequent visits, tramping along over the hills from the old home below Pepper's ferry, and how she met a tragic end. The episode is quoted from the papers of her great grandmother, Mary Pepper Heavin, daughter-in-law of Howard and Ruth Hall Heavin.

“Your grandma's mother, Ruth Hall Heavin, used to come to see us often after we were married for she was strong and liked to take long walks. For a short time after we were married we lived in a house which John's father built near their home on the river. When he died, in 1787, we left some years later and moved to Lovely Mount Tavern. Granny Heavin liked to come to see us and was real foolish over Ruth and Naomi. Sometimes she used to take them home with her for a few days ‘to give me a breathin' spell’, she always said.

“Even after we moved to the tavern and she was living alone but for her two slaves she kept on walking over the hills until she was a very old lady. But one day in the spring, the month of April, I believe, she started off as usual but never reached our place. When we all knew she was lost in the woods all of the kin folks and neighbors searched for her for weeks and weeks. About six months later her bones and some clothes were found deep in the woods. A bear or mountain lion had evidently killed her and dragged her back in the woods. She was an old lady, 79, and wouldn't have lived much longer but we were sorry she had to suffer.”

It is apparent that Grandmother Heavin did not choose to follow the safe river route and avoid the dangers to be found in the deep forest areas. She was a fearless frontier woman so disregarding the dangers from wild beasts she no doubt stuck to the Indian trails so as to shorten her journey as much as possible.

It is unexplainable why this unusual tragic happening was not handed down through her daughter, Nancy, wife of Daniel Howe of Back Creek. As far as known it was first heard of in recent years through this Heavin descendant.

During the 1820's many families from this section were imbued with the idea of going west to seek new homes in the reportedly rich farming regions of Ohio and Indiana. The Heavin and



Matthews clans were seized with this western land fever and the spirit of adventure that far horizons might offer and decided to join the more intrepid emigrants for the venturesome enterprise in a new land. The plan was seriously discussed during the summer of 1827 and a definite decision was made regarding the time of departure and other matters relative to the journey. The destination was to be Southern Indiana. William Heavin Jr., had gone west two years earlier and was now well established on a farm in that section of the state. Reports from him were that the soil and climate were most favorable and also the Scotch-Irish farm folk there were similar to those of their own forebears. In final preparations for the departure from Lovely Mount Tavern for the long journey west Mrs. Wyman's story continues:

"Time slipped by all too quickly and at last the tentative date for departure was set for the most favorable day after the first quarter of the September moon had begun. There were yet other duties to be disposed of; a buyer had to be found for Lovely Mount Tavern and the surrounding farmland. The transaction was accomplished with the sale of the place to William B. Baskerville whose plan was to continue to conduct the tavern as of old. There was the more serious matter of the disposal of the slaves. The elder ones were sent to live with Naomi's sister, Ruth McCluer, while the more active ones were bought by the new tavern owner. Finally, there was to be the last minute round of visiting at the homes of all of the kin folks. Farewells were not easy even with these undemonstrative people for all of them were aware that in all probability they were leaving their dear ones never to see them again. In the year of 1827 one might as well have thought of girdling the globe as to retrace this journey of some 600 miles by carriage over the wilderness roads through sparsely settled territory.

"On a Sunday, that fell on September the 14th, the four adults and the three eldest children set out to pay their final visits to the homes of their kindred. First there was a short visit with the McCluers. Ruth's husband, John McCluer, had bought Pepper's Ferry, and although the longing to accompany her family to the new land was very strong in the soul of the wife, she acquiesced bravely when John pronounced his ultimatum that he would not give up a good living as a ferryman to chase a will-o-the-wisp in a wild country. Next there was a call on grandmother's nephew, William Pepper, on two families of the Matthews and, for the last stop they arranged to see Uncle William and his family whose home was on



Plum Creek only two miles from theirs. William surprised the visitors by having his covered wagon all packed and ready to join the expedition.

"The next morning the three covered wagons stood in the farmyard packed — 'crammed' would be a more adequate word — with a collection of articles from cornhusk dolls to feather beds. The last minute bedding had been stowed away and the children divided among, and settled in, the two wagons of the family from Lovely Mount Tavern. The lumbering wagons moved off; first Anderson's and then John's and William's, on their way to the great unknown west.

"It was nearing the end of October when the caravan of weary travelers reached their goal of Putnam County in southern Indiana. Within the next 24 hours they were to roll noisily into the farm yard of young William Heavin, to the accompaniment of happy cheers and a warm welcome all around. They stayed here temporarily until farm homes of their own could be acquired in the area."

Today a number of reliable farmers and civic leaders who live in this section of Indiana are the descendants of the Heavin clan.

So is recorded the story of the disappearance of another of the pioneer families of the middle New River settlements.

John Heavin III, the son of William, remained behind to operate the grist mill on Plum Creek until his death, in 1853. With his demise the Heavin name, later called "Haven" by the local community, became only a memory connected with the historical events of the distant past.

Under the ownership of William Baskerville Lovely Mount Tavern prospered and that center grew in importance with the ever increasing travel over the Stagecoach Road. The first United States post office for this area was established at Lovely Mount March 28, 1836. The post office was at the tavern and John B. Baskerville was appointed the first postmaster. That the population was shifting west at this time and there was some uncertainty about where the present settlement might be established is indicated by the fact that the post office was changed the following year, March 30, 1837, to Ingles Ferry, Pulaski County. It was moved back to Lovely Mount twelve years later, on December 4, 1849, and finally transferred to Central Depot (Radford) on June 8, 1888.\*

In the meanwhile the tavern had long since changed hands.

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\* Reference: The National Archives and Records Section, Washington, D. C.

Country Church, nine miles from Christiansburg,

O! Lord, while we in thy house appear  
may we feel thy presence near,  
Angel's thoughts arise to me  
and from worldly care set free,  
may all be such as thou canst love  
my Lord I trust them to thy care.  
Rev. Charles Miller, 1856.



July the 6. day. Sabbath Morning. At the pike Row

Alles Irdische vergeht,  
nur des herren Wort besteht.

LOVELY MOUNT CHURCH ON ROCK ROAD, AS SEEN IN 1856.

The people of the Lovely Mount neighborhood and the New River community assemble for Sunday morning services, July 6, 1856. The gatherings of this early period were large and colorful. From an old painting in the possession of the Ellet family of Christiansburg.

Fifty-one years prior to the removal of the post office from Lovely Mount Tavern to Central Depot William Baskerville, in 1837, sold the property to a Mr. Cecil, who after a few years of ownership sold the tavern and land to Dr. John Blair Radford, in 1842. The tavern remained in the possession of Dr. Radford and his heirs until the end of its existence.

Lovely Mount Church, a small red brick structure, was built later, a mile to the east and on the south side of the turnpike. It was founded, in 1835, by Edward Hammet, James W. Wade, Waddy C. Currin and Russell A. Carper, trustees for the Presbyterian Church. The deed of this date states that "one acre of ground surrounding the church was conveyed to the said trustees by Doctor John Blair Radford."

In the early days of the church it was the place of worship for the settlers by the river as well as those in the community of the tavern and far up and down the Valley Turnpike. The reproduction of the painting by the German artist shown elsewhere indicates that the Sunday service drew a large and colorful congregation. The Tyler family records disclose that Sue Hammet, at the age of 12, was baptized here in 1854. She was one of the daughters of Colonel Edward Hammet and grew up to become the wife of James Hoge Tyler of Belle Hampton on Back Creek, later governor of Virginia. Religious services have been regularly held here until recent years. The late Governor Tyler, a devout Presbyterian, often attended services there. He took such an interest in the old church that he continued to go there on special occasions after a Presbyterian church was built in the town, sometimes going to teach a Bible class or take part in a religious revival.



## CHAPTER VIII

### FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF THE LOVELY MOUNT SETTLEMENT THE COMING OF THE RAILROAD

Middle New River was to continue solely a farmer's province for many years. At the coming of the railroad there were only six families living in what was then known as Lovely Mount.

The events that occurred in 1830 were to change the history of the river settlement radically. At this time in the City of Lynchburg an idea was conceived to link the Atlantic Seaboard with the Ohio River Valley by a system of canals. Some 90 miles to the west flowed the New River and if it could be reached by canal it would be easy sailing down to the Ohio. The main obstacle in the path was the Blue Ridge and Allegheney Mountains. This could be overcome by a railroad connection. The idea was the initial impetus for the present Norfolk and Western Railroad. However, as the idea grew in importance the plans for the canal faded into the background. While it had been a great era for inland canals, the railroads were beginning to make this means of transportation somewhat obsolete.

In 1839 an act of the Virginia Assembly incorporated the Virginia and Tennessee Railway Company and authorized it to build a railroad from Lynchburg to the Tennessee line. The grading was soon on its way towards the settlement on New River, the initial objective. It was a tedious procedure. Twenty-four years of work elapsed, beset by many difficulties involving suits by the canal interests, right of way suits and many other legal problems. Adding to these delays was the difficult task of grading, in those days done by hand, before the steel rails finally reached the site of Lovely Mount on New River. As this point was about halfway between Lynchburg and Bristol and on the river front, it was decided here would be an ideal place for a rest stop and a suitable place for general repair shops. On account of its midway location the depot as soon as it was erected was named "CENTRAL." So on June 1st,

1854, "LOVELY MOUNT" ceased to exist as "CENTRAL" was born.

