

THE DYER  
SETTLEMENT

THE FORT SEYBERT  
MASSACRE

FORT SEYBERT, WEST VIRGINIA

by

MARY LEE KEISTER TALBOT

A.B., Hollins College

M.A., University of Wisconsin

Authorized by

The Financial Committee

of

THE ROGER DYER FAMILY ASSOCIATION

IN GRATEFUL ACKNOWLEDGMENT

to the

SUBSCRIBERS

and

GRANT G. DYER of Lafayette, Indiana

HON. WALTER DYER KEISTER of Huntington, West Virginia

DR. WILLIS S. TAYLOR of Columbus, Ohio

Whose faith and financial backing  
have made possible this publication

---

Copyright 1937

By Mary Lee Keister Talbot

---

## Table of Contents

	<i>Page</i>
Officers of The Roger Dyer Family Association, 1936-37.....	4
Foreword .....	5
Roger Dyer Family Reunion—1935.....	7
Roger Dyer Family Reunion—1936.....	9
The Dyer Settlement.....	11
The Will of Roger Dyer.....	23
The Appraisal of Roger Dyer's Estate.....	24
The <i>Sail</i> Bill of Roger Dyer's Estate.....	26
Brief Genealogical Notes.....	29
New Interpretations of Fort Seybert.....	38
James Dyer's Captivity—by Charles Cresap Ward.....	59
The Grave at Fort Seybert.....	61
The Fort Seybert Memorial Monument.....	62
List of Subscribers.....	64

### ILLUSTRATIONS

Relief Map of West Virginia.....	<i>Facing page</i> 7
The Gap in the South Fork River.....	13
Roger Dyer's Warrant to Land—1733.....	16
Where Time Sleeps.....	21
New Drawing of Fort Seybert.....	42
The South Fork Valley at Fort Seybert.....	<i>Facing page</i> 48
Indian Spoon Carved of Buffalo Horn.....	51
The Grave at Fort Seybert.....	63

# Roger Dyer Family Association

## *Officers for 1936-37*

- E. Foster Dyer.....*President*  
Franklin, West Virginia
- Allen M. Dyer.....*Vice-President*  
Philippi, West Virginia
- Mrs. Mary Lee Keister Talbot.....*Secretary*  
2000 Lincoln Park, West, Chicago, Illinois
- Miss Mary Gay Dyer.....*Treasurer*  
Fort Seybert, West Virginia

## *Committees*

### COMMITTEE ON THE FORT SEYBERT MEMORIAL MONUMENT

- Dr. G. C. Trumbo.....*Chairman*  
5712 Brandon Place, Norfolk, Virginia
- Mrs. Kitty Dyer Anderson, Franklin, West Virginia.  
James Neven Dyer,<sup>1</sup> Fort Seybert, West Virginia.  
Mr. W. D. Keister, 444 Sixth Ave., Huntington, W. Va.  
Mrs. Monzell M. Strader, Philippi, W. Va.

### FINANCIAL COMMITTEE

- Mr. John R. Dyer.....*Chairman*  
Elkins, West Virginia
- Miss Mary Gay Dyer, Fort Seybert, West Virginia  
Mrs. H. Gus Muntzing, Moorefield, West Virginia  
Mr. E. T. Miller, Fort Seybert, West Virginia  
Mrs. Mary Lee K. Talbot, Chicago, Illinois

---

Reunion in 1937—Third Sunday in August—Silver Lake Park, West Virginia

---

<sup>1</sup> Appointed by the President on March 7, 1937, to fill the vacancy arising from the untimely death on January 19, 1937, of his brother, Jasper Streit Dyer. Jasper Dyer's death was a great loss to the Roger Dyer Family Association.

## FOREWORD

In writing an account of the early settlement of the Upper South Fork Valley no attempt has been made to follow settlers beyond the earliest records. Limited space would permit no more than that.

In collecting information about the Fort Seybert episode an effort has been made to cull from written records and traditions all the varying reports. There is more to be uncovered about the Fort Seybert massacre. This article makes no pretensions at finding the complete information.

Appreciation is due many people, both relatives and friends, for their kind encouragement and help. There are some whose names can not be omitted. No story of Fort Seybert could be written without doing honor to the memory of Mr. William Cravens Miller, who told me, when I was ten years old, my first story of the Fort Seybert massacre. I am grateful to my grandmother, Mrs. John D. Keister (née Mary Sabina Trumbo) of Brandywine, W. Va., for many of the traditions and information she has given me verbally, and also to J. Clemm Miller for his valuable information. Mr. Charles Cresap Ward of Los Angeles kindly consented to have his version of James Dyer's captivity used in this publication. It has never before been printed. Mrs. C. C. Ward (Flora Lusk) has also been very helpful with suggestions. Mr. Alonzo D. Lough's permission to have his story used has been an invaluable aid. Mr. Granville Hiner of Franklin, W. Va., kindly furnished a copy of Nicholas Seybert's Will.

