

A FEASIBILITY STUDY:
The Potential For Researching
the Genealogies of the High Hollow Settlers



*I would have liked this on
my desk but it was
already gone!*

Andy Wiley
Anthropology
Dr. Larry Babits
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Pledged

Andrew J. Wiley



INTRODUCTION

The goal of my anthropological endeavors during the last twelve weeks has been to study the lineages of several prominent families that we have become familiar with in the "High Hollows" area. This study will begin to show some type of systematic relationships existing between these people. In addition to this, we should also be able to realize the cultural pressures the Scotch-Irish underwent as they existed in America and particularly in Rockbridge County. The concentration of the study was placed upon the Taylor, Lackey, Cunningham, Bodkin, Moore, Hayslett, and Armentrout clans. However, as you will soon be able to detect, even this is too narrow a scope. Research in the Rockbridge County Courthouse has been basically through Birth and Marriage Registers, Will Books, and Deed Books. Through these documents many interrelationships have been discerned. However, this report has turned into little more than a feasibility study. The surface of this area has just been scratched and with greater deployment of human resources to this field the scope could be widened to the necessary levels.

Through this study I hope to offer insights into several areas. The first of these areas, the inadequacy of past records and chain of title search methods, will become all too apparent. The genealogies of these people are sketchy at best. Their lineage is tied not only in physical terms but socially as well. Consequently, the deeds are often

hard to trace because the true ownership of certain tracts is hidden by a different name even if it is, in actuality, held by the same family.

The second insightful area would be the realization of the impact that emigration has had on the Scotch-Irish. Basically, the lowlanders had always followed the tradition of willing property to the eldest son. In America, this seemed to change. During this period of time, from approximately 1770-1845, there was still plenty of unclaimed land on the frontier. Many of the Scotch-Irish sons were apparently lured away from the once strong nuclear family to find his own wealth and property. This resulted in many of the females becoming primary heirs which in turn caused many tracts of land to be held under different names.

Lastly, some insights into the financial dealings of these people can be gained. This was an unexpected sidelight in this venture but through a few examples one can see how the relatives of the High Hollow community helped each other in times of financial duress. These insights will often be only as clear as the records allow but a feel for the overall situation may be just as important. Also, there will be several references made to joint marriages and sister exchange without land changing hands. We can only postulate as to their purpose but with a broadened project scope many of the details should begin to emerge.

TRANSACTIONS FOR FINANCIAL REASONS

Even though the emphasis of the whole study was placed on the Taylor clan, it came to be noticed that they were indeed one of the most prominent families in the area. As you will see by these financial transactions, it is usually the Taylor's who came to the aid of friends. The first two of these financial transactions occurred between William Wilson, Daniel Wilson and William Taylor. These occurred in 1815 and 1824 respectively. The Wilson's and Taylor's are seemingly related through the marriage of Anne Wilson to Andrew Taylor. However, there must have been a subsequent marriage as Anne Wilson is already listed as a cousin of Andrew.

In William Wilson's deed there is a land indenture. For the sum of one dollar, three hundred thirty-three acres changed hands. This land on the North River would be held by Taylor for a certain length of time as Wilson tried to raise the debt money. However, upon the expiration of this time, if Wilson had been unsuccessful in raising the funds, Taylor would be forced to auction the land to the highest bidder. (J-355)

The Taylor's, however, were by no means free of debt. In 1819 William Taylor and William Wilson entered into an indenture agreement with William Moore. (M-46) Apparently, Wilson and Taylor followed a different tack by selling a great amount of personal property (not land). This was done in order to escape some \$5500.00 in debt. The relationship with

the Moore's also seems to have come by marriage as Barbara Taylor married James Moore in 1812. Barbara Taylor, however, remains untraceable in Morton's or any other reference material. Therefore exact relationships may be indeterminable.