Captain John Thomas Howe, the father of the writer, as a barefooted boy of 12, saw the first train that made the trial run to Dublin. In recalling the occasion he said:

"My family was living on Back Creek at this time. We had heard that the railroad line had reached CENTRAL DEPOT on June 1st (1854) and now, July 1st, the line had been completed to Dublin and the trial run would be made there on this day. The event had been talked of for some time, as they talk of the coming of the circus. Everybody around the country was going so our family decided to make a holiday of it and go also. We dressed in our Sunday best and with picnic basket packed set out in the family surrey. We arrived around noon and spread our dinner under the maples near the depot where some other groups were eating and others constantly arriving.

"At last after most had eaten and everybody had been sitting around impatiently waiting for the locomotive to make its appearance, there came a distant rumble and the shout went up, 'Here she comes!' Pretty soon she hove in sight from around the bend and came puffing up to the depot. Everybody crowded around, the grown folks asking questions of the engineer and fireman who had jumped to the ground and were moping their faces with red bandana handkerchiefs.

"After a time the engineer climber back up in the cab and the fireman followed him and started throwing slabs of wood into the firebox preparatory to taking off. The engineer began pulling levers and there came a terrible hissing noise as clouds of steam started billowing out over everybody. The fireman to further the exhibition, rammed home several more armloads of slabs that sent the sparks and smoke 'a-flying'. With this a big loose-mouthed country fellow — you'll find one at every country gathering — yelled at the top of his voice, 'Look out, folks, she's gonna turn around!' and with that warning cry he headed for the nearby rail fence. The crowd stampeded with him.

"Everybody, of course, knew that as this was the end of the line, the engine would have to go back the way it had come. Yet nobody had given a thought to this part of the operation until the countryman shouted, 'She's gonna turn around!' The grown folks vaulted the rail fence with one wild leap while the small kits scrambled through the cracks. My young brother, Haven, and Jimmy Hoge Tyler (later governor of Virginia), both age seven,

and not so fast of foot as the larger boys, almost failed to make it. From the safety of the rail fence I watched wild-eyed until the puffing monster was disappearing from sight in a cloud of setam smoke and cinders.

"My first sight of a locomotive had proven an even more exciting experience than I had ever dreamed it would be."

Dublin like so many other places in the new world took its name from the town in the old country from whence most of the settlers had come. In this case, however, the name came about in a most indirect manner. One of the first thoughts of the earliest settlers on Back Creek, most of Scotch-Irish ancestry and devout Presbyterians, was the establishment of a place of worship. A location convenient to all was selected and two brothers named Reed were given the job of constructing the log church and manse. The Reeds lived at a small settlement on the Valley Turnpike halfway between Ingles Ferry and Newbern, called "New Dublin". The brothers from the time of the hewing of the first logs referred proudly to their developing handiwork as the "New Dublin Church". The founders accepted this name when the church was completed and ready for the first religious service, in 1769. It was probably the first church, and certainly the first Presbyterian church, west of the Allegheny Mountains.

The village of New Dublin has long ago passed into oblivion — and without a trace. The church with many restorations through the years still remains. It was natural and fitting that from this historical landmark the railway depot should take its name.

Just as CENTRAL DEPOT marked the end of LOVELY MOUNT so did DUBLIN DEPOT, on July 1st, 1854, bring to an end the aspirations of NEWBERN to become the first city of Pulaski County.

Two years elapsed after the coming of the railroad before the steel rails were laid all the way to Bristol. The summer of 1856 the first regularly scheduled run was made over the line. By this time the original six families had increased to 20 and the population now numbered some 100 persons. The railroad company had built a combination freight and passenger station, a roundhouse, repair shops and a number of dwellings, commonly known as "company houses". They were painted a dark red with yellow trim to match the railroad cars. Also a restaurant was built across from the depot to take care of the meal stops.

On the day of the running of the first through train the entire population was out to greet the visitors and the railway dignitaries.

The restaurant had great quantities of food prepared for the town's people and the travelers. It proved to be a gala occasion long to be remembered.

Central Depot, in spite of this initial burst of enthusiasm, was for some years to remain one of the smallest towns on the line between Lynchburg and Bristol, despite the excellent location, the amount of business during the early years was exceeded by most of the other stations along the road. Also, in contrast here they were confined mainly to farm products. In 1859 the principal outgoing product was leaf tobacco, of which 63,000 pounds were shipped that year. Bacon ranked second with 12,000 pounds and lumber third with 8,000 pounds. As evidence of the importance of the tobacco crop in these early years, many abandoned log tobacco barns could be seen standing in the outlying fields of both East and West End as late as the 1890's. Some had been converted into dwellings by thrifty inhabitants.



## CHAPTER IX

### COMES THE CIVIL WAR AFTER THREE YEARS OF CONFLICT THE FIGHTING REACHES SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA

The coming of the Civil War was to have its retarding effect on the development of the middle River settlements. The fighting, however, had raged for three years before gunfire was actually heard in Southwest Virginia. The excitement was intense when the Union forces eventually invaded this territory, in 1864, and a fierce engagement took place here. It was the first and only pitched battle to be fought this far west in the state. It was known as the Battle of Cloyd's Farm. An interesting episode is told in connection with the advanced Union elements that reached Pepper's Ferry.

The old Bingamin home and farm on the east side of the river had by this time come into the possession of Edgar Eskeridge, Senior, some years prior to the Civil War.

Following the engagement of May 9, 1864, a detachment of Union soldiers in pursuit and engaged in exploiting the countryside was in the neighborhood of Pepper's ferry. Advanced elements had crossed the river and were entering the Eskeridge farm. With overwrought enthusiasm for repelling the invaders Mr. Eskeridge ran excitedly across the field and towards the river and let the oncoming enemy ranks have both barrels of birdshot from his number 10 muzzle loading gun. Not seriously harmed but greatly infuriated by this hostile display from a non-combatant the Yankees gave immediate chase. Impetuous anger turned quickly to alarm as Mr. Eskeridge retreated in panic. On seeing he was bound to be overtaken, and by what seemed to him an entire army of bluecoats, he attempted to slow the advance of his pursurers by dropping his shotgun in their path. The now terror stricken Eskeridge saw that the soldiers had snatched up his gun and were coming on as rapidly as ever. In final desperation he threw his prized gold watch and chain down in their path. The ruse proved of no avail. The angered Yankees took the final lure in stride and came on with renewed

determination. They soon overtook the fleeing Mr. Eskeridge in the yard of his home. There without a formal hearing they prepared to hang him from a limb of one of the large shade trees on the lawn. Only prolonged and tearful pleading by the ladies of the family finally prevailed upon the Yankees to relent and spare his life.

While the Battle of Cloyd's Farm had no military significance it proved an exciting period in the long sanguinary conflict for the New River community. The many shell scars in the brick walls of the old freight office and the Doctor Radford home bear lasting testimony that this settlement once had its baptism of fire.

Another feature of special interest regarding this isolated engagement is that on this Southwest Virginia battleground there fought side by side three future presidents of the United States; Rutherford B. Hayes, James A. Garfield and William McKinley, all young officers with the Union forces commanding the troops that fired the shots into Central Depot and Doctor Radford's home.

The descendants of Doctor John Blair Radford can pridefully point to the artillery shell scars on the ancient brick walls of ARNHEIM and truthfully claim, "Those battle scars were put there by three presidents of the United States."

## ROSTER

### COMPANY "E" Fourth REGIMENT STONEWALL BRIGADE "Montgomery Highlanders"

Colonel James Francis Preston, C. S. A., commanding the 4th Virginia Volunteers, inducted Company "E" into the service of the Confederate Army at Blacksburg, Virginia, April, 1861.

The company was made up of farm boys from Pulaski, Giles and Montgomery Counties.

NOTE: A number of the volunteers on the company roster were under age at the time of mobilization and joined at later dates as they became of military age.