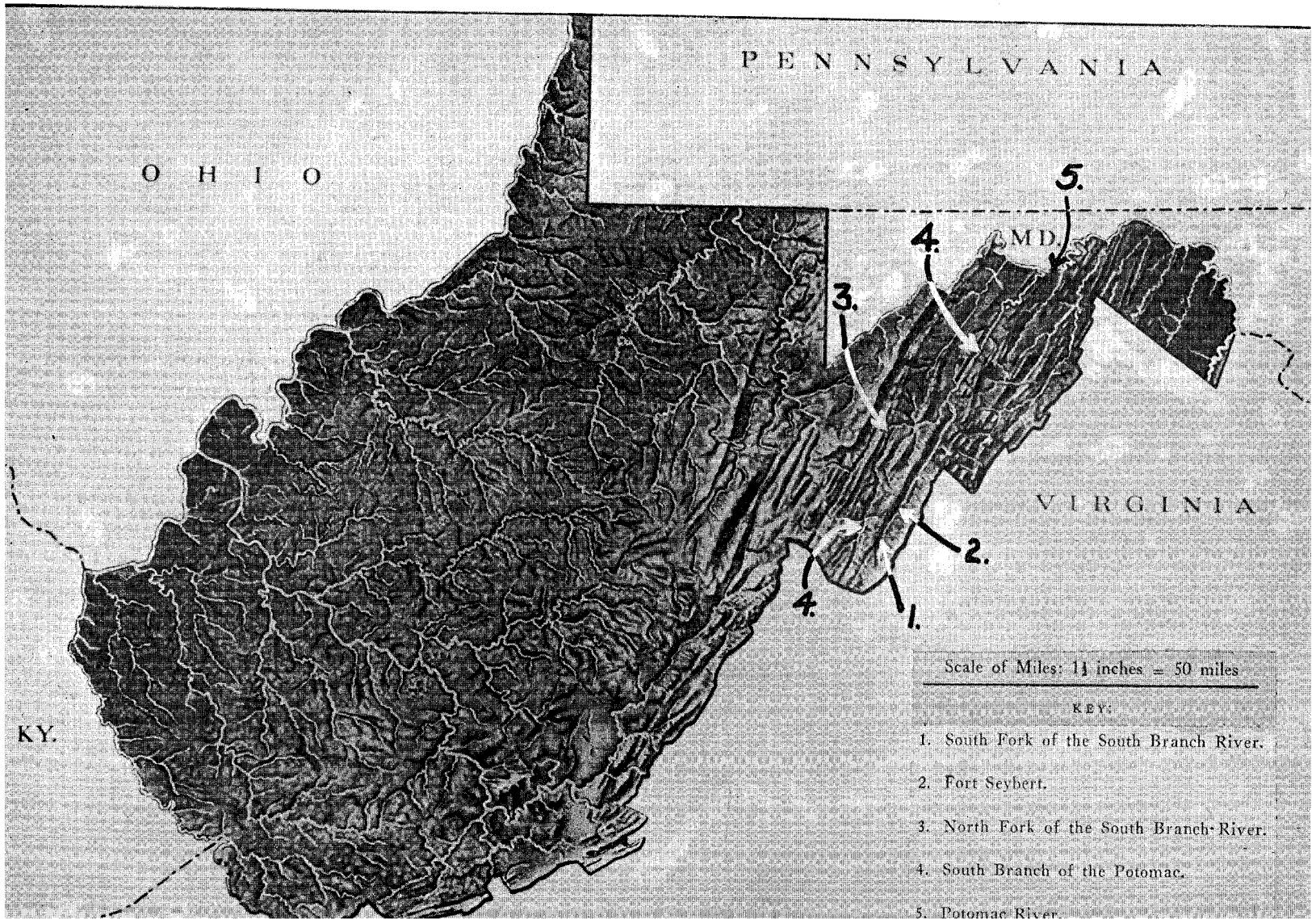
For the picture of the Indian spoon, taken especially for this publication, appreciation is due Miss Lona D. Pope of Doe Hill and Radford, Virginia. Also for other pictures appreciation is due Dr. G. C. Trumbo of Norfolk, Virginia; W. D. Keister of Huntington, West Virginia; Strawn Trumbo of Ottawa, Illinois, and Miss Clara Cowger of Monticello, Indiana. Alaric Charneia, a student at the Foreman High School in Chicago, made the drawing of Fort Seybert. Mr. Arvid Simmons of Brandywine, West Virginia, was most helpful with the use of his car in the summer of 1936. Miss Dorothy Fell of Grand Forks, North Dakota, and Miss Olga M. Alexeyuk of Chicago, have aided with the typing. Mr. R. A. Lambert of Larson-Dingle Printing Company has cooperated in a very helpful manner.

The original plan for this publication did not include genealogical notes. They have been added at the request of several people. They are brief, covering less than half the generations from Roger and Hannah Dyer to date; they are incomplete, and have not the full authority noted, which further time would have made possible. If there is a demand among readers for complete genealogical data, and more information can be secured, another publication may be planned.

It is hoped that readers may find information of interest in these pages, and that it may be received with as much interest as it has been compiled.

MARY LEE KEISTER TALBOT.

July 20, 1937.  
2000 Lincoln Park, West  
Chicago, Illinois.



P E N N S Y L V A N I A

O H I O

MD

V I R G I N I A

K Y.

Scale of Miles: 1 1/2 inches = 50 miles

KEY:

- 1. South Fork of the South Branch River.
- 2. Fort Seybert.
- 3. North Fork of the South Branch River.
- 4. South Branch of the Potomac.
- 5. Potomac River.





## Roger Dyer Family Reunion—1935

### *In Honor of a Pioneer*

ONE of the pioneers of Augusta County, Virginia, was Roger Dyer, who bought land on the South Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac in 1747. He settled there shortly afterwards with several other families. Less than ten years later a fort was built on land adjoining Roger Dyer's tract, called Fort Seybert.

In the spring of 1758, when Indians appeared in the vicinity of Fort Seybert, they killed William Dyer, the older of Roger Dyer's two sons, when he went out to hunt. After the inhabitants of the "Dyer Settlement" realized that the Indians were there in numbers, some of them gathered in the fort. Very shortly, on April 28, 1758, the Indians, led by Killbuck, captured the fort, massacred all of those in the fort except those they took as captives. Later the massacred victims, who numbered seventeen or more, were buried in a common grave.

Roger Dyer was massacred; a son, James, and a daughter, Sarah Dyer Hawes, were taken as captives. All five of the children of Roger Dyer left descendants. William had two small sons, Roger and John, at the time he was killed. Hannah Dyer married Frederick Keister, and has many descendants in West Virginia and elsewhere. Sarah Dyer married Henry Hawes before the massacre, and had one daughter, Hannah. After her return from captivity with the Indians, she married Robert Davis. They had several children. Hester Dyer married Matthew Patton and has descendants in Kentucky. James Dyer, the youngest, had sixteen children. Many of the descendants of Roger Dyer pioneered to Kentucky, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Iowa, Missouri, Wisconsin, and some went as far west as the state of Washington. Others still live in Virginia and West Virginia.

On Sunday, August 25th, 1935, the descendants of Roger Dyer, who was massacred in 1758, held a reunion at Silver Lake Park, West Virginia. The purpose of this reunion, which was the second reunion of Dyer descendants, was, in addition to the desire to bring the various families together for a friendly good time, to organize a permanent Dyer Family Association. Officers were elected, and suggestions were made for the Dyer Family Association to plan a fitting and permanent memorial to Roger Dyer, and others, who are buried in the common grave at Fort Seybert in Pendleton County, by arranging to have a marker erected there.

More than a hundred descendants and their families attended the reunion, some coming from Columbus, Ohio, for the sole purpose of attending the reunion, and the plans were enthusiastically received. The speaker of the day was the Hon. Walter D. Keister of Huntington, West Virginia, who is a representative from Cabell County in the State Legislature. He expressed great interest in planning a suitable memorial at the grave of the massacred pioneers to commemorate their sacrifice to future generations. Roy Bird Cook, Associate Editor of *The West Virginia Review*, who is a descendant of Hannah Dyer and Frederick Keister, was invited to be one of the speakers, but was unable to attend. Jasper S. Dyer presented a motion for the formation of a permanent

organization called the Roger Dyer Family Association. A unanimous and enthusiastic vote was taken. Officers were elected as follows:

E. Foster Dyer, Franklin, West Virginia.....*President*  
Allen M. Dyer, Philippi, West Virginia.....*Vice-President*  
Mrs. Mary Lee Keister Talbot, Chicago, Ill.....*Secretary*  
Miss Mary Gay Dyer, Fort Seybert, West Virginia.....*Treasurer*

The date for the reunion of the Dyer Family Association for 1936 was set for the third Sunday in August, at Silver Lake Park, West Virginia. With the singing of "Auld Lang Syne", and with the words of the benediction given by Mr. Elias McWhorter in their hearts, all returned to their homes feeling that it had been a happy gathering on a beautiful day.

