An Ownership Study:
Rb117

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Pledged

[Signature]
The purpose of this study was to trace the ownership history of a tract of land, containing site Rb117, in conjunction with the "High Hollows" project. This tract of land is located in the Kerr's Creek Managerial District of Rockbridge County and more specifically on the northwest side of Big House Mountain on the headwaters of said Kerr's Creek by Va. state route 646. By comparing this data to other historical studies being done concurrently in this area and to the artifacts being unearthed in sites such as Rb117 we will hopefully be able to discuss what type of people located in this area and just how early they came to form the "High Hollow" community.

In an attempt to trace this ownership as far back as possible it was necessary to gather information from both the Lexington and Staunton courthouses. However, it is now apparent that the Fincastle courthouse should have also been consulted in order to arrive at the patentees. In order that this be presented in the least confusing fashion the history will be taken from the present owners back, including additional information about prices, boundaries, and families whenever appropriate or possible.

The current owners of this tract are Dr. Paul H. Anderson and his wife Lois M. Anderson. They were granted this 248.38 acre parcel by Charles Franklin Newcomb and his wife Elizabeth Gildon Newcomb on December 7, 1965, as noted by deed book 289 page 363. (Further deed book
references as well as will book references will be noted only as to the book and page number i.e. 289-363). The price on this transaction was ten dollars cash paid at the signing of the deed. The boundary identification, however, was referred to a later deed and will be given at the appropriate time.

HUGHES

In order to discern how the Newcombs became owners of the property we must introduce another family into the area. Since around the turn of the century various members of the Hughes family has had control of this parcel. In his will, dated June 27, 1927 (will book 44-135) William Calvin Hughes devised all of his real estate to his wife, Martha Virginia Hughes, for her lifetime and the remainder to his daughter, Elizabeth Ellen Miller. Then, as Martha V. Hughes died shortly thereafter all property came under the control of E. E. Miller.

Elizabeth Ellen Miller only survived her mother for a few years and as noted in a will dated January 25, 1954 (will book 73-417) vested the title of all real estate in the names of her two children, Heiswell J. Miller and Thelma M. Chittum. This land was, at this time, erroneously assessed at 348.38 acres but was later corrected in the transaction of September 15, 1964. (281-364) It was in this transfer that the Newcombs received the property from Thelma W. Chittum, her husband R. L. Chittum, H. J. Miller and his wife Radie W. Miller. This was all done for the sum of $10.00 cash paid in hand and again the boundaries
were referred to later deeds.

At this point the tract is now traced back to the primary deed of the whole study (281-463-66). Upon examination of this deed, one is able to see, through a list of acquisitions, how William C. and Henry C. Hughes systematically acquired 904 acres, more or less, by buying up smaller adjacent tracts of land in a southward moving manner. This author, however, is primarily interested in the more southerly acquisitions that would contain the 248.38 acre Anderson plot as well as site Rb117. In order to understand this it will again be necessary to skip back a bit to the point where W. C. and H. C. Hughes originally acquired the property.

The original acquisition of property came in two basic parts totalling 470 acres. The gap in acreage may be explained as much of the 902 acres was subsequently sold and listed as conveyances in the same deed (281-463). The first acquisition was a joint one involving William C. Hughes, Henry C. Hughes and Andrew J. Hayslett. The Hughes were granted 144 acres in exchange for the cash sum of $1,900.00. This transaction took place on January 21, 1901, and the land was listed as situated on Kerr's Creek, adjoining the residence of Hayslett and Hughes property as well as others. (91-60) The boundaries of this property are long and complex but may serve as an identification purpose.

Beginning at a double walnut near the top of a ridge near said Hayslett's line thence with new lines S34E568 chains to a pine top of said ridge,
thence down the ridge S144/2E4.55 chains to a small locust N884/3E11.12 chains to a small hickory near the top of the ridge S59E18.00 chains, crossing a branch of Kerr's Creek and a road and passing above and near the site of a saw mill to a stone set in the ground on the top of a ridge thence with the ridge 54° E5.12 chains to two chestnuts from one root S16W12.31 chains to a white oak 57.22 chains to a chestnut and maple S30E433 chains to two maples 7.22 chains to two maples from one root S45E4.97 chains to two chestnuts S293/4E4.15 chains to two maples S22E8.72 chains to a chestnut oak S35E5.06 chains to a chestnut oak S104/2E3.25 chains to a walnut by a chestnut stump in a low place, corner to James F. Knick and the "Cunningham" place thence down with the old line N70E5.50 chains to a point on a hillside in a field where a poplar stood N35E6.50 chains to a sugar tree in a hollow N28E36.00 chains to a point in Carter's field on a line with the old Britton Robinson Survey N78W4.30 chains to a locust near the top of Big Hill N71W1.52 chains to a chestnut oak N49W2.23 chains to a chestnut oak N553/4W6.46 chains to a chestnut oak on the top of a ridge N38W4.27 chains to a red oak N46W4.93 chains to a chestnut N77W6.00 chains to a pile of stones by a branch N28W9.36 chains passing through walnut flat school house lot to a large poplar on the bank of Kerr's Creek N40W5.63 chains to a white pine and a yellow pine N54W4.10 chains crossing a creek and a road to a large white oak N24W16.70 chains to a fallen hickory with sprouts marked on a line of the old Mountain Survey and corner of Reynold's land thence S47W25.68 chains to the beginning.