NAME	RANK or GRADE	REMARKS
Reynolds, Charles A.	Captain	Promoted to Col. on the death of Col. Preston in '62.
Bennett, M. D.	1st Lieut.	Promoted to Major.
Hardwick, A. C.	2nd Lieut.	
Ridley, John D.	2nd Lieut.	
Argabright, Stewart	1st Sgt.	
Hale, Jacob	2nd Sgt.	Died
Hale, William	3rd Sgt.	
Hammers, Joseph	4th Sgt.	
Eakin, William P.	1st Corp.	Promoted to 2nd Lieut.
Thomas, William N.	2nd Corp.	
Galloway, Robert R.	3rd Corp.	Died
Bartin, Amos C.	4th Corp.	Promoted to 2nd Lieut.
Scott, Edward	4th Corp.	Lost a leg in 1864
<b>Privates</b>		
Angel, Benjamin		Killed at 2nd Manassas
Adams, Frank		
Barger, George W.		Transferred to 4th Cav.
Burket, D. W.		
Bowe, James A.		
Bowe, Joseph		
Bell, William A.		
Black, John		
Barton, Joseph		Died
Bradford, Peter		Died
Barden, Charles		
Bibb, Robert		Died
Blizzard, James		
Calvert, R. N.		Killed, Gettysburg, July 3rd
Craig, Albert		
Collins, George C.		
Cunningham, Adam		Captured
Castle, Robert		
Cass, James		
Coleman, J. R.		
Dawson, William		
Dawson, Robert M.		
Davis, David B.		
Dudding, William		

## ROSTER

(Co. "E" Continued)

NAME	RANK or GRADE	REMARKS
Ellis, A. S.		
Fisher, Sam W.		
Franklin, W. F.		
Francisco, R. L.		Promoted to Captain
Gordon, Charles L.		Promoted Sgt. wounded at Chancellorsville
Galloway, J. C.		
Howe, John T.		Promoted 1st Lieut. and Capt. Wounded and capture at Gettysburg, July 3, '63. In Union prison 6 mos. Exchanged and ret'nd. to Org.
Harris, R. M.		Promoted to Corp.
Hodges		
Hoge, Andrew Johnston		Killed at Gettysburg, July 3, 1963.
Hall, Cornelius		
Hilton, William		
Howe, Sam Shepherd		Wounded and capture at Gettysburg. Died in Union prison, Pt. Pleasant, Md.
Harvey, T. M.		
Haynes, William H.		
Heyman, Sam B.		
Hughes, John		Died
Howard, John		
Harless, Abram		
Jenell, H. S.		
Jennell, John T.		
Jones, George W.		
Kinfer (Kinger)?, J. S.		
Kinsley, R. N.		Wounded at Gettysburg
Kirby, James		Wounded at Chancellorsville
Keffer, Sam		
Linkous, James		
Love, Levi A.		
McLemore, P. J.		
Meek, James		
McDonald, John E.		
McDonald, George		
Martin, David		
Martin, C. L.		Died
Martin, Harvey		Died April 2, 1962
Meek, James R. (or S)		
Miller, John T.		
Miller, George W.		
McCoskey, J. B.		
Montgomery, Sam		Died
Peck, Robert		
Peck, John E.		Detailed to P.M.G. Office
Paine, William		
Price, E.		
Parkins, John A.		Promoted 2nd Lieut.

## ROSTER

(Co. "E" Continued)

NAME	RANK or GRADE	REMARKS
Peterman, M. G. W.		Killed at Chancellorsville
Rutledge, George W. Robinson, David (or D. T.) Richeson, George W. Richeson, John H.		Promoted to Lieut.
Smith, James A. Slusser, John A. Snider, John H. Snietzer, William		
Taylor, William M. Taylor, M. W.		
Wilson, John (H) Watson, A. B. Walker, E. L.		

## ADDENDUM

Bridges, Frank Bane, Allen		
Childrey, Sam Christian, W. W. Cray, William		
Jordan, Joseph		
Richeson, William		Killed at Cedar Mountain, Aug. 9, '62.
Thompson, James H. Thompson, John W.		
Varden, James M.		
Argabright, S. Allen, Benjamin		Wounded and left in Hosp. at Winchester.
Barton, S. O. Burwell, J. S. R. Brown, John Bingham, K. P.		
Caldwell, J. E. Christian, W. W. Collier, A. J. Caldwell, I. E.		
Dunn, H. S. Dare, R. N. Dudding, Alex		Captured
Elliott, James M.		

**ROSTER**  
(Co. "E" Continued)

**ADDENDUM**

(Continued)

NAME	RANK or GRADE	REMARKS
Evans, John W.		
Forcee, William J.		
Gordon, I. H.		Wounded at Chancellorsville
Hammer, Joseph		
Harvey, J. W.		
Hilton, W. H.		
Hinchee, J. M.		
Jarrette, H.		
Kyle, John C.		
Lyons, M. F.		
Lambert, M. A.		
Long, J. B.		
Netherland, W. B.		
Price, John H.		
Pingley, J. W.		
Richardson, William		Killed at Cedar Run Aug. 9 '64
Richardson, G. (or J.)		Killed and buried at Mt. Jackson
Shelton, E. C.		
Thompson, J. W.		
Wall, James G.		Promoted to 2nd Lieut.
Witson, John (H)		

## CHAPTER X

### SOMETHING OF THE EARLIEST FAMILIES OF LOVELY MOUNT

Of the six families who lived at Lovely Mount at the time of the coming of the railroad, two are already known; Doctor John Blair Radford, probably still the only resident west of Connolly's Run, and Colonel Edward Hammet of the east. The family of James Hammet, son of Colonel Hammet, accounts for the third of these six families.

James Hammet secured from his father a large acreage of rich bottomland at the far eastern end of the extensive Hammet estate, extending to the extremities of the river bottom at Plum Creek. There he built a two-story log house. It was in the middle of the river bottom about a mile east of the Colonel Edward Hammet homestead.

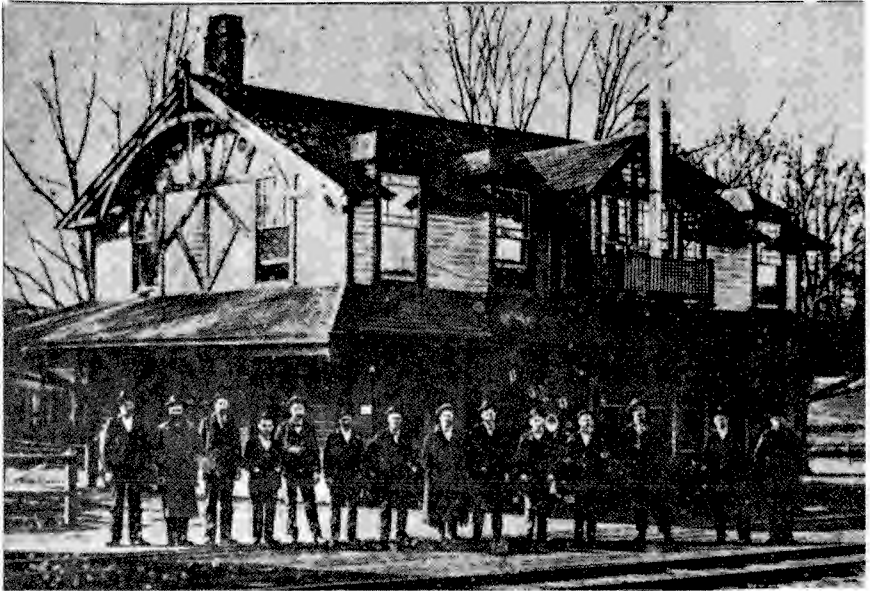
In later years this property came into the possession of Judge George and Kathleen Hammet Cassell. Judge Cassell had the log house covered with clapboard and completely modernized and enlarged the original home. He gave it the name of "CASSELLTON".

Many years after the judge had passed away and most of the children were married the estate was sold to the railroad company. The old Cassell home still stands, now in use by the railroad for official purposes. While the main part of the house has been altered beyond recognition the entrance, with its special feature — the handsome front door — so well remembered, remains intact. The name "CASSELLTON" is etched in large script across the center of the plate glass which composes its upper half. It recalls one of the town's most genial hosts and most gracious hostesses, and many gay social activities carried on here in days long past.

During the early 1870's, some years prior to the events concerning "Cassellton", Captain Stockton Heth married Isabella Hammet, the younger daughter of Colonel Edward Hammet.\* After

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\* Sue Hammet, an elder daughter of Colonel Hammet, married James Hoge Tyler, in 1868, and they began their married life at his home, "Belle Hampton", on Back Creek.



**NORFOLK AND WESTERN DEPOT, EAST RADFORD, 1898.**

The comings and goings of the railroad trains here provided the main interest for the town's folk around the Gay Nineties, as well as for an earlier period when the settlement was known as CENTRAL DEPOT.





**WEST RADFORD, CIRCA 1890.**

As it looked prior to the building of the Wagon Bridge. The West End railway station (center) was built in 1889-'90. The Radford Inn (to right), built about the same time, was destroyed by fire on May 16, 1893. To rear of depot can be seen the "Bee Hive" famous department store of the nineties.

the colonel's death his remaining estate came into the possession of Captain Stockton and Isabella Hammet Heth. At this time the estate included the home place in the grove and all of the land east of Connolly's Run with the exception of the James Hammet estate in the far east end of the original land holdings and those portions conveyed to the railroad for right of way and other purposes. Also, the small tracts that had been sold for private homes and business purposes.