Those present from West Virginia were:

Franklin: Mrs. Kitty Dyer Anderson, W. D. Anderson, Miss Evelyn Dolly, H. M. Sigler, Mrs. Myrtle Curry Dyer, Misses Rebecca and Mary Curry Dyer, Mrs. Ernest Bowman, E. Foster Dyer.

Brandywine: E. L. Keister, Mrs. Virgia Davis Temple and Miss Margaret Temple.

Fort Seybert: Mr. and Mrs. Jasper Dyer, Misses Mary and Fanny Dyer, George A. Dyer, James Dyer, William H. Cowger, Mr. and Mrs. E. T. Miller, Miss Neva Miller.

Petersburg: Dr. and Mrs. Vernon L. Dyer, John and Sunette Dyer, Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Moomau, Diana Frances Moomau, Mr. and Mrs. T. J. Grove, Mrs. Charles Zell, Mr. and Mrs. L. Wade Rexrode, Anna Lee and Helen Rexrode.

Philippi: Mrs. C. K. Switzer, Miss Neva Switzer, Mr. and Mrs. Monzell M. Strader, Misses Rosa Lee, Alberta Dyer, and Martha Dyer Strader, Mr. and Mrs. Allen Dyer, Arthur B. and Philena Grace Dyer, Mr. and Mrs. J. Stanley Corder, Audrey and Bobby Corder, Harry Dyer.

From other places in West Virginia there were present as follows: Mr. and Mrs. Troy Wilson, Philena Sue, Nathan Dyer, Jo Anne and Mary Lou Wilson from Kingwood; Mr. and Mrs. W. H. Carter, Mary Frances and Anne Carter from Parkersburg; Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe Dyer, Irene, Edmond, Elmer and Lucille Dyer, and Mr. and Mrs. Paul White from Clarksburg; Mr. and Mrs. E. S. McWhorter, Mr. and Mrs. C. A. Nepps, Wynne, Carleene Sue and Carl Allen Nepps from McWhorter, West Virginia; Mr. and Mrs. Allen D. Bolton, Mrs. Louise Bolton Lyall from Morgantown; Mr. and Mrs. Earl Smoot from Martinsburg; Mr. and Mrs. Jared M. Smith, Miss Grace Smith, Mr. and Mrs. E. K. Smith and Keister Smith from New Creek; Mr. W. D. Keister and Miss Jessie Keister from Huntington; Mr. and Mrs. C. H. Marsteller, C. M. Marsteller, James Keister Marsteller, and Holly Grimm from Elkins.

From outside West Virginia there were: Dr. W. S. Taylor, Dr. Ralph B. Taylor, Misses Bertha and Mabel Taylor from Columbus, Ohio; Mrs. Rose Taylor Dryer from Westerville, Ohio; J. Ed Dyer from Carthage, Missouri, and Mrs. Mary Lee Keister Talbot from Chicago, Illinois. Mr. and Mrs. Bushing, Eleanor and Ruth Bushing from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, were among the guests.

## Roger Dyer Family Reunion—1936

The second annual reunion of the Roger Dyer Family Association, and the third reunion of Dyer descendants, was held on Sunday, August 16th, 1936, at Silver Lake Park, West Virginia.

After remarks of welcome from the President, E. Foster Dyer, of Franklin, West Virginia, and Invocation by Mr. Elias S. McWhorter, of McWhorter, West Virginia, a picnic dinner was served to more than 150 people. The picnic tables were unusually attractive in their variety, arrangement, and quantities of food.

Immediately following the picnic dinner Hon. Walter Dyer Keister of Huntington, West Virginia, gave a brief talk in review of the reunion of 1935, and spoke of the value and importance of family organizations.

Mrs. Milo J. Griffith of Racine, Wisconsin; Mrs. Fannie Barber of Sheridan, Illinois, and Mr. John R. Dyer of Elkins, West Virginia, expressed their pleasure at their first attendance at the Dyer Reunion.

After the reading of the minutes of the reunion of 1935 by the secretary a resolution from the forty-second reunion of the Taylor-Trumbo family of Ohio was read, extending greetings to the Roger Dyer Family Association.

The business meeting was largely taken up with presentation of plans for the erection of a monument in 1938 by the Dyer Family Association at the grave of the victims of the Fort Seybert massacre on April 28, 1758. Committees are to be appointed to handle the matter of raising adequate funds, and to secure specifications for a fitting memorial. A resolution was adopted to express appreciation to Mr. J. Clemm Miller and Mr. Ed. T. Miller for their consent in the use of a plot of ground which includes the grave, for this memorial. The land where the grave is belongs to Mr. J. Clemm and Mr. Ed. T. Miller.

Dr. Vernon L. Dyer of Petersburg, West Virginia, gave the report of the nominating committee, which recommended the reelection of present officers. The report was unanimously accepted, and the officers for 1936-37 are as follows:

President, E. Foster Dyer of Franklin, West Virginia; Vice-President, Allen Dyer of Philippi, West Virginia; Secretary, Mrs. Mary Lee Keister Talbot of Chicago, Illinois; Treasurer, Miss Mary Gay Dyer of Fort Seybert, West Virginia.

The program closed with an interesting talk by one of the guests, Mr. Frank Crone of Richmond, Virginia, who is a genealogist, tracing the movements of early families in Pennsylvania and the Valley of Virginia.

Great interest was manifest in the events of the day. The guests and relatives, many of whom came from a distance, expressed their enjoyment at this reunion. Among those who registered with the secretary were the following:

Mr. and Mrs. Milo J. Griffith and Miss Barbara Griffith of Racine, Wisconsin; Mr. Gaile A. Barber of Crystal Lake, Illinois; Mrs. Fannie B. Barber of Sheridan, Illinois; Drs. Willis and Ralph Taylor, Misses Bertha and Mabel Taylor, Mrs. Louise Taylor McCann, William McCann, all of Columbus, Ohio; Mrs. Rose Taylor Dryer of Westerville, Ohio; Mrs. Martha Taylor Babbitt of New Albany, Ohio; Mrs. Mary

Lee Keister Talbot of Chicago, Illinois; Edward Dyer, Morgan O. Dyer, Martha Edna Dyer, all of Dayton, Ohio; Miss Annie Cowger, Pokomoke City, Maryland.

