

KEGLEY'S

VIRGINIA FRONTIER

THE BEGINNING OF THE SOUTHWEST

THE ROANOKE OF COLONIAL DAYS

1740-1783

WITH MAPS AND ILLUSTRATIONS

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LEXINGTON, KENTUCKY

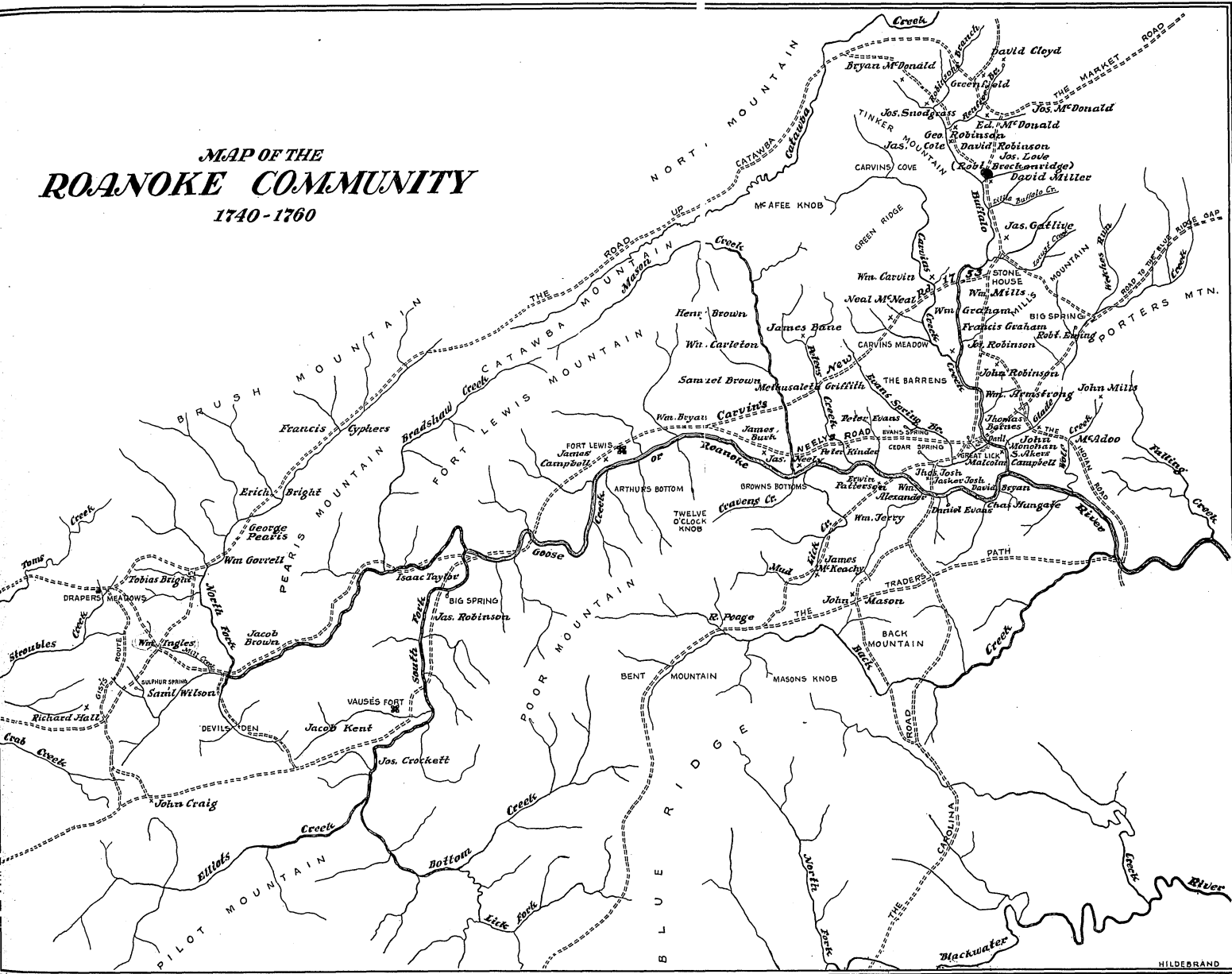
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MAP OF THE ROANOKE COMMUNITY 1740-1760



attorney to obtain a title from the heirs of Patterson. In 1758 Erwin Patterson and his wife, Eleanor, were living in Lunenburg County. In May 1761 he was dead leaving Margaret Patterson his heir-at-law. Margaret married George Hannah and had Patterson Hannah who was her only child. William McClanahan bought the land described above from George Hannah, and Hannah purchased from Anderson, the land going to James McClanahan. Patterson Hannah brought suit for ejectment and obtained a judgment. McClanahan was granted an injunction, and the case was finally dismissed.¹

In 1795, George Hannah obtained an inclusive grant for 700 acres of the Patterson land adjoining the lands of John Johnson, James Mason and William McClanahan, and in 1799 McClanahan got together 1690 acres on the north side of the river including 398 acres of Hannah's 700. This he called the "Long Meadow" Survey.