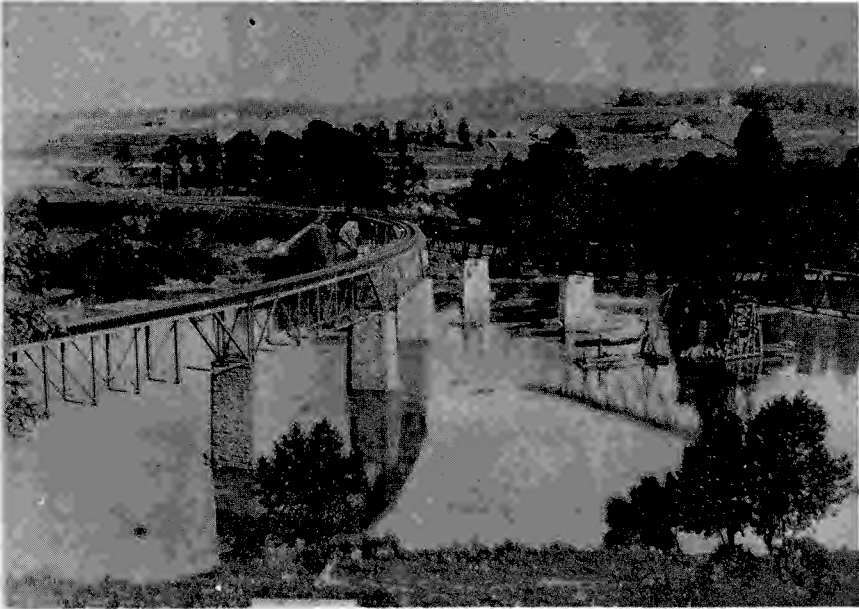
Captain Heth, in 1886, built a handsome brick home in the now well known "Heth's grove" to replace the old Hammet log house he and his family had lived in up to this time. A portion of the log house was retained for utility purposes. The expansive mansion was a show place for that day and one of the finest residences for miles around. It was named "Norwood" in honor of Isabella Hammet's grandmother whose maiden name was Isabella Norwood. Norwood Street, the main thoroughfare of the town was also named for her.

Captain and Mrs. Heth's house-warming during the summer of 1886 consisted of a lavish evening banquet attended by all of the prominent families of the town and county. Old friends came from as far away as Giles County and Back Creek in Pulaski County. The guests from any considerable distance spent the night as was customary in the horse and buggy days. Stable boys were on hand to take the teams to the barn for watering, feeding and bedding down for the night. Mint juleps were in plentiful supply for the men and the merits of this famous old Virginia beverage were appraised and discussed at such length that several of the country squires had to be assisted to their bedrooms before the evening was over.

In 1881 an event occurred that initiated the town's steady development. It was during this year that the Norfolk and Western Railroad came into being. The new company was the result of the consolidation of the Virginia and Tennessee and other rail lines. Frederick J. Kimball\* was named first vice-president of the new company. Mr. Kimball was interested in coal. He had learned of the presence of coal in Southwest Virginia, particularly of the rich outcroppings around Pocohontas. These had been reported by Gen-

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\* The Kimball house, one block south of the Kenerdines, was among the first of the modern homes to appear in West Radford. Others were the homes of the industrialists and railroad officials of that period. They included Kenerdin, Kimball, Dimmick (the Harvey home), Captain Osborne and General G. C. Wharton (of an earlier period). Captain Osborne and Mr. Kimball were mainly interested in the new railroad line.



**THE CURVED BRIDGE AND FAR WEST RADFORD, CIRCA 1890.**

The curved bridge, unique in railroad structures, was built in 1888. Over this bridge passed all railway traffic to Bluefield and the coalfields, via St. Albans and Belsprings. Prior to the advent of the curved bridge the N & W trains used the Y switch system at New River Depot in order to transfer onto the trackway for Bluefield. (See railway line in this area shown on U. S. Geological Survey Map.) The General Wharton house (center background) was one of the first of the large homes in West Radford.

eral G. C. Wharton years earlier when he marched through that section of West Virginia with his brigade in 1862. General Wharton had always envisioned the plan of somehow tapping this rich resource with a railroad line. Mr. Kimball was now about to bring this dream to fruition.

Then came two years of feverish activity as the 70 mile line was constructed from the western extremities of Central Depot to Bluefield to serve the coalfields. During the first seven years after its completion the trains used the straight railroad bridge over the river into New River Depot. Here the "Y" system was used to switch the trains to the line that led up the grade by St. Albans. An extra locomotive was required at siding on permanent duty to assist in the switching as well as to provide pushing service up the grade as far as Schooler's hill, after which it was an easy run on to Belsprings and Bluefield.\*

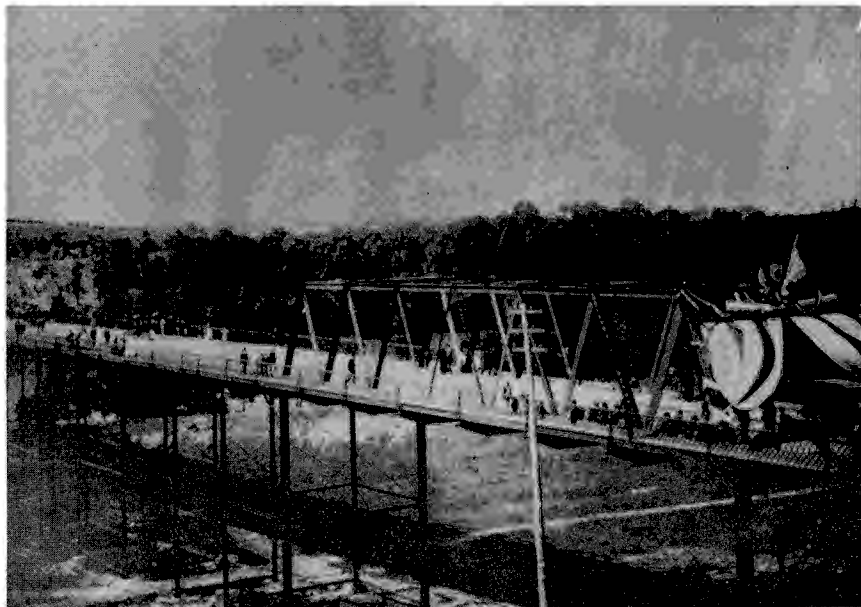
In 1888 the curved bridge, unique in engineering construction, was built to give the trains a direct run to and from the coalfields. This avoided the intricate switching that caused so many unnecessary delay at New River Depot. Long to be remembered was the sight of a string of 60 or 70 gondolas piled to the top with shining black coal rolling down the St. Albans grade and rounding the hairpin curve over New River bridge. Like a slithering blacksnake it rumbled on its way to the seaport at Norfolk.

It now might be assumed that the old stagecoach which for years wended its way up and down the Valley Turnpike had long since faded from the scene; and that Lovely Mount Tavern had died a natural death along with it. A custom — a way of life — that has been in existence for almost a hundred years rarely dies a sudden death. The stagecoach and the old wayside inn were to linger on for many years after the coming of the railroad.

Something of the life and times of the people here at this period is told by one who was a part of it. It is unusual to find a living person (at the time of this interview, 1957) whose life dates back to such a far distant past. Such a one was Mrs. James William Likens (nee Georgianna Kesterson), 93, and still active and keen of mind at her advanced age. She was glad to tell something of the life here when the community was nothing more than a cluster of houses by the railroad. Norwood Street extended only from Heth's grove to Harrison and the only route to West End was by way

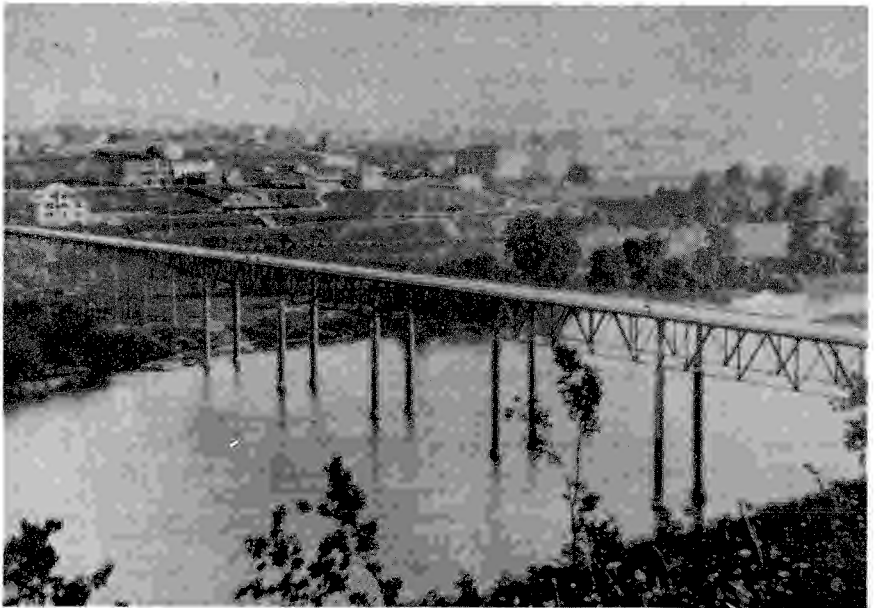
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\* The railroad line can be seen on the old U. S. Geological Survey map shown, with the "Y" switch at New River Depot in use prior to the advent of the curved bridge.



**OPENING OF THE WAGON BRIDGE, 1891.**

The Wagon Bridge, officially opened to traffic Sept. 7, 1891, was so called because it filled a long felt need for wagon traffic to and from Pulaski County.