From Virginia: Dr. and Mrs. G. C. Trumbo and children, Sunny, Susan and Richard Trumbo, Norfolk; Mr. W. H. Keister, Harrisonburg; Mr. Frank Crone, Richmond; John M. Colaw and Joseph Marvin Colaw, Monterey; Miss Kate Pennybacker, Linville; Miss Emma Byrd, Harrisonburg; W. R. Dyer, Roanoke.

From West Virginia: Mr. and Mrs. John R. Dyer, Charles C. and Virginia Lee Dyer, Beverly N. Blair, Mr. and Mrs. A. B. Dyer, Mollie Pennington Dyer, Dora, Holly, Maxine and Wandell Dyer of Elkins; Mr. and Mrs. Paul White, Mr. Edmund Dyer, Irene Dyer of Clarksburg; Mrs. Joseph Bierer, William Bierer, Joanne Bierer of Morgantown; Okey Corley, Garnet M. Corley, Okey Paul Corley, Jane Lew;

Clifford A. Dyer, Blanche Dyer, David Dyer, Philip Dyer, Mr. and Mrs. M. M. Strader, Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Dyer, Mrs. Allen Dyer, Mrs. C. K. Switzer, Miss Anna Lee Dyer, Harry D. Dyer, Mrs. Audrey Dyer Corder, Ruth C. Corder, Arthur Bernard Dyer, Mrs. Amelia Huff Dyer of Philippi;

Mr. and Mrs. Del J. Parsons, Patricia Parsons, Dale Parsons, Rosalind Parsons, Mrs. Myrtle Troutman, Mrs. Bertie Sayre of Hambleton; Mr. and Mrs. Troy Wilson, Philena Sue Wilson, Nathan D. Wilson, Jo Anne Wilson, Mary Lou Wilson, Robert Calvert of Kingwood;

E. Foster Dyer, Mr. and Mrs. P. T. Solomon, Miss Alta Solomon, Mrs. T. Floyd Rexrode, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas J. Bowman, Thomas Jefferson Bowman, III, Alice Woodson Bowman, Mrs. J. McClure Anderson, James McClure Anderson, Mrs. Kittie Dyer Anderson, Mrs. Gordon Boggs, Mr. H. Sigler of Franklin;

Dr. and Mrs. Vernon L. Dyer, Sunette and John Allen Dyer, Dr. and Mrs. Glenn Moomau, Diana Frances Moomau, Mr. and Mrs. L. Wade Rexrode, Misses Helen and Anna Lee Rexrode of Petersburg;

Mr. and Mrs. Lon Dyer Trumbo, Miss Clelda Trumbo, Mr. Charlie Dyer, Miss Annie Dyer, Mrs. Virgia Davis Temple, Mr. Lee Temple, Miss Margaret Temple, Misses Cloe and Lynn Trumbo, Mr. J. Herman Trumbo, Allen R. Trumbo, Mrs. Ollie Kiser Sinnott of Brandywine;

Mr. J. Clemm Miller, Mr. E. T. Miller, Roland D. Cowger, Fanny Dyer, Mr. and Mrs. Jasper S. Dyer, Mr. and Mrs. George Dyer, Preston Cowger, Jr. of Fort Seybert;

Miss Flossie Dyer, Charleston; Mr. and Mrs. H. Gus Muntzing, Moorefield; Mr. and Mrs. W. D. Keister, Huntington; Mr. and Mrs. E. S. McWhorter, McWhorter; Mr. and Mrs. Jared M. Smith, Miss Grace Smith, Mr. and Mrs. E. K. Smith, Keister Smith, Keyser; Mr. and Mrs. Earl Smoot, Martinsburg; Mary Sue Heavner, Upper Tract.

## The Dyer Settlement

The Dyer Settlement, afterwards called Fort Seybert, was so remotely situated that it seems to be in the nature of a miracle that the first settlers found their way into the upper South Fork Valley. Their only way of ascent in making settlements was by following the water courses. About five or six miles downstream, below the Dyer Settlement, which, contrary to accustomed thinking, is north, the South Fork River disappears between two mountains into a gorge. It is five miles before the river breaks into open country below. Only horseback travel has ever been possible through this Gap, and that by crossing the river back and forth. Even today there is no road there.

Very early, however, word got into the middle colonies, especially Pennsylvania, that there was very beautiful and fertile country in the river valleys to the southward. The river valleys where the water flows swiftly north to join the North Branch and form the Potomac are three: they run parallel and are separated from each other by an intervening mountain, spurs of the eastern fringe of the Alleghanies.

There is the South Fork of the South Branch of the Potomac, which is the most easterly of the three; its valley is separated on the east from the Shenandoah Valley by the Shenandoah Mountain. It is separated on the west from the South Branch Valley by the South Fork Mountain. On maps today the South Fork River is called Moorefield River; it flows into the South Branch at Moorefield, West Virginia.

The South Branch, called the Wappatomaka by the Indians, is the central stream which flows into the North Branch about twenty miles below present Cumberland, Maryland, and there forms the Potomac. "The valley through which the South Branch flows is broad and its lands very fertile, causing them to be much sought after for farms by the hardy pioneers in the early days before the Revolution. It was then familiarly known as the 'upper tract' of Virginia."<sup>1</sup>

The North Fork of the South Branch is the most westerly of the three rivers, flowing into the South Branch higher up than the South Fork. Its valley is separated from the South Branch valley on the east by the North Fork mountain. It was little known in the earliest days of settlement. It was settled later.

The tradition is that a man by the name of John Howard, and his son, explored and discovered the "charming valley" of the South Branch, later crossing the Alleghanies and going down the Ohio. After being captured by the French, and sent to France as suspicious characters, they went to England where Fairfax (Lord Fairfax, Baron of Cameron) heard of Mr. Howard, and "obtained from him a description of the fertility and immense value of the South Branch which determined his lordship at once to secure it in manors."<sup>2</sup>

John VanMeter, a trader with the Indians, who wandered with the Delawares, took word back to his sons in New York that they should settle in the South Branch Bottom, if they decided to settle in Virginia.<sup>3</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Journal of My Journey Over the Mountains", p. 32. Edited by J. M. Toner, 1892.

<sup>2</sup> Kercheval, Samuel, "A History of the Valley of Virginia", 1925, Fourth Edition, p. 51.

<sup>3</sup> Kercheval: p. 55.