Joseph Cummings made an entry and obtained a survey for a tract of land on the south side of Roanoke, but died before the patent issued. In August, 1756, John Mason was appointed his administrator.

John Smith, Jr., son of Capt. John Smith, was killed at Fort Vause in June, 1756. The land he owned was on North River of the Shenandoah. This plantation which he had bought of Silas Hart he gave to his nephew, John Smith, son of his brother, Daniel. Daniel Smith was his executor with Silas Hart and Robert Harrison as sureties.

Henry Brown, Sr., came from New Jersey to the back part of Virginia settling early on the Roanoke. He owned land on the south side of the river called Brown's Bottom and also on Lick Run on the west side of Mason's Creek. He was in Captain Robinson's Company in 1742 and was active in all the early movements for community roads. It is thought by members of the family that Henry Brown was married twice, having sons, Henry, Jr., and Samuel, by the first wife and Daniel, David, Thomas, Robert and Esther by the second. A thrilling story is told about the family's defending itself against the Indians when the father was killed.² Henry Brown, Jr., married Alice Beard and lived in Bedford from the time of his father's death in 1757. Daniel Brown remained on the Roanoke ten years longer then went to Bedford. Thomas Brown married Mary Terry and lived between Peter's Creek and Mason's Creek of the Roanoke. Robert lived on Mason's Creek. Esther married William Carleton who owned land adjoining her own tract of 54 acres on Lick Run of Mason's Creek.

BRYAN MCDONALD, SR.

Bryan McDonald, Sr., of Buffalo Creek of Roanoke, came to Virginia from Mill Creek Hundred, New Castle County, Delaware, about the year 1745. He was the son of Bryan McDonald (McDonnell) and Mary Combs who came

¹Mumford's Reports—18, page 499.

²Prichard, Mead Relations.



Home of Bryan McDonald, Sr.

to America about 1684. His brothers and sisters were John, William, James, Mary, Richard and Anabel. His wife was Catherine Robinson, daughter of a neighbor, James Robinson, and sister of Capt. George Robinson who was sponsoring the new settlement in Virginia. Her mother was Catherine Howell. This Bryan McDonald was born about 1686, married in 1713, moved to Virginia in 1745, died in 1757. He was then 59 years old when he came and his older children were grown. The sons were Richard, James, Edward, Joseph, and Bryan; the daughters, Rebecca, Catherine, Mary and Priscilla. Edward married Mary Robinson and lived at the forks of the Great Road to the west, later Amsterdam; Joseph married Elizabeth Ogle and lived first near Edward and afterward on Toms Creek of New River; Rebecca married James Bane and lived first on the Roanoke and later on Toms Creek; Bryan married Susan Ogle and lived on part of his father's homeplace; James lived near Edward and Bryan; one of the girls married John Armstrong and lived near her father's home, later in Kentucky. Those who died early in the settlement were buried in the McDonald or Glebe graveyard at the corner of Edward's land. The old Bryan McDonald place is at a head spring of Buffalo or Tinker Creek. The first home was probably over the divide on Catawba but not far away. There has always been a road through that gap by the end of Tinker Mountain, so the selection of land was an advantageous though exposed one. For generations



Buffalo Creek Valley
South from Bryan McDonald's

there were McDonalds there, but now only their old houses tell the story of their thrift and influence.¹

Some of the people who had died in this period were victims of hostile Indians. The settlement of the back country up to the sources of the eastern flowing rivers and the passage of many families over the divide into the valleys of the upper tributaries of the Mississippi aroused the suspicion of the French and the Indians who for a long time had lived in those regions in a friendly relation. The inevitable conflict between the French and British nations over the extension of their dominions in North America was about to begin. The occasion of the fighting came with the activities of the Virginia land companies and the exchange of defiant messages by the officials of both governments. The episodes of the war that followed the beginning of hostilities belong to the period of frontier history which we have discussed in Part II and make up such an important part of the history of that period that we make it Part III of our story.