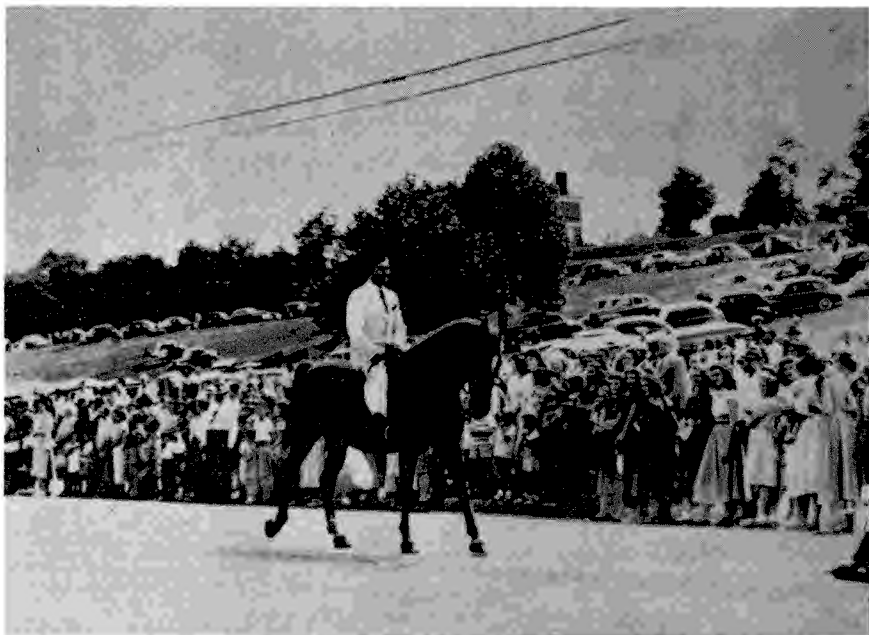
**THE WAGON BRIDGE AND WEST RADFORD, CIRCA 1892.**

The two story white brick building to the immediate right of the far end of the bridge was built to house the main offices of the N & W Railroad. This illustrates the optimism that prevailed during the early boom years. When it was found that the main offices would be permanently located in Roanoke the building was converted into an apartment house. It was later torn down after the West End depot was consolidated into East Radford station.



**DEDICATION OF THE SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA MEMORIAL BRIDGE,  
SEPT. 5, 1949.**

The new replaces the old 58 years later. Town's people and visitors assemble for the dedication ceremonies. Piers of the old Wagon Bridge can be seen on the left.



**MEMORIAL BRIDGE OPENING, SEPT. 5, 1949.**

The dedication ceremonies begin as Mayor C. K. Howe, Jr., parade marshal, leads the parade west on Norwood Street. Following in order are the 176th Infantry, Virginia National Guard, Veterans organizations and pupils of the public schools. On the hill in the background, partially concealed by trees, can be seen the first house in West Radford, built by Dr. John B. Radford, in 1836-'38.



of Harrison Street to the ferry road and thence up the river bottom. The vehicular traffic crossed Connolly's Run at a shallow ford and the pedestrians used a footleg adjacent. Found preparing vegetables on the back porch for her own dinner, she relaxed from her labors as she cheerfully responded to greetings and an initial question:

"Our family (father, mother and four children) moved here from Bath County in 1870 when I was six years old. We first lived for a time in a log house on Plum Creek known as the old Haven place. There was a grist mill and a milldam a short distance up the creek. The mill pond was a good fishing place. We kids could catch a mess of perch there most anytime and we had a good time playing about the mill and exploring up and down the creek.

"In answer to your question about Lovely Mount Tavern, I first visited there when I was about ten years old. That would have been in 1874. My parents took us there with them when they went to attend a dance. Everybody from around the neighborhood was going and they couldn't leave us at home alone. A large crowd of men and women all dressed in their Sunday best had gathered and everybody was in a joyous frame of mind. They had two good fiddlers to make the music and they danced the Virginia reel and square dances to lively music like 'Possum up a Simmon Tree', 'If you Get to Foolin' with My Lula Gal', and 'She Danced all Night with a Hole in her Stocking.' They danced and pranced like nothing I'd ever seen before. I was curled up on a bench most of the time. The tavern was the favorite place for dances, socials and such in those days.

"Later that year we moved from Plum Creek to a place on the corner opposite Heth's grove. It was a frame store building that had been done over into apartments. We had to move from there after a short time as it was to be torn down to make room for a hotel. When the hotel was finished it was called "The Virginia House". It was a handsome two-story white frame building with a porch all the way across the front. During the summer time whenever I passed there the easy chairs on the front porch were always filled with drummers or men about town chewing their cigars and talking politics.

"Our family came to this house after leaving the store building near Heth's grove and lived here ever since. (It is a frame house north of the railroad tracks on the west side of Harrison Street). I was married in this house to Will Likens, in 1898. He was a railroad man who lived in this neighborhood. Most of the people lived

in this section in the early days. We liked it because it was by the railroad and near the depot and we could see the trains coming and going. All the men around here worked on the railroad so that made it convenient for them as well.

“A few years ago two ladies from the State Historical Society came here to ask me about some of the old landmarks. They particularly wanted to see the site of the Lovely Mount Tavern. They had been told I was the only person in town who knew anything about it. They drove me out on Rock Road in their automobile. Things had changed so much I couldn't find the place where the tavern used to be. I did show them the Lovely Mount Church where I went to Sunday school as a child. That was before they had built churches or schools here in town. A church and a school house of sorts were built here later but the little red brick church on Rock Road was the only place for religious services for some years. Before the first one-room school house was built classes were held in any vacant room that could be found about town. I finished my schooling in such places.”

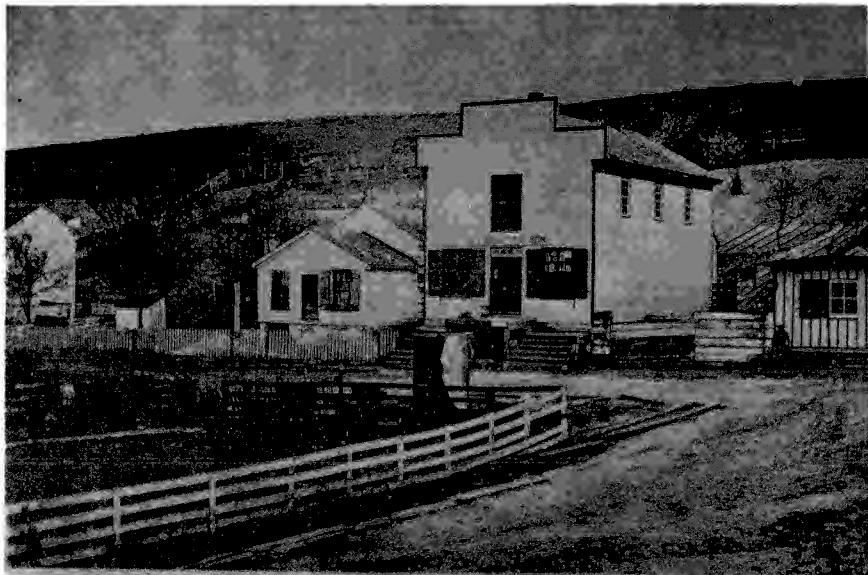
## CHAPTER XI

### THE EARLIEST SCHOOLS AND CHURCHES AND INITIAL BUSINESS ESTABLISHMENTS

The first public school in Central Depot was organized in 1856, at about the time the railway was in complete operation. Classes were held in a log house across from the depot. During the first years of the struggling school classes were shifted from one vacant building to another. The freight depot was used for a time and the vacant room over Roberts store was also used, pending the building of a schoolhouse. This was accomplished in 1876 when the first one-room school house was built on the side of the hill west of the coal tipple. The first year's enrollment was about 60 pupils of all ages, from the primary through the eighth grade. Miss Kate Palmer was the sole teacher, at a salary of \$25 per month. This wage was considered most adequate for that time. It was comparable with the better salaries for clerical jobs about town. The standard wage for the railroad men at the shops was \$25 per month — ten cents per hour for a ten hour day — although the yardmaster and others in the higher bracket were paid \$50 per month. So the salary of a school teacher was one to be envied.

The frame schoolhouse burned in 1881 and for the next three years classes were again conducted in any vacant building that might be found available. In 1884 appeared the first multi-room standard schoolhouse for the community. Mrs. Heth donated the land at the corner of Downey and Third Streets and was instrumental in having it built. The town was justly proud of the two-story imposing looking building with the high bell-tower at the front. The new school was named Belle Heth Academy in honor of Mrs. Isabella Heth. Although it was a combined elementary and high school it was called "Academy", probably to give it the prestige such a building merited. Belle Heth Academy was considered a substantial institution for that day. It amply met the essential needs of the two for many years to come.

Provisions for religious worship go much further back than the



**CENTRAL DEPOT (RADFORD), CIRCA 1885.**

The G. E. Roberts and Son store on Norwood Street near junction of Virginia Avenue was the center, and practically all, of the business district. The year of 1885 the community had a population of 500.

earliest public schools. In his Montgomery County Story Charles W. Crush states, "During this decade the first Methodist preaching was done in this county. The Reverend Lesley Matthews, a Methodist itinerant minister, came here in the year 1790. He preached at William Haven's near the mouth of Plum Creek"

The old Haven home on Plum Creek can be called the first meeting place for religious services in the vicinity of Radford, as well as in Montgomery County. The first church built for this community was the little red brick church on Rock Road, built in 1835, as previously noted. Before a church was built within the immediate community of Radford religious services were held in any vacant building that might be found available. The schedule of infrequent services was made to conform with the coming of the itinerant minister. There was no regular preacher of any faith in the community. The freight depot and the vacant room over Roberts store were the two places frequently used, just as they were later used for school purposes. The minister who most often appeared had to ride horseback from Floyd County. The first denominational church built in the community was the St. James Episcopal Church, built in the seventies, on the north side of the railroad a block west of where Harrison Street turns into the ferry road.