The second part of the 470 acre tract was also purchased as a joint acquisition from Andrew J. Hayslett. This tract, purchased on February 3, 1903, (93-400) contained 276 acres and cost $3,500.00 The first $1,650.00 was paid cash in hand with the balance being due in five equal installments. This land is also situated on the headwaters of Kerr's Creek adjoining the lands of the Hughes', Andrew F. Knick, James F. Knick, and others being bounded as follows:
Beginning at a double walnut near the top of ridge on the dividing line between the said Hayslett and W. C. Hughes, thence with the new line of said Hayslett and Hughes S24E5.68 chains to a pine on the top of said ridge thence down the ridge S46°E4.55 chains to a small locust thence N88°E11.12 chains to a small hickory near the top of a ridge thence S59E18.00 chains crossing a branch of Kerr's Creek and a road and passing above and near a saw mill to a stone in the ground on the top of a ridge S4W5.12 chains to two chestnuts from one root S16W12.31 chains to a white oak thence 57.22 chains to a chestnut and maple thence S53DE4.33 chains to two maples from one root thence S54E4.97 chains to two chestnuts thence S293/4E4.15 chains to two maples thence S22%E8.72 chains to a chestnut oak S10°E3.25 chains to a walnut by a chestnut and chestnut stump in a low place corner to James F. Knick and Cunningham place thence N521/8W41 chains to a cucumber tree in the edge of said James F. Knick garden then with said Knick's land S68W3 chains to a point in the branch near Knick's barn thence S10W18.40 to a beech on the west side of branch, thence S29W4 chains to a hickory and big chestnut stump with sprouts marked on edge of small ridge between two steep hollows S8E11.30 chains to a chestnut oak with sprouts on top of a dividing ridge between Kerr's Creek and Collier's Creek corner to said Knick and George Goodbar thence along said ridge N53W25 chains to a black oak N22W3 chains to a white oak stump near the top of a ridge on Collier's Creek side thence N34W2.00 chains to an old red oak stump with small hickory marked at root of stump N17W13.19 chains to a bunch of maples between a hickory and a white oak stump corner to Andrew Knick, Hugh Siders, and Thomas Alphin on a steep side of a hill on Kerr's Creek side and on a line of the old Mountain Survey thence along this line N47°E41.29 chains to the beginning.

We are now able to see how the joint ownership of the 470 acres was accomplished by William and Henry Hughes. However, on December 23, 1907, there was a partitioning between the two parties vesting the 194 acre title in the name of H. C. Hughes and the 276 acre title to W. C. Hughes. Apparently H. C. Hughes died soon after this and left his property to William Hughes and subsequently his heirs, Martha Hughes and E. E. Miller.
HAYSELLETS

Now that we have traced the land back to the turn of the century we must introduce yet another family—the Haysletts. By the fifteenth of December, 1892, we are able to place the ownership of all 464 acres, of which the Anderson tract was devised, to Andrew J. Hayslett. These lands were originally inherited by Phoebe B. Alphin and Andrew J. Hayslett in two equal tracts of 232.5 acres each. However, in a deed bearing the same date of December 15, 1892 (79-97) Phoebe B. Alphin sold her half interest to her brother for the sum of $2,000.00. This land is listed in said deed as adjoining the lands of Sallie Reynolds, James F. Knick, W. C. Hughes and others and is bounded as follows:

Beginning at a cucumber tree in edge of said James F. Knick's garden and corner to said Knick thence with his lines S68W3 chains to a point in the branch near Knick's barn S109W 18.40 to a beech on west side of the branch S29W4 chains to a hickory and large chestnut stump with sprouts marked on edge of a small ridge between two steep hollows S80E11.30 to a chestnut oak stump with sprouts on top of dividing ridge between Kerr's Creek and Colliers Creek corner to said Knick and George Goodbar thence along said ridge N53W25 to a black oak bush N27W4.35 to a large red oak N22W3.00 to a white oak stump near top of ridge on Colliers Creek side N34W2.00 to an old red oak stump with small hicky marked at root of stump N17°W13.19 to a bunch of maples between hickory and white oak stump N28W7.65 to a white oak on top of ridge N39W6.50 to a hickory and locust stump corner to Andrew Knick, Hugh Siders, and Tom Alphin on steep side of a hill on Kerr's Creek side of line with the old Mountain Survey thence along this line N47°E66.97 to a fallen hickory with the sprouts marked corner to Sallie Reynolds and with her lines S24°E16.70 to a large white oak S54E14.10
crossing road and creek to a white pine and a yellow pine N40°E5.63 to a large poplar on the bank of Kerr's Creek S28E9.36 passing through "Walnut Flat" school house lot to a pile of stones by the branch S77°E6.00 to a chestnut S46°E4.93 to a red oak S38°E4.27 to a chestnut oak on top of a ridge thence up said ridge S55°/4E6.46 to a chestnut oak S46°/4E1.40 to a chestnut oak S56°E1.00 to a chestnut oak S49°E2.23 to a chestnut oak S71°E1.52 to a locust near top of a big hill S18°E4.30 to a point in Carter's field in a line with the old Britton Robinson survey thence S28W36.00 to a sugar tree in a hollow S35°W6.50 to a point on side of a hill in a field where a poplar stood S70W5.50 to a large chestnut tree corner to Cunningham and James F. Knick N8°W41.00 to the beginning.

Henry Hayslett, Sr., father of Phoebe Alphin and Andrew Hayslett, came about the entire trace of land through several ways but all connections appear to be correct. First, on September 16, 1837 (v-81) Henry Hayslett, Sr. purchased 109 acres on the headwaters of Kerr's Creek from James Cunningham. The price paid for this land was $450.00 cash in hand and was bounded as follows:

Beginning at two red oaks on the point of a ridge thence N67W28 poles to a white oak on the top of Piney Ridge N26W12 poles to a red oak N21W27 poles to a large white oak N38W22 poles to a white oak N53W25 poles to a red oak and a sugar tree thence N28W40 poles to three hickories then S48°3W30 poles to two witchhazles and hickory N74W64 poles cropping a run to two lynn's and a red oak at the foot of a hill S47E36 poles to two lynn's S66E42 poles to a sugar tree and oak S23E148 poles to two leaning white oaks on the top of the dividing ridge thence along the top of the ridge S21E.34 poles to two chestnut oaks S55E100 poles to a large poplar N8E68 poles to a red oak formerly two beeches N68E12 poles to a cucumber tree on the bank of a creek thence N75W51 poles to the beginning.
However, the residue of the track, or 321 acres, was bought to the Hayslett clan by way of marriage to a girl in the Armentrout family. Molly, who was the daughter of Henry Armentrout, became Mrs. A. J. Hayslett, Sr. in 1802 (The A. J. Haysletts were either cousins or father and son (presumably the latter.) With this marriage Molly bought her inheritance of 321 acres, known as the upper end of the "Taylor Place" bringing the Hayslett acreage up to the 430 acre total.

TAYLORS

In order to keep this in the most simplistic form it becomes necessary to digress as to the significance of the "Taylor Place." This digression will take us back to the farthest traceable point of the land. At this point, history has William Taylor, Sr. dying circa 1807. This author was unable to obtain not only the patentee of the land but was even stumped as to where William Taylor received the land. However, the ownership of the parcel as it went from this point to the point where Molly Hayslett and James Cunningham granted the land to the Hayslett clan is easily discernable.

Upon William Taylor, Sr.'s death in December of 1807 his property was divided in a manner where John Taylor, his son, received one-third and William Taylor, Jr. received two thirds, with the allowance that the widow, Ruthy Taylor, could live there for the duration of her life. This was noted in his will dated August 8, 1807 (3-80).
On April 1, 1814, the widow Ruth, John Taylor and his wife Agnes, who were intermarried, sold the entire 731 acre farm to Thomas Bodkin. (K-51) This transaction carried the cost of 500 pounds Virginia money. Out of this land Thomas Bodkin and his wife Mary sold 89 acres to Michael Wilhelm for $267.00. This transaction occurred on November 4, 1816, (K=185) and the land is bounded as follows:

Beginning at two red oaks on a ridge corner to a tract of land purchased from William Taylor's heirs by Thomas Bodkin thence to patent lines of the tract last mentioned N87W36 poles to a lynn N32100 poles to two red oaks N74W36 poles cropping a run to two lynns and a red oak at the foot of a hill S47E36 poles to two lynns S66E42 poles to a sugar tree and S23E148 poles to two learning white oaks on the top of the dividing ridge thence along the top of said ridge S21E34 poles to two chestnut oaks S55E100 poles to four chestnut oaks corner to James Wilson N8E68 poles to a red oak formerly two beeches now gone before Henry Yoles door N68E12 poles to a cucumber tree on the bank of a branch thence a new line N75W55 poles to beginning.