¹Miss Ellen T. McDonald, of Blacksburg, Va., knew much of the family history. Her notes check well with such records as we have.

MARY McDONALD

Mary McDonald, the widow of Edward McDonald, was living at Edward's original homeplace until after 1783. John Campbell had married her daughter, Elizabeth, in 1778, and his brother, Robert Campbell, married Elizabeth's sister, Rebecca in 1785.

In April 1789, John Campbell for himself and Mary McDonald, Robert Campbell, John Greenway and Nancy McDonald sold the place, 200 acres for £400, to William Watts. In May, 1794, Watts sold to John Snyder, and in December of the same year Snyder sold to George Stover, who laid off the Town of Amsterdam.

It is very probable that the chapel at which Bryan McDonald held services when he was "Reader" on the Roan Oak and where Presbyterian services were afterwards held by the congregation called Denean by Rev. John Craig, was at the McDonald, or Glebe Graveyard on the edge of Mary McDonald's tract of land. No more suitable or central location could be found. Some are yet living who remember an old building there which was used for a tobacco barn. After the departure of Mary McDonald and the death of Bryan the McDonald Meeting House was established farther west, on the Catawba divide.

George Etslor (Edsler) in July 1798, conveyed to Edward McDonald, Jacob Peters, Christian Lemon and Jacob Myers, trustees, one acre of land "For the preaching of the gospel and the education of youth."

BRYAN McDONALD, JR.

Bryan McDonald, Jr., died in 1777. He more than any other member of the family took his father's place in the community. The house that he built for his family when Indians were yet lurking in that region speaks well for his character and his enterprise. The main walls are built of limestone rock, but the front wall of the house and the window sills are polished sandstone. Inside the house there are secret openings, one leading from the fireplace in the living room to the basement. One of the sons lived at McDonald's Mill on North Fork of Roanoke. It is significant that the huge rock barn there is faced in front with similar sandstone.

Miss Ellen McDonald, the historian of the McDonald family in Virginia, gives the following record of the family of this Bryan McDonald: Bryan McDonald was Born July 8, 1732 in New Castle County, Pennsylvania; Married about 1752 Susan Ogle, who was born May 6, 1728; Died January 19, 1777 and buried in the Glebe Graveyard. The children were: James, born January 18, 1753, died August 1777; Thomas, born March 17, 1755, died March 1777; William, born September 24, 1756, m. Nancy Robinson, died December 13, 1833; Mary, born October 30, 1758, married John Ross, died January 2, 1815; Edward, born October 3, 1761, married (1) Mary Rowland, (2) Annie Peters, died April 19, 1855; Richard, born March 11, 1764, died young; Susanna,

born November 3, 1765, married Samuel Walker; George, born September 26, 1767, married Ruth Owens, died January 5, 1815; Jane, born September 16, 1772, married Rev. Edward Crawford, died March 4, 1847.

By his will Bryan McDonald left to his wife the use of his dwelling house and office and one third of the improvements on the land, except the tanyard and a negro woman, also one third of the personal estate. Son, James, was to have part of the land with the house and tanyard adjoining John Armstrong; William to have the part next to James Allison's; Thomas to have the land on North Fork of Roanoke. James and William were to pay Edward £50 at the age of 21, George the same, and each a horse.

His daughter, Mary, was to have a negro girl, a last-springs mare colt which came of the English mare, two cows, a feather bed and furniture.

At her mother's death Susanna was to have the negro woman, Joyce, "if she have any children to go to."