For many years the only general store in Central Depot was the mercantile establishment of George E. Roberts and Son. It was located on the south side of Norwood Street near the junction of Virginia Avenue. During the early days and through the eighties this was the heart and center — and "the all" — of the business district.

The first hotels appeared here in the late seventies. The Virginia House, a kind of summer resort hotel, stood back from the corner of Norwood Street opposite Heth's Grove. Of a somewhat earlier vintage were the Hoffman House and the Bibb Hotel. The Hoffman House, a three-story frame structure, stood on Virginia Avenue on the south side of the railroad crossing. The Bibb Hotel, very similar in appearance, was on the far (north) side of the crossing. Both hotels were favorite retreats for drummers and railroad men.

Virginia Avenue was teeming with activity during this period. The residential section north of the railroad was more thickly populated than any other residential section of the town. This was due to the concentration of families of railroad employees on the north side. It was more convenient to the railroad shops from

whence the chief livelihood came at this time. Virginia Avenue was the only artery or direct access to and from this important residential area then known as the "Back Track" section. Possibly a third of the children of the town passed back and forth along Virginia Avenue on their daily treks to and from Belle Heth Academy when school was in session. The two hotels added to the importance of the thoroughfare.

The Bibb Hotel burned on a Friday afternoon in 1894. The holocaust occurred at the same hour as one of the town's greatest disasters. The bridge then being built over Connolly's Run linking East and West End fell that same afternoon and eight workmen plunged 75 feet to the rocky creek bed below. Six were killed outright. The tragic occurrence coming simultaneously with the burning of the Bibb Hotel threw people into such a state of excitement that for hours the crowds were running first to the scene of one disaster and then the other, and in a state bordering on frenzy over the double tragedy. The day in 1894 can be called "Black Friday"—and the town's darkest hour.

## CHAPTER XII

### CONCLUSION

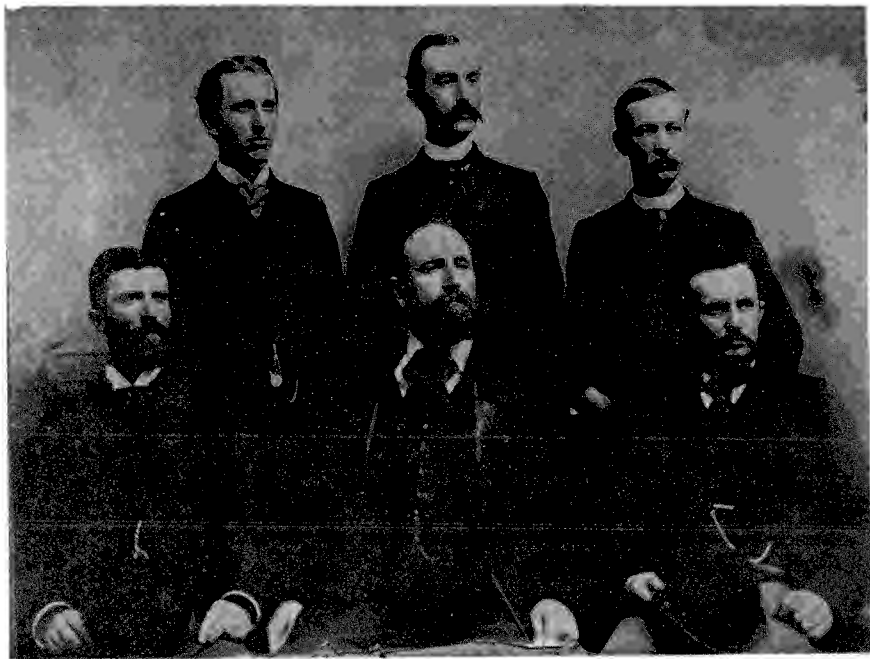
By the latter part of the 1850's with the establishment of the railroad the populace gradually came to the conclusion that this new means of transportation was here to stay. For them a new day had dawned. The era of the stagecoach was at last at an end. The railroad company now having secured the franchise for carrying the United States mail, the stagecoach with one of its principal functions curtailed, began finally to sense the end of its usefulness. Agricultural products and general travel by degrees shifted from the highways to the steel rails. No more was the covered wagon and the packhorse caravan to be seen on the Valley Turnpike.

A period of 34 years elapsed, however, after the coming of the railroad before the old order completely gave away to the new and the stagecoach made its permanent exit from the region. The slow transition was due to the fact that the United States post office remained at Lovely Mount Tavern until 1888 before its permanent transfer to Central Depot (Radford). During this long period the local stage continued to ply between Central Depot and Lovely Mount Tavern. At the tavern post office the mail was sorted and from here distributed throughout the community. In addition a portion of the mail had to be hauled to outlying districts, some as distant as Grayson, Auburn, Riner and Floyd, and to other smaller settlements.

Two of the old stagecoach drivers still lived here in the early nineties, Frank Page and Mike Fizer. The later said he had the run from Christiansburg to Seven Mile Ford.

When the post office was finally transferred to Radford the tavern was soon abandoned. While it stood deserted the Rock Road colored folk looked upon the lonely wayside inn as a "ha'nted house and a home fit for only bats and owls." It disappeared from the scene in the early 1890's.

Radford was incorporated as a town in 1887. The name "RAD-FORD" had come into common use some years earlier. It was ap-



**CHARTER COMMITTEE FOR THE CITY OF RADFORD — 1892**

Left to right, sitting: Hugh C. Preston, J. W. Marshall, J. L. Radford. Left to right, standing: W. R. Wharton, Samuel Harris Hoge and R. J. Noell. Following the Chapter Committee, Mr. Hugh C. Preston became the first mayor of Radford.



parently generally conceded, and universally accepted, that this settlement by right could have no other name than that of its best known and most universally beloved early settler and first doctor.

In 1892 the town's Charter Committee composed of: J. W. Marshall, Captain Hugh C. Preston, J. L. Radford, W. R. Wharton, Samuel Harris Hoge and Robert Jackson Noell had the town incorporated into the City of Radford.

The Charter Committee elected Captain Hugh C. Preston to be the city's first mayor.

Two centuries have passed since the first pioneers came to this fertile river valley. They cheerfully withstood the most harrowing dangers and hardships through the years; ever striving to eke out a living and better their lot and that of the generations to follow. It is with a feeling of gratification that the story is told of the steady progress of these sturdy men and faithful women through the long years of travail and struggle. Their hardships and will to overcome all obstacles, and their continuing progress eventually led to the prosperous and thriving community we see here today on the banks of New River.

Whether the start of the city was from a single log cabin in the river bottom or an equally primitive wayside inn out by the Stagecoach Road, it is indisputable that today we have here a progressive, thriving and happy community; comparable in scenic beauty and potential worth to any city in the great Commonwealth of Virginia.





# INDEX

- Adams, Frank; 49  
Adams, Mrs. Radford; 27  
Alleghenies; 1, 43, 45  
America; 3  
Anderson; 39  
Allen, Benjamin; 57  
Angel, Benjamin; 49  
Appomattox River; 1  
Argabright, S.; 51  
Argabright, Stewart; 49  
Arnheim; 28, 29, 48  
Auburn; 69
- Back Creek; III, 14, 19, 37, 44, 45,  
53, 56  
Bane, Allen; 51  
Barbados; 19  
Barden, Charles; 49  
Barger, Philip; 13  
Barger, George W.; 49  
Bargers;  
Bartin, Amos C.; 49  
Barton, Joseph; 49  
Barton, Lucy; 5  
Barton, S. O.; 51  
Baskerville Family; 36  
Baskerville, William B.; 38, 34, 41  
Bath County; 63  
Bee Hive; 55  
Bell, William A.; 49  
Belle Hampton; 41, 53  
Belle Heth Academy; 65, 68  
Belsprings; 57, 58  
Bennett, M. D.; 49  
Beyer, Ed; 8, 25  
Bibb Hotel; 67, 68  
Bibb, Robert; 49  
Bingamin, Adam; 14  
Bingamin, Christian; 16  
Bingamin, Harry; 16  
Bingamin, Henry; 16, 17  
Bingamin, John; 14, 15, 16  
Bingamin, John, Jr.; 14  
Bingamin, Milldam; 17  
Bingamin, Mrs. 14, 16  
Bingamins; 13, 14, 21, 47  
Bingham, K. P.;  
Black, John; 49  
Blizzard, James; 49  
Bluefield; 57, 58  
Blue Ridge; 43  
Bourbon County, Kentucky; 20  
Bowe, James A.; 49  
Bowe, Joseph; 49  
Boyd Haven; 3  
Bradford, Peter; 49  
Bridges, Frank; 51  
Bristol; 45, 46  
Brooklyn; V  
Brown, John; 51
- Burket, D. W.; 49  
Burwell, J., Sr.; 51
- Caldwell, I. E.; 51  
Caldwell, J. E.; 51  
Calvert, R. N.; 49  
Campbell, Elizabeth; 26  
Campbell, General William; 26  
Cannaday, Dan; 2, 14  
Carolinas; 20  
Carper, Russell A.; 41  
Cass, James; 49  
Cassell, Judge George; 53  
Cassell, Kathleen Hammet; 53  
Cassellton; 53  
Castle, Robert; 49  
Catawba; 2, 13  
Cecil, Mr.; 41  
Central Depot; V, 39, 41, 43, 44, 45,  
46, 54, 58, 65, 66, 69  
Cherokees; 1  
Childrey, Sam; 51  
Christiansburg; 3, 13, 21, 23, 24, 25,  
36, 40, 69  
Christian, Col. William; 3, 4, 5, 24, 25  
Christian, W. W.; 51  
Civil War; V, 11, 47  
Clay, Rebecca; 20  
Claytor Lake; 3, 5  
Cloyd, Catherine; 5  
Cloyd, Joseph; 20  
Cloyd, Thomas; 3, 4, 5  
Collier, A. J.; 51  
Collins, George C.; 49  
Coleman, J. R.; 49  
Connolly's Run; 1, 24, 26, 28, 31, 34,  
53, 56, 63, 68  
Crab Creek; 23, 24  
Craig, Albert; 49  
Craig, Clementina Venable;  
Craig, James; 24, 25, 26, 28  
"Crescent Falls"; 5  
Crush, Charles W.; 16, 26, 67  
Cunningham, Adam; 49  
Currin, Waddy C.; 41
- Dare, R. N.; 51  
Davis, David B.; 49  
Dawson, Robert M.; 49  
Dawson, William; 49  
Downey St.; 65  
Drapers; 2, 13  
Draper's Meadow; 1, 2, 3, 7, 13, 14, 16,  
26, 31  
Dublin; 45  
Dublin Depot; 45  
Dudding, Alex; 51  
Dudding, William; 49  
Dudley's Ferry; V  
Dunkards; 3, 4, 5