This is also the same property sold to James Cunningham by said Michael Wilhelm in 1833. This 89 acres, which is described in both (K-185 and S-133) as running corner with the patent lines of the Taylor tract, was added on to by Cunningham as he purchased 20 additional acres from T. Morris in 1836. These two tracts became the aformentioned 109 acre tract sold to Henry Hayslett in 1837.

Returning to Thomas Bodkin in the year 1816, we see that he
still controls the residue of the 731 acre tract or 642 acres.

On October 11, 1819, we see William Taylor, Jr. coming of an age and financial bearing appropriate enough for him to repurchase the land for the Taylor clan. (L-609) The transaction cost here was 236 pounds Virginia money and the land is bounded as follows:

Beginning at two chestnut oaks at the top of a pine ridge N10°W62 poles to a white oak and walnut corner to James Cunningham S73W122 poles to a red oak N75W34 poles to a red oak 579W125 poles to a white oak and hickory by a road thence up a ridge N60W28 poles to three chestnut S19W58 poles to two white oaks N87W42 poles to a walnut hickory and elm S35E56 poles to a chestnut on the side of a deep gully S46E55 poles to a cucumber, sugar tree and lynn S20E104 poles to two large chestnut oaks on the point of a ridge S18E13 poles to two red oaks N87W36 poles to a lynn N32W100 poles to two red oaks N74W75 poles crossing a run and two lynns and a red oak at the foot of a hill S47E36 poles to two lynns S66E42 poles to a sugar tree and oak S23E148 to two learning white oaks on top of dividing ridge thence along the top of the same S24E34 poles to two chestnut oaks S55E100 poles to four chestnut oaks corner to James Wilson's survey N14E68 poles to two beeches N68E12 poles to a cucumber and red oak in the fork of the head branch of Kerr's Creek crossing a run S52E18 poles to a chestnut and red oak on a ridge S26E20 poles to a chestnut oak S39E29 poles to two chestnut oaks in Britton Robinson's line and with his line N71E22 poles to a large poplar N38E22 poles to two sugar trees corner to said Robinson then N27E322 poles to the beginning.

William Taylor, Jr. held this land for three years until September 27, 1822, when he sold it, in it entirety to one Henry Armentrout for $1,500.00. This land, as noted in (N-272) will hopefully be reconstructed by the written boundaries and added onto
our larger map allowing for a more comprehensive view of the area. The boundaries are as follows:

Beginning at a cucumber tree crossing a run S22E18 poles to a chestnut near the run thence N78E56 poles to a chestnut then S35E60 poles to a chestnut and a red oak on a ridge then S30E26 poles to a chestnut oak then S39 E 28 poles to two chestnuts in Thomas Cunningham’s line and with his line N71°E22 poles to a large poplar the N27°E322 poles to a white oak and walnut corner to John Moore. 573W122 poles to a red oak then S79W125 poles to a white oak and hickory by a road then up a ridge N60W82 poles to two chestnut oaks then W85W50 poles to three chestnuts then S19W50 poles to two white oaks then N87W42 poles to a walnut and hickory and elm then S35°E56 poles to a chestnut by the side of a deep gully then S46°E55 poles to a cucumber and sugar and lynn then S20E104 poles to two large chestnut oaks on the point of a ridge then S18°W13 poles to a large red oak and a corner to Michael Wilhelm then with his lines S75°E55 poles to the beginning.

Henry Armentrout survived for only four more years until his death in 1826. In his will dated March 4, 1826, Henry Armentrout, Sr. left the lower part of the Taylor place, plus an 84 acre section known as "the entry" up Job's Hollow, adjacent to the Taylor place to his son Charles. This consisted of 405 total acres. Armentrout then willed the upper part of the Taylor place, also 321 acres, to his daughter Molly who was married to Andrew Hayslett, Sr., thus bringing the land unto the Hayslett clan.
CONCLUSION

If the verbal presentation seems confusing the chart of ownership in the appendix can be referred to in order to clear up any misunderstanding. By grouping together the many physical and research studies being done one should be able to link the various people and parts of the "High Hollows" Community together. This will enable us to uncover many elements of Rockbridge County's heritage. Who was here first? What type of people were they--rich? poor? etc. What type of business was carried out? Many aspects may be discerned.

It is very interesting to note that over time the property has apparently been bought in a systematic fashion; sold at some point, perhaps piecemeal, and then bought up again by someone else in the same fashion. Planned marriages, though not a common tradition in this country, are also a possibility. It appears that perhaps cousins or even close friends or neighbors married off their young in order to keep property in the family. Lastly, it is interesting to note that even though all this property lies outside the Borden Tract many of the same names appear as neighbors in the Mill Creek area. This author has no answer for that but it could be an interesting point to explore at a later date.