"Long before there were any settlements in Frederick County, 1729, (Maryland) parties of Germans passed through it going from Pennsylvania to seek homes in Virginia. The principal route for these people, coming as they did from Lancaster County, was over a pack horse or Indian road, crossing the present counties of York and Adams to the Monacacy where it passed into Maryland, thence across Maryland through Crampton's Gap; crossing the Potomac at several fords."<sup>1</sup>

Men by the name of Coburn, Howard, Rutledge, and Walker, called Irish, were supposed to be the first settlers of the Wappatomaka, arriving there from Pennsylvania in 1734 or 1735.<sup>2</sup>

The tradition is that the Michael Harness family learned of the South Branch valley from four men sent out by Lord Fairfax to investigate the country, and set out from Pennsylvania with the family of Philip Powell Yoakum in the spring of 1738. Instead of following the water courses to the valley they traveled across Cacapon and South Branch mountains with their wagons and belongings, and took up land on the west side of the South Branch near the present site of Moorefield. Elizabeth Harness, their eldest daughter, then only eleven years of age, in crossing the mountains, went ahead of the wagons, and, with tomahawk, steel, and spunk in hand, helped to clear the way. She had a fire kindled near at the river when the rest arrived. Thus she was the first white woman to set foot in the South Branch valley.<sup>3</sup>

In the spring of 1748 George Washington accompanied a surveying party into the South Branch and South Fork valleys; they surveyed for Lord Fairfax, and Washington kept a record of this in his "Journal of My Journey Over the Mountains". He found settlers in the lower South Fork valley, where he surveyed for Michael Stump, but did not go as far south as the upper valley.<sup>4</sup> The upper valley was not in Lord Fairfax's Grant, but very near it.

By 1748 and 1749 the Moravian Missionaries, coming from Bethlehem, Pennsylvania, found their way into the South Fork valley, as well as into the South Branch, where they preached to the settlers in German and in English. Upon his return in 1748 from one of these trips, Brother Gottschalk reported on the river valleys and made recommendations for preaching among the settlers. He describes the South Branch:

"This is a large and long river, extending over more than one hundred and fifty miles. It rises in the higher Alighener (Alleghany) mountains, on whose other side the Mississippi also has its source. After having united with the North Branch it is called the Potomik (Potomac). Most of the German people live along this river, but also many English settlers because it is an extraordinarily beautiful and fertile country. This river, the South Branch, has above another fork, called the South Fork. About forty five miles below the South Fork the country begins to be thickly populated, and thus it continues upward to the upper part of the South Fork."<sup>5</sup>

<sup>1</sup> William, T. J. C., "History of Frederick County, Maryland", p. 3.

<sup>2</sup> Kercheval, p. 50.

<sup>3</sup> Notes written by Mrs. Helen Y. Black of Texas in 1878 when she was 81 years old—secured [1936] through the courtesy of Mrs. W. S. Fisher of Moorefield, W. Va.

<sup>4</sup> Edited by J. M. Toner.

<sup>5</sup> "Virginia Magazine of History and Biography", [1903-04] Vol XI, p. 226. Edited by Rev. William J. Hinke and Charles E. Kemper.



THE GAP IN THE SOUTH FORK RIVER

Here the river disappears between two mountains and forms a narrow gorge for five miles.  
*Photograph by Thomas S. Cowger of Monticello, Indiana, August 30, 1936.*

The upper part of the South Fork, above the Gap where the river disappears between the mountains into a gorge, seems to have been settled later than the lower valleys. A hunter by the name of Burner built a cabin on the upper South Fork about 1745, on the west bank near a bend in the river, one-half mile below (north) the site of present Brandywine,<sup>1</sup> but there were no settlers there until 1747 or 1748.

With the gorge of the river acting as an obstruction to trails farther down, and with low passes in the mountain to the west of the South Fork Valley at this particular location, it is easy to understand how there were two Indian trails converging at this spot, later called Fort Seybert. These trails led the way farther east through the lowest pass in the Shenandoah Mountain, now called Brock's Gap. Both of these trails came from the Ohio waters; the lower one, or North Trail, followed east past Seneca Rock and by way of Greenawalt's Gap across the South Fork Mountain into the South Fork Valley. The South Trail followed east by way of the Hunting Ground (now west of Circleville, West Virginia) crossing Hunting Ground Mountain, then across North Fork Mountain, (by way of what is now Ruddle, West Virginia) along Friends Run through Conrad's Gap, and across the South Fork Mountain through Dean's Gap into the South Fork Valley.<sup>2</sup> This valley was a garden spot for hunting Indians, as it abounded in game of all kinds. There were also numerous never-failing springs in this vicinity. The favorable hunting facilities, as well as the fertility of the land, may have helped the first settlers in choosing their land sites higher up and farther south than earlier settlers had attempted to go.

Whether the families were acquainted beforehand and traveled together to buy their land in the South Fork Valley in Virginia is not known, but as early settlers usually traveled in groups connected through business or relationship, they probably were. It is a recorded fact that on November 5th, 1747, seven men bought tracts of adjoining land from Robert Green of Orange County, Virginia: John Patton, Senior;<sup>3</sup> his sons, Matthew, and John, Junior; Roger Dyer and his son, William; John Smith, and William Stephenson formed the group of first settlers in the upper South Fork river valley south of the gorge.

The land is described as "Scituate, Lying, and Being on the Southernmost Fork of the South Branch of the Potowmack in Augusta County being part of a Tract of Land containing Two Thousand Six Hundred and Forty Three Acres granted to the S<sup>d</sup> Robert Green by Patents bearing date the XIIth day (12) of January MDCCXLVI (1746)".<sup>4</sup>

The deeds were the first recorded for the Upper South Fork Valley, all recorded in Augusta County Court House at the same time, the Leases under date of 4th of November, 1747, and the Releases under date of 5th of November, 1747.

---

<sup>1</sup> Morton, O. F.: "History of Pendleton County, West Va.", [1916] p. 31.

<sup>2</sup> Information from J. Clemm Miller of Fort Seybert, W. Va., August 14, 1936.

<sup>3</sup> It is not yet known how closely he was related to Col. James Patton [d. 1755], who was prominent in early Augusta County, but it is almost certain that there was a relationship.

<sup>4</sup> This is quoted from the original deed to John Patton, Sr. which is in possession of Mrs. Kitty Dyer Anderson, Franklin, West Virginia. For some years the Anderson family has owned lands which originally belonged to John Patton, Sr., and Matthew Patton.