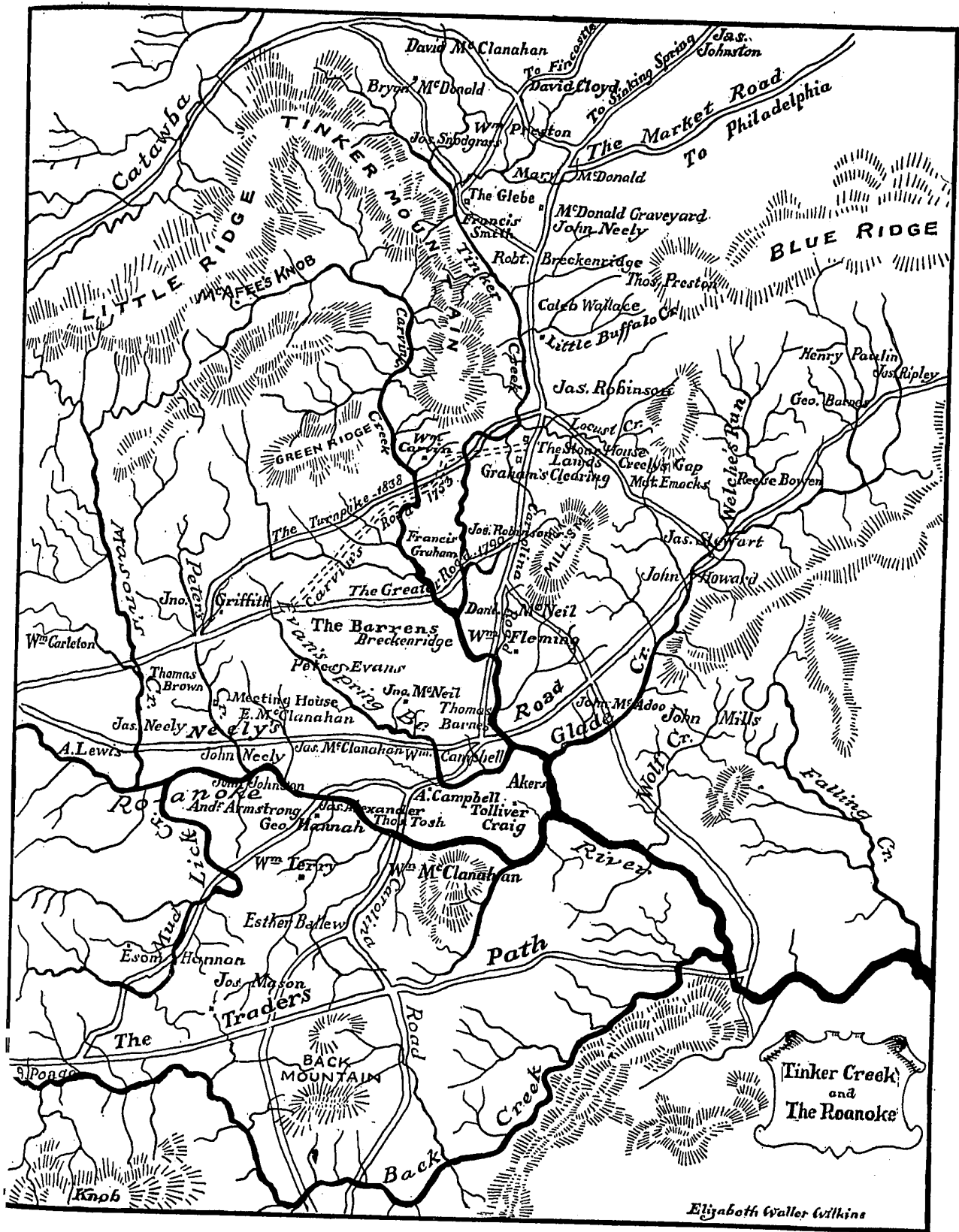
The younger daughter, Jane, "when marriageable" was to have a breeding mare. The remainder of the estate was to be divided equally. The appraisement of the personal property amounted to £766. The executors named were the three oldest sons, James, Thomas, and William.

James McDonald died in August after his father's death in January. He wanted his brother, Edward, to have the part of the plantation they lived on provided he did not charge William with the £50 as directed by his father. George should have the land on North Fork and £15, William the mare, Bonny, and colt. Sisters, Mary, Susanna, Jean and Edward to have the cows. The profits of the tanyard were to be divided amongst the three boys. (Bot. Will Bk. 1, 60 and 96.)