Daniel Wilson followed this same personal property approach in 1824. (O-8) He used personal property such as beds, tools, clothes and even livestock in order to pay his debt. I would have to hypothesize that these parties either had little personal property (land) or little chance of repaying their debt. By doing this your land and probably your career was saved.

In 1824 and again in 1829, the Moores and the Taylors entered into two more financial transactions. First, in 1824 (O-52), William Taylor and David E. Moore received an indenture from Halbert McClure. Again, the deed went into lengthy explanations and lists of tools, etc. which would be auctioned off in order to pay the debt. The relationships between the McClures and the Taylors was also marital in nature. James Taylor, probably a nephew to William, wed Catharine McClure on February 11, 1808.

In the 1829 transaction (Q-240) Thomas Moore was indebted \$258.00. He therefore indentured some four to five hundred acres in the name of James Taylor for \$1.00. This deal was made under the usual terms of one month's notice of sale to the highest bidder, until the debt was paid.

Next, the Taylors entered into several indentures with

the Walker family. The relationship here appears, on the surface, to be very thin with only the marriage of Samuel Taylor and Cathrine Walker in 1793. However, realizing the incompleteness of the genealogies, as well as understanding just how intermarried these people were, the bond has to be stronger. In any event, on February 18, 1827 both John and Randolph Walker entered into an indenture with James Taylor. In order to secure payment owed to Thomas Anderson they sold, for the sum of \$1.00, 15.75 acres bounded as follows:

Beginning at a white oak on the bank of the river corner to Halbert McClure's land and running with the line of the same N38E8½ poles to two beeches thence S3GE30 poles to two pines on a high hill in a line on McClure's land then with a new line N13E66 poles to a stone set in the ground in a line of Thomas and Moses McClure's (dec.) land then with said line N84W67 poles to a sycamore on the bank of the river then down the river with the courses thereof S18E20 poles and S110E22 poles to the beginning.

Again the usual month's notice applied as the sale of the land would cover both legal fees for current suits as well as all debts. The surplus revenue, however, would revert back to Walker's pocket.

Two other deeds of similar consequence were struck on March 30, 1833 and March 23, 1835. In the first, John Paul indentured to William Taylor (S-19) and in the second Sam McDonald and John Paul indenture to William Taylor (S-445). Both of these indentures carried the usual terms of sale and payback.

Perhaps the most interesting, as well as the brightest

deal, was struck between Archibald B. Walker and Robert T. Taylor on June 4, 1844. (Y-65) Archibald was in debt to various people (the deed seemed unclear here) and was using Priscilla, Melinda D., and Elizabeth M. Walker as security. So, he sold unto Robert Taylor, for the price of \$1.00, his entire one hundred acres of wheat and all of his corn and oats. The deal, however, excepted what was given to the croppers for their work as well as what was needed for family maintenance. This was done in order that he may extend his credit for ninety additional days in order to save his relatives' securityships. Also, by dealing in this fashion, Walker avoided bankruptcy and the possibility of losing his land at an unfair price.

REGULAR TRANSACTIONS

In order to present these in the least confusing manner it will be beneficial to order the data as to importance. The transactions will be presented from the less important to those where the relationships between the people and property are strongly intertwined. Even though this puts the data in a state of chronological disarray it will probably make more sense.

The first group of exchanges occurred on March 2, 1835 and continued to April 20, 1836. In the preliminary deed Joseph Steele and John Leech sold their interests in the land willed to them by David Steele, Jr. and Sr. of Tennessee. Heirs other than these named in the deed were John S. Leech,

Betsy Crawford, David Leech, Nancy Leech and Jane S. Leech, the last five being heirs to Issabella Leech. The land, located on Buffalo Creek, was sold to Stuart Taylor for \$130.10. Stuart Taylor then proceeded in the next year to purchase for \$11.00 what appeared to be a 1/9 and a 1/11 share of David Steele, Sr.'s land from Isaac Steele (U-97). The only family bonds holding these transactions together appear to be the marriage of Elizabeth Taylor to an unknown Steele. However, Stuart Taylor could be Elizabeth's brother as both names are listed under the parenthood of James Taylor and Anne Paul.