The price and acreage of the land were as follows:

£8 10 S current money Virginia	
Robert Green to John Patton, Jr.....	210 acres
“Corner to Roger Dyer.”	
(Augusta County, Va., Deed Book I, p. 393.) <sup>1</sup>	
£8 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to Roger Dyer.....	190 acres
Corner to John Patton, Sr.	
(Deed Book I, p. 396.)	
£14 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to William Dyer.....	350 acres
(Deed Book I, p. 400.)	
£8 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to William Stephenson.....	200 acres
(Deed Book I, p. 404.)	
£6 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to Matthew Patton.....	157 acres
(Augusta County, Va., Deed Book I, p. 393.)	
£25 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to Roger Dyer.....	620 acres
(Augusta County Deed Book I, p. 412.)	
£12 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to John Smith.....	300 acres
(Deed Book I, p. 416.)	
£18 current money Virginia	
Robert Green to John Patton, Sr.....	453 acres
Corner to William Stephenson	
(Deed Book I, p. 420.)	

On November 29, 1750, Roger Dyer secured fifty acres, joining the land he lives on, with one right.<sup>2</sup>

On November 24, 1749-50, Moses Campbell secured one hundred acres, with one right adjoining Rodger Dyer, on South Branch Potomac.<sup>3</sup>

By 1748 Roger Dyer and his family were living on his land, as the diaries of Moravian missionaries traveling in the South Branch and South Fork Valleys record the fact that they lodged with *Rogert Dayer*. Brothers Joseph Spangenburg and Matthew Reutz lodged there on their journey, made July and August, 1748. The next year Brothers Leonard Schnell and John Brandmueller, traveling in Maryland and Virginia, October 12th to December 12th, 1749, lodged there also, on November 9th, and

<sup>1</sup> And those following this reference to Augusta County Deed Book I are taken from Chalkley, Lyman: “Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlement in Virginia” (1912), Vol. III, pp. 264-265.

<sup>2</sup> Chalkley: Vol. II, p. 378 refers to Augusta County Records, Land Entry Book I.

<sup>3</sup> Chalkley: Vol. II, p. 378 refers to Land Entry Book I.

Pennsylvania, ss.

# By the Proprietaries.

**A**T the Request of *Roger Dyer* ----- of the County of *Lancaster* ----- that We would grant him to take up *Four hundred* ----- Acres of Land on a Branch of *Beaver Creek* (if so much can be had without Prejudice to other Persons that are already settled thereabout) ----- in the said County of *Lancaster* ----- for which He agrees to pay to our Use the Sum of *Fifteen Pounds ten Shillings current Money of this Province* for each hundred Acres, and the yearly Quit-rent of *one Half penny Sterling* for every Acre thereof; THESE are to authorize and require thee to survey or cause to be survey'd unto the said *Roger Dyer* ----- at the Place aforesaid, according to the Method of Townships appointed, the said Quantity of *400* Acres that hath not been already survey'd or appropriated, and make Return thereof into the Secretary's Office, in order for a further Confirmation; which Survey, in case the said *Roger Dyer* ----- fulfill the above Agreement within *six* Months from the Date hereof, shall be valid, otherwise to be void. G I V E N under my Hand, and the lesser Seal of our Province, at Philadelphia, this *twenty fifth* ----- Day of *January* Anno Dom. 1733 -----

To Benjamin Eastburn, Surveyor General.

Roger Dyer praised the medicine which Brother Joseph had recommended the year before "by which the son of the family had been cured."<sup>1</sup> In the log of distances kept by Brother Schnell he stated that it was nine miles from Michael Stump to Anthon Richer and Peter Rith, and fifteen miles from there to *Rogert Dayer* (Roger Dyer), eight miles of that distance being *without a house*. From *Rogert Dayer's* to *Bastian Huber* (Sebastian Hoover), 6 miles. Without house to the end of the South Fork and part of the way along the *Clober Creek* to *Wulsen* (Wilson) 20 miles.<sup>2</sup>

Roger Dyer came into Virginia from Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, where he had owned land. The earliest that is now known of Roger Dyer is that he took out a warrant No. 9 for land in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania, 25 January, 1733.

Only 191 acres were surveyed for Roger Dyer,<sup>3</sup> and these 191 acres were patented to Roger Dyer January 17, 1745.<sup>4</sup> This tract of land is today situated in Stroudsburg Township, near Stroudsburg Borough, southeast of the city of Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

It appears from the Pennsylvania Archives that Roger Dyer owned other land in Pennsylvania. The minutes of the Board of Property "2 mo. 26th 1747" give the following:

"Moses Musgrave obtained an order for surveying 300 acres of land, 140 acres whereof being laid out on a Branch of Octorara. He sold his right to it to Roger Dyer who sold the same to George Ledyard, who is now ready to pay for the same and desires a warrant for it in his own name, and to have the addition of about 100 acres adjoining to the above."<sup>5</sup>

Where the others comprising the Dyer settlement came from is not now known upon authority, but it is assumed that they all came into Virginia from Pennsylvania.

For many years following the settlement of the valleys, on the Virginia frontier there was continuous travel back to Pennsylvania, through Maryland, for business purposes. "The pioneer settlers of the Valley at first traded almost entirely at Newcastle and Delaware, at Lancaster and Warwick in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. Then they shifted to Williamsburg, Falmouth, and Fredericksburg, Virginia, and by 1765 to Richmond."<sup>6</sup>

However, they needed to go to the seat of the county to carry on legal business, and by 1749 the inhabitants of this settlement found themselves in great need of a road to the county seat, first called Augusta Court House, later Stantown, and now Staunton, Virginia. In the file of Original Petitions for 1749 in Augusta County, the following is found:

"To the Honorable Court of Augusta. Petition of inhabitants and subscribers of the South Fork of the South Branch of Pattomuck are very much discommoded for want of a road to market and to Court if occation but espetily to market. We have found a very good way for a road: Beginning at John Patton's over the mountain to Cap. John Smith's: we begg that you will take this our petition unto your consideration and grant us a bridle road to Court and a road to market where it will sute most convenient, and will ever pray, signed: Costian Huver,

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XI [1903-04] p. 121.

<sup>2</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. XII, p. 81 [1904-05].

<sup>3</sup> Recorded in Survey Book A, Vol. 46, p. 7, at Harrisburg, Pa.

<sup>4</sup> Patent Book A, Vol. 12, p. 293, Harrisburg, Pa.

<sup>5</sup> Pennsylvania Archives, 2 Series, Vol. 19, Land Records, p. 748.

<sup>6</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 30 [1922] p. 179, from "The Settlement of the Valley", by Charles E. Kemper.