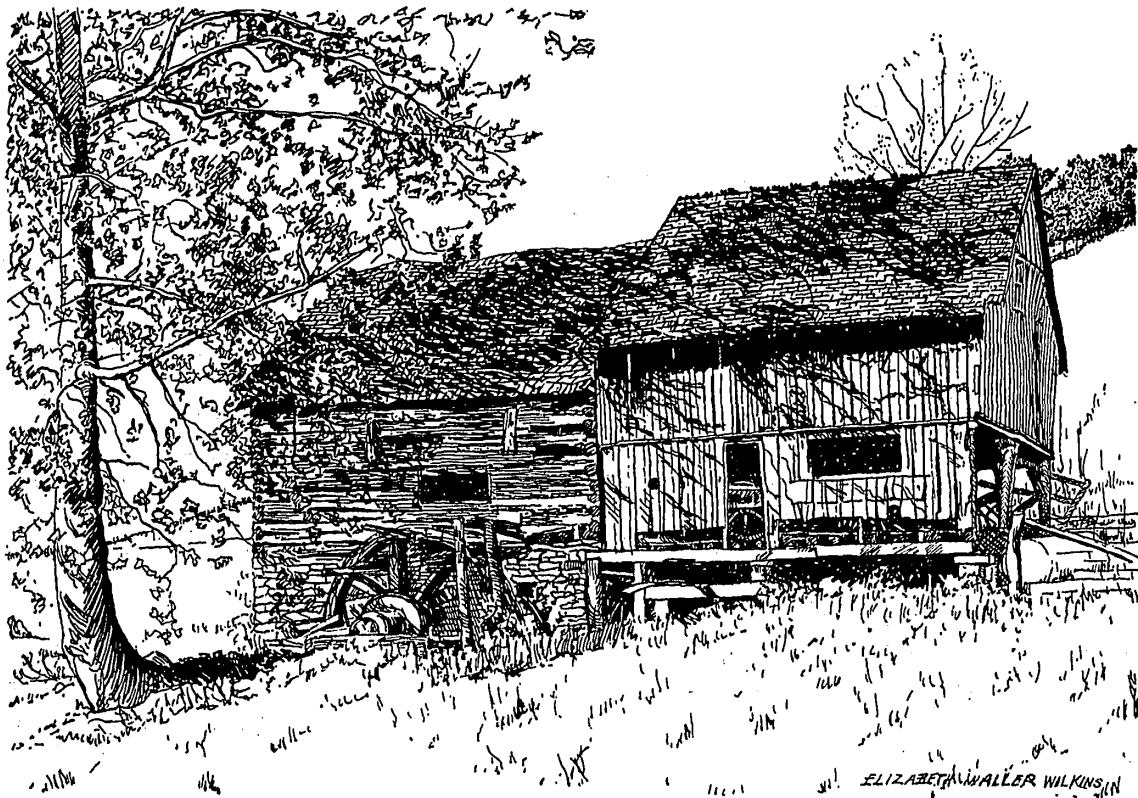
JOHN NEELEY

John Neeley lived on the Bryan Cuff-Joseph Love land east of Edward McDonald's. At his death in 1778 he left to his wife, Elizabeth, the privilege of living on the place and "to be found bread, milk and meal and other necessities and conveniences." His son, Robert, was to have £40 out of son, Andrew's part for clearing his land. John Neeley, Jr., was to have the 150 acres of land where he lived and 15 acres at the foot of his father's land and adjoining William Breckenridge's land, and also £100 cash. Son, Andrew, was to have the rest of the land, a clock and two work horses. The daughter, Elizabeth Cloyd, should have the negro girl, Sarah; granddaughter, Betsy Neally, a bald faced colt; and grandson, Samuel Neally, a roan horse. All the remainder was to be divided amongst the four children.

The executors were wife and son, John; witnesses, John Neely, John Drake, James Neely and Aaron Palfroman. John Drake afterwards (1811) acquired the Neely land and homeplace.



Tinker Creek and the Roanoke—Early Botetourt County



Old McDonald Mill

he served regularly on the jury and was fined (1783) for not serving. In 1780 James Wood succeeded him as captain, and 1781 Thomas Rowland succeeded him as Lieutenant Colonel. He sold land (399 acres) to Edward Rutledge in 1798.

TOBIAS BRIGHT

Tobias Bright owned the land next to Robinson at the forks of the road where the western branch goes over the dividing ridge to Draper's Meadows. He sold to Robert King (1774) who migrated to Washington County in the later years of his life and in his will gave to his son, Robert King, Jr., "two pattons now in my possession lying on a branch of the North fork of Roan-doake," Montgomery County, and everything else that he possessed or was due him. His other children, Joseph, Margaret, Elizabeth, James and Agnes had gotten their allowance. In 1793 Robert King was granted a license to keep an ordinary at his house in Christiansburg.

JOHN HENDERSON

John Henderson said (1767) that in 1766 he purchased through Robert McGee from George Pearis a tract of land on the north Fork of Roanoke, alias Goose Creek. In 1774 John Henderson, Sr., received a deed for 271 acres of land on North Fork of Roanoke from Geo. Pearis, Jr. Attorney for Geo. Pearis, Sr. In 1775 Robert Henderson purchased Robert McGee's tract of 200