Another minor transaction occurred on April 23, 1833 (S-47) between James Elliott and Mathew Taylor. It appears that the family link here occurred when Sally Taylor, daughter of George and his wife Letty, married John Elliott in 1798. The land was bought for the relatively steep price of \$1800.00 and located on the Little Cowpasture River and bounded as follows:

Beginning at three white oaks corner to the heirs of William Davis thence with lines of same S35E176 poles to a white oak stump near a thorn bush S52W11 poles to two hickories S35E43 poles crossing the Little Cowpasture River to a double sycamore corner to Joseph Bell thence down the meanders of the river to two sycamores corner to Author Walk-up N31 W294 poles to four white oaks N54E119 poles and 6 links to the beginning.

The total quantity of land here amounted to about 202 acres plus 120 square poles.

One last minor transaction occurred as Sarah E. Taylor, daughter of Andrew Taylor, married James W. Lackey in Novem-

ber of 1865. It so happens that their daughter, Mattie J. Lackey, sold back acerage into the Taylor clan to Isaac M. Taylor, her uncle. Therefore, one can again see how the deed search may have ended as land was masked in two names.

Stepping up to some slightly more verifiable transactions we have a series of exchanges between various members of the Paul clan and Canfield Taylor. The family ties here are more direct as Canfield is the son of James Taylor and Anne Paul. So one could really state that the land was staying in the Paul clan, one generation removed, on the female side. These families were probably even closer than indicated because, as you will see by the first transaction, they named their children for one another.

The first exchange came on June 22, 1790 between Audley Paul of Boutetourt (Canfield had a brother named Audley) and Canfield Taylor. For five pounds Canfield purchased 135 acres lying on Roaring Run, a branch of the James River, adjoining the lands of David Lloyd, James Wells, Audley Paul, and Jacob Yeates. This was part of the land on which Paul currently lived and was bounded as follows:

Beginning at a white and black oak in Yeates' line then NE120 poles with Lloyd's line to his corner black oak and chesnut on James Wells' line and with the same S29W120 poles to a black oak and hickory on said line corner to Paul and with his line S50E178 poles crossing a branch to two walnuts and two hickories on Yeates' line Paul's corner and with said line NE 116 poles to the beginning. (B-127)

Less than five years later we see Canfield buying land from James Paul (probably either the son of Audley or the brother of Audley, Jr.) and his wife Mary. For five pounds he purchased four more acres of Paul land bounded:

Beginning at a red oak by the side of the great road on Taylor's line and runneth S18 W12 poles to a hickory and chesnut grubs on the great roadside then N75W38 poles to a hickory the N32E23 poles to a white oak chesnut on Taylor's line with the same S50E36 poles to the beginning.

Just one day earlier James Paul deeded, for 380 pounds, the adjoining 152 acres to Samuel Steele. The relationship between the Paul's and the Steele's are uncertain because their names were outside the scope of the main project.

An even stronger family tie can be seen between the Taylors and McCorkles. First, in 1802, we have a marriage between William McCorkle and Anne Taylor. Following this, in 1805, another marriage is held between James Taylor and Elizabeth McCorkle. In 1812 Elizabeth's sister Nancy married Archibald McCorkle. The actual transaction took place on January 4, 1825 (O-333) and involved Hugh P. Taylor buying land from Anne McCorkle. Just as a sidelight, I believe that Hugh Taylor is the great uncle of Archibald and James. At any rate, Anne McCorkle was said to be the sole heir and devisee of John Taylor. The reason for this is unknown as the name John does not show up this early. Anne McCorkle sold, for \$18.00, a tract known as "Lot #12" in the town of Springfield in Rockbridge. This land was bounded as follows:

Beginning at a stake on the main street corner to lot number eleven thence with the same $N68\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}W127$ feet to a stake on the back alley thence with the same $S21\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}W60$ feet to a stake corner to lot #13 thence with the same $68\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}E170$ feet to a stake on the main street thence with the same $N21\frac{1}{2}^{\circ}E60$ feet to the beginning.