Adam Stroud, Christian Evan, John Evan, Peter Haap, (German names follow and paper torn so that names are illegible) John Smith, John Patton, Samuel Patton, Matthew Patton, William Jimson, William Dayer, Claude Evens, George Donther, Roger Doyer, John Wa(1)ker, Abraham Smith, Benjamin Kinley, Daniel Smith, Isaiah Shipman, Henry Smith, Jacob Gillespy, Gabriell Pickens, John Smith, William Logan, John Melkem, John McCluer."<sup>1</sup>

Before 1751 a mill had been erected on the land of John Patton, Junior, at the river's edge, and there is mention of it in another petition for a road which is among the Original Petitions for 1751-52, as follows:

"Petition for road from Widow Cobern's Mill, on the South Branch, to John Paton's Mill on the South Fork, at least 30 miles nearer than the road we formerly traveled. A bridle road asked for: Signed: William Stephenson, Matthew Patton, Jeremiah Calkin, George West, Peter Reed, Jr., Samuel Patton, Benjamin Patton, Leonard Reed, John Reed, John Knowles, Alexander Crockett, John Patton, Luke Collins, Jacob Reed, Daniel Richardson."<sup>2</sup>

What happened to cause a change in this settlement in less than ten years is not known, but there was another wave of immigration into the valley. Some of the original land holders comprising the Dyer Settlement sold their land. 21st of May 1755 John Patton, Jr., sold his 210 acres to Jacob Seybert of Fredericktown, Maryland.<sup>3</sup> The next year Fort Seybert was built on this land, which joined Roger Dyer's. The fort stood about one hundred yards from the site of John Patton, Junior's Mill.

On the same day the sale is recorded<sup>4</sup> of the 300 acres of John Smith and Rebecca, his wife, to Nicolas Havenor, for £107, 10S; "corner to tract surveyed for Matthew Patton. Delivered to Nicholas Havenor 1765". Nicholas Havenor is thought to have been a brother-in-law of Jacob Seybert.<sup>5</sup>

On 22 May, 1755, John Patton, Senior, sold his 453 acres to John Dunckle and Ludwick Waggoner for £100. It was on the west side of the river; corner to tract sold to Wm. Stephenson.<sup>6</sup>

On 15 March, 1757, William Stephenson and Sarah, his wife, sold 200 acres to Mathias Tise (Tice, Dice) for £90, corner to Tract sold to John Patton, Jr.<sup>7</sup>

By 1758 the only first settlers comprising the Dyer Settlement who lived on and owned their original purchase of land were Roger Dyer, his son, William Dyer, and Matthew Patton, who had married Hester, a daughter of Roger Dyer.

Other surveys were made and settlers kept coming into the upper South Fork Valley, frequently establishing themselves long before their deeds to land were recorded. On 29 May, 1761, a deed is recorded for 255 acres to Frederick Kester on South Fork of South Branch of Potomac, for £64.<sup>8</sup> Frederick Kester (Keister) had

<sup>1</sup> Chalkley, Lyman, Vol. I, p. 432.

<sup>2</sup> Chalkley: Vol. I, p. 438.

<sup>3</sup> Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 336, refers to Augusta County Records, Deed Book 7, p. 112.

<sup>4</sup> Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 336, refers to Augusta County Deed Book No. 7, p. 109.

<sup>5</sup> In original documents examined at Augusta Court House [1936] Hannah Lawrence empowered her son, Jacob Seybert, to administer on estate of her deceased husband, Henry Lawrence [1757]. In 1758 Nicholas Havenor signed over the right to Daniel Smith, who was administering on estate of Jacob Seybert, and speaks of Hannah Lawrence as "my mother-in-law."

<sup>6</sup> Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 337, refers to Augusta County Records Deed Book 7, p. 150.

<sup>7</sup> Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 347, refers to Augusta County Deed Book 7, p. 437.

<sup>8</sup> Chalkley Vol. III, p. 374, Deed Book 9, p. 481.

evidently been in that country for some years prior to this time as he was married to Hannah Dyer, a daughter of Roger Dyer, by 1755 or 1756.

Matthew Patton sold to Robert Davis, 21 May, 1764, on the South Fork of South Branch of Potomac, a large tract of land patented first to Matthew Patton, for £75. It had a corner to Frederick Kiester.<sup>1</sup> It is thought that this was the same year that Robert Davis married Sarah Dyer Hawes, a daughter of Roger Dyer and widow in 1755,<sup>2</sup> of Henry Haas (Hawes).

There were other families in the upper South Fork Valley very early. The Moravian missionaries lodged with Michael Probst (Propst) Nov. 11, 1749, two nights following their lodging with Rogert Dayer (Roger Dyer). They mention that several German families were settled there. They mention having known Mr. Probst before "with whom we had become acquainted at Cohenzy."<sup>3</sup>

There were a number of these settlers added to the list of tithables in Augusta County, Virginia, on August 18, 1750. Among them were Roger Dyer, William Dyer, Matthew Patton, John Patton, Samuel Patton, Peter Horse (Haas), Henry Horse (Haas), Michael Propst, Mark Swattle (Swadley), Poston Hoover.

However, deeds to land for Michael Propst, Mark Swadley, or Sebastian Hoover were not recorded in Augusta County until 1761.<sup>4</sup>

On May 18, 1762 certificates for naturalization were issued in Augusta County for a number who were residents of the South Fork or South Branch Valleys. They were: Henry Stone, Sebastian Hover (Hoover), Gabriel Kyle, Henry Peninger, Woolrick (Uhlrich) Conrad, Mark Swadley, John Dunkle, Michael Mallow, Michael Props, George Hammer, Nicholas Havenor (Hevener), Henry Pickle, Ludwick Havenor (Hevener), Frederick Easter (Keister).<sup>5</sup> It may be that seven year's residence was required in Virginia before naturalization certificates could be issued, as was the case in Pennsylvania.<sup>6</sup> There were other settlers who arrived in the upper South Fork Valley prior to the Revolutionary War.

Many of the first settlers have descendants living on and owning their original tracts of land. Among them are some connected with the Dyer family. Descendants of Roger Dyer through his son, James, who inherited the land, are living on the original land owned by him. Descendants of William Dyer are living on a part of his land. Descendants of Frederick Keister and Robert Davis are also living on the land originally owned by them.

Matthew Patton owned his land until 1793 when he removed with his family to Clark County, Kentucky. From 1785, Matthew Patton, his sons and a son-in-law, James Gay, had been making trips into Kentucky with blooded cattle "the first to enter the country over the wall of the Alleghenies." This was two years after blooded cattle had been introduced into Virginia from England. Matthew Patton took blooded cattle with him in 1790. "Cattle descended from these were taken into

<sup>1</sup> Chalkley Vol. III, p. 408, refers to Augusta County—Deed Book II, p. 545.

<sup>2</sup> Chalkley Vol. III, p. 39 refers to Augusta County Will Book II, p.115.