Dunkard's Bottom; 3, 4, 5, 10, 14, 23  
 Dunn, H. S.; 51  
 Dusseldorf on the Rhine; 8, 25  
  
 Eakin, William P.; 49  
 East Radford; 54, 60  
 Eggleston; 14  
 Ellet Family; 40  
 Elliott, James M.; 51  
 Ellis, A. S.; 50  
 Ephrata Society; 3  
 Eskeridge; 15  
 Eskeridge, Edgar, Sr.; 47  
 Evans, John W.; 52  
  
 Farrow, Mrs. Thomas; 3  
 Fisher, Sam W.; 50  
 Fizer, Mike; 69  
 Hanagan, Mr.; 21  
 Floyd County; 1, 69  
 Forcee, William J.; 52  
 Fort Vause; 10  
 Francisco, R. L.; 50  
 French and Indian War; 3, 7  
  
 Galloway, J. C.; 50  
 Galloway, Robert R.; 49  
 Garfield, James A.; 48  
 Gay Nineties; V  
 German Seventh Day Baptists; 3  
 Germany; 3  
 Giles County; 19, 49, 56  
 Gordon, Charles L.; 50  
 Gordon, I. H.; 52  
 Gray, William; 51  
 Grayson; 69  
 Gunpowder Springs; 14  
  
 Hale, Jacob; 49  
 Hale, William; 49  
 Hall, Cornelius; 50  
 Hammer, Joseph; 52  
 Hammers, Joseph; 49  
 Hammet, Colonel Edward; 26, 28, 41, 53  
 Hammet, James; 53, 56  
 Hammet, Isabella; 53, 56  
 Hammet, Sue; 41, 53  
 Hans Meadow; 13, 24, 25  
 Hardwick, A. C.; 49  
 Harless, Abram; 50  
 Harlesses; 13  
 Harmon, Adam; 14  
 Harmons; 7, 13  
 Harris, R. M.; 50  
 Harrison St.; 58, 63, 67  
 Harvey, J. W.; 52  
 Harvey, T. M.; 50  
 Haven, William; 67  
 Hayes, Rutherford B.; 48  
 Haynes, William H.; 50  
 Heavin, Howard, 13, 31, 32, 37  
 Heavin John, 1, 31, 34, 35, 36, 37  
 Heavin, John II; 31  
 Heavin, John III; 39  
 Heavin, Polly; 36  
 Heavin, Ruth Hall; 31, 36, 37  
 Heavin, William; 31, 35, 39  
 Heavin, William, Jr.; 38  
 Heavins; 13, 21, 36, 37  
 Heth, Captain Stockton; 53, 56  
 Heth's Grove; 28, 58, 63, 67  
 Heth, Mrs. Isabella; 65  
 Heyman, Sam B.; 50  
 Hilton, W. H.; 52  
 Hilton, William; 50  
 Hincee, J. M.; 52  
 Historical Society of Wisconsin; 14  
 History of the Middle New River Settlements; 2, 19  
 Holland; 3  
 Hodges; 50  
 Hoffman House; 67  
 Hoge, Andrew Johnston; 50  
 Hoge, Samuel Harris; 70, 71  
 Hotchkiss, Major Jed; 2  
 Howadr, John; 50  
 Howe, Ann; 19, 20  
 Howe, Captain John Thomas; 44, 50  
 Howe, Catherine Cloyd; 3  
 Howe, Charles Kent, Jr.; III, 62  
 Howe, Charles Kent, Sr.; V  
 Howe, Daniel; 21, 31, 37  
 Howe, Daniel Dunbar; VI  
 Howe, Eleanor; 19, 20  
 Howe, Haven; 44  
 Howe, Haven Boyd; 5  
 Howe, Isabella; 21  
 Howe, Joseph; III, 14, 19  
 Howe, Mary Cloyd; 3  
 Howe, Sam Sheperd; 50  
 Howe, William; 21  
 Hugenots; 19  
 Hughes, John; 50  
  
 Indiana; 37, 38, 39  
 Ingles; 2, 13  
 Ingles, Col. John; 10  
 Ingles Ferry; 2, 3, 7, 9, 10, 11, 23, 39, 45  
 Ingles, John 8, 9  
 Ingles, John Lewis "Nig"; 9  
 Ingles, Mary Draper; 7, 10, 11, 14, 16  
 Ingles, Thomas; 11  
 Ingles, William; 3, 7, 8, 9, 10, 26  
  
 Jarrette, H.; 52  
 Jenell, H. S.; 50  
 Jennell, John T.; 50  
 Johnston, David E.; 2, 19  
 Jones, George W.; 50  
 Jordan, Joseph; 51  
  
 Kanawha; 1, 2, 10, 16  
 Keffer, Sam; 50  
 Kegley, F. B.; 5  
 Kegley's Virginia Frontier; 4, 5  
 Kent, Jane; 26

Kenerdin; 56  
 Kenerdines; 56  
 Kimball; 56  
 Kimball, Frederick J.; 56, 58  
 Kinfer (Kinger)? J. S.; 50  
 King's Mountain; 26  
 Kinsley, R. N.; 50  
 Kirby, James; 50  
 Kyle, John C.; 52

Lambert, M. A.; 52  
 Lancaster County, Pennsylvania; 3  
 Likens, Mrs. James William; 58  
 Likens, Will; 63  
 Linkous, James; 50  
 Little River; 1  
 Long, J. B.; 52  
 Love, Levi A.; 50  
 Lovely Mount; 23, 24, 25, 26, 28, 31,  
 32, 43, 44, 45, 53  
 Lovely Mount Church; 32, 40, 41, 64  
 Lovely Mount Tavern; XI, 1, 31, 32,  
 34, 36, 37, 38, 39, 41, 58, 63, 64, 69  
 Lower Horseshoe; 10 14  
 Lybrook, Philip; 13, 14  
 Lybrooks (Leibroch); 13  
 Lynchburg; 43, 46  
 Lyons, M. F.; 52

Marshall, J. W.; 70, 71  
 Martin, C. L.; 50  
 Martin, David; 50  
 Martin, Harvey; 50  
 Matthews, Anderson; 34, 36  
 Matthews, Naomi; 34, 36, 37  
 Matthews, Reverend Lesley; 67  
 McCluer, John; 36, 38, 39  
 McCluer, Ruth; 38  
 McCorkle, James; 4, 5  
 McCoskey, J. B.;  
 McDonald, George; 50  
 McDonald, John E.; 50  
 McKinley, William; 48  
 McLemore, P. J.; 50  
 Meek, James; 50  
 Meek, James R. (or S.); 50  
 Miles, Professor George Hollard; V  
 Miller, George W.; 50  
 Miller, John T.; 50  
 Montgomery County; 49, 67  
 Montgomery County Story; 26, 67  
 Montgomery Highlanders; 49  
 Montgomery, Sam; 50

Netherland, W. B.; 52  
 Newbern; 45  
 New Dublin Church; 45  
 New River; III, V, VI, 1, 2, 3, 7, 10, 13,  
 14, 16, 19, 22, 23, 24, 25, 40, 43,  
 48, 57, 58, 71  
 Noell, R. J.; 70, 71  
 Norfolk; 58  
 Norfolk and Western; 43, 54, 56, 57,  
 60