The next transaction would be a good one for follow-up research. On April 1, 1815 (J-234) we have James McDowell giving his daughter, Susannah P. Taylor, a sizable grant of land. Susannah, married to William Taylor, was granted four basic tracts of land as follows:

1) One tract on Wood's Creek adjoining the lands of Thomas Johnston, and James Moore, Jr. containing 198 acres, 3 rods and 28 poles.

Beginning at a black and white walnut by the side of the creek then runneth E290 poles to three small hickories SW198 poles to a black oak corner formerly to Joseph Lapsely thence NW192 poles to a white oak NE12 poles to a black oak and white oak NW52 poles to a hickory thence NW five poles to an elm by the side of the creek to the beginning.

2) Another tract adjoining the former on the side next to Lexington containing 50 acres excepting the land that the former proprietor John Rancton left for his grandchildren.

Beginning at the three white walnuts on the SE side of Wood's Creek corner to the tract first described and runneth with a line of the same SE115 poles to a white oak hickory and spanish oak corner to E. Brown now John Hoffman then with his line N55E99 poles to two walnuts and a red oak in Hoffman's line then with his line N134 poles to two white oaks on Wood's Creek then up the course thereof to the beginning.

3. A third tract of land on the side next to William Wallance containing 32 acres:

Beginning at a black oak corner to the first tract and runneth with the old line

NE128 poles to three small hickory saplings old corner then S47½E80 poles to Wallace's corner between an oak and red oak thence N75°W132 poles with Wallace's line to a branch of Wood's Creek than N15W8 poles crossing said branch to the beginning.

4) One last tract of land containing 78 acres adjoining William Wallace and Alexander Shields:

Beginning at three white oaks corner to Craighead's land formerly and runneth with his line N70W100 poles to his hickories and two white oaks in Lapsley's line formerly and with said line N68E250 poles to two black oaks S20E40 poles to two locusts and one spanish oak S58W170 poles to the beginning.

This is another prime example of the father apparently being forced to leave the property to the female instead of the more traditional male.

The next set of families even furthers our "pioneer hypothesis." Not only were the adventurous males going west but they were marrying and taking friends. First, in 1806, we see John Taylor wedding Nancy Cunningham. Then in the two following years, we see William Cunningham marrying Peggy Taylor and John Cunningham marrying Jane Garner. These couples subsequently set fourth and relocated in Shelby County, Kentucky. However, on October 13, 1817 we see the Kentuckians selling the late James Cunningham's patented tract on Kerr's Creek to John Moore. Moore apparently worked his way in through marriage to Betsy Cunningham on December 1, 1801. He, of course, remained in Rockbridge. The land consisted of 463 acres patented on September 5, 1795 plus a 1/3 share of an adjoining 68 acre tract. The property was bounded as follows:

Beginning at a black oak corner to the land of Joseph Campbell and Robert McCampbell and running thence with said McCampbell's line N6E200 poles crossing the creek to a white oak and spanish oak on the bank N20E12 poles to a white oak corner to Joseph Goodbar's land and with his lines N52½W134 poles to a black oak corner to said Goodbar thence a new line S36W29 poles to a walnut in a line of Robert Lawson. And with the same S36E36 poles to two black oaks on the bank S5 poles to a red oak and dogwood in the fork of the creek and up the several courses to the western fork S17W34 poles to a cherry and hickory on the top of a ridge S88W74 poles to two chesnut oaks on James Lawson's line thence leaving Lawson's line S36W106 poles to two white oaks on the top of a ridge S46E42 poles to a locust and a black oak on the top of a ridge N87E36 poles to a white oak and walnut on the side of a ridge S18E80 poles crossing the South fork of Kerr's Creek to a chesnut oak and chesnut S70E118 poles to a chesnut and chesnut oak corner to Joseph Campbell's land and with the line of the same N81E98 poles to the beginning.