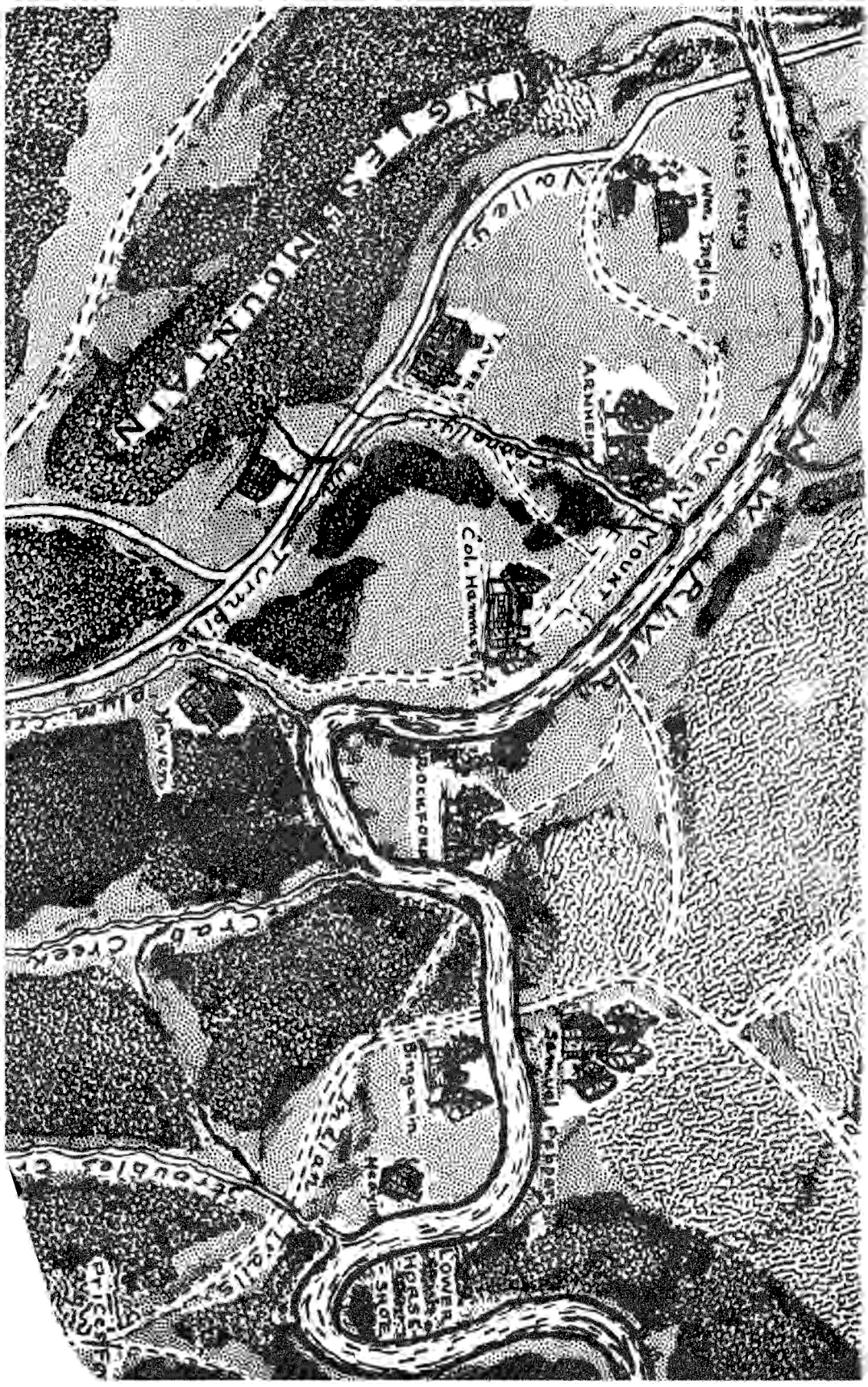
Norwood; 56  
 Norwood Street; V, 56, 58, 62, 66, 67

Ohio; 16, 37, 43  
 Ohio River; 7  
 Osborne, Captain; 56

Pacific; 1  
 Page, Frank; 69  
 Paine, William; 50  
 Palmer, Miss Kate; 65  
 Paris, Kentucky;  
 Parkins, John A.; 50  
 Parris Island; 19  
 Patton, Col. James; 7, 16, 26  
 Pearis, George; 19, 20  
 Pearis, Matilda; 19  
 Pearis, Robert; 19, 20  
 Pearisburg; 20  
 Peck, John E.; 50  
 Peck, Robert; 50  
 Pepper, Dr. Charles T.;  
 Pepper, Louis; 21  
 Pepper, Mary "Polly"; 31, 37  
 Pepper, Nancy; 31  
 Pepper, Samuel; 14, 19, 21, 31  
 Pepper's Ferry; 13, 14, 16, 17, 19, 20,  
 22, 23, 31, 37, 38, 47  
 Pepper, William; 17, 38  
 Peterman, M. G. W.; 51  
 Petersburg; 1  
 Pingley, J. W.; 52  
 Plum Creek; 16, 17, 23, 24, 31, 32, 35,  
 39, 53, 63, 67  
 Preston, Hugh C.; 70 71  
 Preston, Colonel James Francis; 49  
 Preston, William; 7, 14  
 Price, E.; 50  
 Price, John H.; 52  
 Price, Michael; 13  
 Prices; 13  
 Price's Forks; 13  
 Prickett, James McChesney; 21  
 Pulaski County; 19, 39, 49, 56, 59

"Racepaths"; 24  
 Radford; III, V, 32, 39, 66, 67, 69, 70  
 Radford College; V, 2  
 Radford, Dr. John Blair; 27, 28, 29, 41,  
 48, 53, 62  
 Radford, J. L. 70, 71  
 Radford Inn; 55  
 Radford Pipe Works and Foundry; V  
 Reeds, The; 45  
 Revolutionary War; 20, 21, 24, 25, 31  
 Reynolds, Charles A.; 49  
 Richardson, G. (or J.); 52  
 Richardson, William; 52  
 Richeson, George W.; 57  
 Richeson, John H.; 57  
 Richeson, William; 51  
 Ridley, John D.; 49  
 Riner; 1, 69  
 Roanoke; 60

Roberts Store; 65, 66, 67  
 Robinson, David (or D. T.); 51  
 Rockford; 27, 28, 32  
 Rock Ford; 26  
 Rock Road; V, 40, 64, 67, 69  
 Rural Retreat; 21  
 Rural Retreat Times; 21, 22  
 Rutledge, George W.; 51  
  
 Scott, Edward; 49  
 Seven Mile Ford; 69  
 Shells;  
 Shallow Ford; 20  
 Shell, Barbara; 31  
 Shell, Jacob; 31  
 Shelton, E. C.; 52  
 Sinking Creek; 14  
 Slusser, John A.; 51  
 Smith, James A.; 31  
 Snider, John H.; 51  
 Snietzer, William; 51  
 Some Recollections and Tales of Old  
     Times  
 South Carolina; 19  
 Southwest Virginia; 19, 20, 34, 47  
 Southwest Virginia Memorial Bridge;  
     61, 62  
 Stabler, Harold B.; 34  
 Stagecoach Road; 1, 3, 23, 31, 34, 39,  
     71  
 St. Albans; V, 57, 58  
 St. James Episcopal Church; 67  
 Staunton; 2, 26  
 Strubles Creek; 13  
  
 Taylor Elizabeth; 27, 28  
 Taylor, John; 16, 24, 26, 27  
 Taylor, John McCandless; 26, 27, 28  
 Taylor, M. W.; 51  
 Taylor, William M.; 51  
 Third St.; 65  
 Thomas, William N.; 49  
 Thompson, James H.; 51  
  
 Thompson, John W.; 51  
 Thompson, J. W.; 52  
 Tinkling Springs; 7, 26  
 Trigg, Abram; 24, 31  
 Trigg, Susanna; 31  
 Tyler, James Hoge; 41, 44, 53  
  
 Upper Horseshoe; 16, 26  
  
 Valley Turnpike; 5, 31, 34, 41, 45, 58  
 Varden, James M.; 51  
 Vause, Col. Ephraim; 10  
 Virginia Avenue; 67, 68  
 Virginia House; 67  
 Virginia and Tennessee Railway  
     Company; 43, 56  
  
 Waco, Texas; 22  
 Wade, James W.; 41  
 Wagon Bridge; V, 59, 60, 61  
 Walker, B. L.; 51  
 Wall, James G.; 52  
 Water Works and Sandpipe; V  
 Watson, A. B.; 51  
 West Radford; 11, 29, 55, 56, 57, 58, 62  
 West Virginia; 58  
 Wharton, Gen. G. C.; 56, 57, 58  
 Wharton, Mrs.; 28  
 Wharton, W. R.; 70, 71  
 Wilderness Road; 34  
 Wilson, John (H.); 51  
 Witson, John (H.); 52  
 Wood, Colonel Abram; 1  
 Wood's Gap; 1  
 Wood's River; 2  
 Wylie, John; 24, 26  
 Wylie, Peter; 24, 26  
 Wyman, Mrs. Bernice Bassett; 36, 37,  
     38  
 Wytheville; 21  
  
 Yadkin; 20  
 Yancy, Mr.; 16



WALTERS MOUNTAIN

VALLEY

Mrs. Ingles

ARNHEIM

COVEY MOUNTAIN

Col. Hammett

ROCK FORT

BENJAMIN

HEALY

SAMUEL PEPPART

LOWER HORSE SHOE

CRAD CREEK

STREPOLE

MAYEST

DUMBLE

PLUM