The 68 acre tract's boundaries were listed separately:

Beginning at a chesnut oak on a ridge corner to the aforesaid tract thence along the top of the ridge the four following corners. N72W39 poles to a white oak S76W48 poles to a black oak and spanish oak S88W38 poles to a white oak S65½W34 poles to a white oak on the north side of a ridge S7W26 poles crossing the head of a deep hollow to two hickories at the foot of a steep hill S46E104 poles to two hickories on the side of said hill S56E30 poles to three white oaks on William Taylor's line thence N49½E24 poles to a locust and black oak corner to said Cunningham survey of 463 acres thence with the lines there of N43W42 poles to two white oaks on the top of a ridge thence N38E106 poles to the beginning.

The last of the family connections appear in conjunction with one tract of land. For clarity's sake it may be necessary to rehash a bit of my last paper. If you recall, William Taylor, Sr. died in 1802 leaving his wife Ruthy and his

two sons, John and William, Jr. 731 acres of land. However, William, being probably the eldest son, was still not old enough to handle the responsibility and the land was sold to Thomas Bodkin in 1814. However, what went unnoticed before was that William Taylor, Jr. ended up marrying Elizabeth Bodkin in 1819. His sister, Polly, also married into this clan to Charles Bodkin in 1820. Upon the marriage of William, Jr. to Elizabeth Bodkin in 1819, the residue of the Taylor tract or 642 acres was sold to William, Jr. For the boundaries of this tract please refer to the aforementioned paper or L-609.

After holding this acreage for four years William Taylor Jr. decided to sell the entire parcel to Henry Armentrout. This left the way open for yet another example of property being willed to the female. In 1826, Henry Armentrout willed one-half of the land to his daughter Molly. However, on April 22, 1802 Molly Armentrout had joined the Hayslett family by way of marriage to Henry Hayslett. Therefore, this acreage became congeonurated into another tract of land under his name.

However, this 321 acres would still be built onto by way of marriage. On September 6, 1837 (U-81) James Cunningham and his wife Jane sold Henry Hayslett and additional 108 acres for \$450.00. This acreage was part of the original 731 acre Taylor tract. Therefore, you have 430 original acres left, still within the same family, but under a different name. The only problem here is finding a Hayslett/Cunningham marriage for support. This is especially vital since James' wife Jane

is untracable.

MISCELLANEOUS

Other marriages existed that could have been deemed sister exchanges or what have you with more research. Here are a few of these as they existed in the marriage register.

Note that there will be no property transactions in conjunction with these names.

1. William Tolly m. Sally Taylor August 28, 1800
John Tolly m. Abe Taylor November 28, 1809
2. Phoebe Taylor m. John Patton September 9, 1812
Nathaniel Taylor m. Mary Patton 1791
3. Samuel Paxton m. Isabella Taylor August 14, 1800
Thomas K. Taylor M. Elizabeth Paxton --
4. James Kirkpatrick m. Elizabeth Cunningham December 14, 1815
John Cunningham m. Margaret Kirkpatrick September 1, 1803
5. Henry Plat m. Cathrine Entsminger December 8, 1791
Andrew Entsminger m. Mary Plat December 8, 1791

CONCLUSIONS

Hopefully the evidence presented in this paper has been adequate enough to point out the great potential for research that lies in this area. It has been pointed out before that, "kin dispersed settlements exist throughout the south." (J. S. Otto, personal communication; April 6, 1981) I submit that these findings show great proof of this statement. The early settlers of this area were tied to each other not only geographically but by kinship and their social existence as well. My personal recommendations would include full scale research in this area. The construction of exact genealogies of the settlers should take precedence over the present research

into chain of title. The reason for this should have become self-evident over the last pages. Once you have the genealogies, there will be less "lost" property and the tracts and parcels of the area should be more easily traced to their original patentees.