<sup>3</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography Vol. XI., p. 121.

<sup>4</sup> Chalkley Vol. III, pp. 373-376 refers to Augusta County Deed Book No. 9.

<sup>5</sup> Chalkley Vol. III, p. 97 refers to Augusta County Order Book VII, p. 211.

<sup>6</sup> Pennsylvania Archives Second Series Vol. 2, p. 296.

Jessamine County, Kentucky, and to Ohio, probably the Scioto Valley. All of this breed or breeds (which were Shorthorn Cattle) in their various intermixtures after their introduction in Kentucky were called 'Patton Stock' and were for many years afterward universally known by that name only."<sup>1, 2</sup>

The section of Virginia comprising the Dyer Settlement was in 1745 Augusta County, Virginia. In November 1738 the counties of Frederick and Augusta were formed from Orange County as people had already settled on various rivers on the northwest side of the Blue Ridge Mountains.<sup>3</sup> The South Fork and South Branch Valleys were chiefly in Augusta County until 1753, when that north of the Dyer Settlement was changed.

An act was passed by the Virginia Legislature adding to Frederick County "all that part of the county of Augusta lying within the Northern Neck" or Lord Fairfax's Lands and by the same act Frederick County thus enlarged was divided into two counties: "Frederick, east of the Great North or Cape Capon Mountains, and the other, Hampshire, lying on the west of said mountains and extending to the Potomac River."<sup>4</sup> Now Hampshire County extended south in the South Fork Valley almost as far as the Dyer Settlement, but the Dyer Settlement was still in Augusta County.

In October, 1777, another county, Rockingham, was formed from Augusta County (and from Botetourt County), which included the Dyer Settlement. The boundary of the new county began at "the north side of North Mountain opposite to the upper end of Sweedland Hill, and running a direct course so as to strike the mouth of Seneca Creek on the North Fork of the South Branch of the Potowmack river, and the same course to be continued to the Allegheny Mountains, thence along the said mountain to the line of Hampshire County.\*\*\*"Some of Augusta again was added to Hampshire County, and another part became Rockingham County.<sup>5</sup>

In October, 1785, that part of Hampshire County north of the Dyer Settlement became Hardy County.<sup>6</sup>

In 1788 a new county, called Pendleton, was formed from parts of Rockingham, Augusta, and Hardy Counties, and the section comprising the Dyer Settlement was included in it.<sup>7, 8</sup>

Pendleton County, Virginia, it remained until 1863, when it became a part of the newly created state, West Virginia. Today the land of the original Dyer Settlement is in Pendleton County, West Virginia, but less than ten miles from the Virginia line, and thirty miles from Harrisonburg, Virginia.

How it has happened that this section of country, the region of the South Fork and South Branch River Valleys, has been so close to the marts of trade and has remained so untainted, so lightly touched by the soot marks of civilization, is difficult

<sup>1</sup> "Short Horn Cattle" by Alvin H. Sanders, p. 168, Second Edition pub. 1901—Sanders Publishing Co., Chicago.

<sup>2</sup> William and Mary College Quarterly, Vol. 26, p. 167, (1) January 1918.

<sup>3</sup> Hening's Statutes, Vol. V, pp. 78-79.

<sup>4</sup> Hening's Statutes, Vol. VI, pp. 376-379.

<sup>5</sup> Hening's Statutes, Vol. IX, pp. 420-421.

<sup>6</sup> Hening's Statutes, Vol. XII, p. 86.

<sup>7</sup> Calendar of Va. State Paper, Vol. 5, pp. 134, 137.

<sup>8</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. II, p. 93.



WHERE TIME SLEEPS  
A road north of Fort Seybert, Pendleton County, West Virginia, near Rough Run.  
*Photograph by Strawn Trumbo, June 1936.*

to understand, unless the hardships of travel in mountainous country, before the era of good roads, are familiar. These fertile valleys are nestled between mountains which will be forever wooded, and green in summer, as the George Washington National Forest on the east and the Monongahela National Forest on the west, will preserve them in their wooded state. They were harmed earlier by few destructive axes. This is a beautiful country which has escaped the ravages of time, and has been neglected by historians. It is a country rich in traditions of the past which are little known to the outsider, and is aptly called by a resident of one of the county seats, "The Overlooked Land."



## Will of Roger Dyer\*

In the name of God, Amen. the twenty-fourth day of February, in the year of our Lord, 1757, I, Roger Dyer of Augusta County, being weak in body, but of perfect mind and memory thanks be given to God, thereto calling to mind the Mortality of my body, and knowing that is appointed for all men once to dye, do make and ordain this to be my last will and Testament, that is to say principally and first of all, I give and recommend my soul in the hands of God, the hands of God that gave it and my body I recommend to the earth to be buried in a Christian manner Executors nothing doubting but at the general Resurrection I shall receive the same again by the mighty power of God. And as touching such worldly estaite where with it pleased God to bless me in this life, I give, Devise and dispose of them in the following. Item: I give and bequeath to my well beloved wife Hannah Dyer, after debts and charges be paid, the full third part of all of my movabels. Estaid of goods and Grants whether in this Colloney or any Other, and one good bed and one horse or mear, which she shall juse out of my stock, over and above the third part and the plantation I now live on Until my son James comes of the age of twenty-one Years unless my wife be married again Then the plantation be rented out for the use of my s<sup>d</sup> son James Dyer I like wise constitute make and ordain my well beloved wife my only and Sole executor of my last will and Testament. Item: I give and bequeath to my well beloved son, William Dyer two shears be equally to be dividet between him and my three daughters after the rest is paid what is nomynated in this will. Item: I give and bequeath to my well beloved son James Dyer the plantation that I now live on with all the improvements thereunto belonging and fifty acres survaied by itself joining the same plantation I live on and not *pattoned*<sup>1</sup> as yet. *Messuages*<sup>2</sup> and all profits thereunto belonging in any wise and fifty pounds current money with the s<sup>d</sup> lands to his Heirs and assigns forever. Item: I give and bequeath unto my well beloved daughter, Hannah Gester<sup>3</sup> a certain tract of land lying in Hampshire county containing 427 acres of land, more or less, to her, Her heirs and Assigns forEver. Item: I give and bequeath unto my grandson Roger Dyer, son of William Dyer, Twenty pounds current money of Virginia. Now after all the above legacies are paid the remainder of my movables is to be divided into five parts, and my beloved son, William Dyer is to have two parts, and my beloved daughters, Hester Patton<sup>4</sup>, Sarah Hase<sup>5</sup> and Hanna Gester, eage of them one part. And I do hereby utterly disalow, revoke and disanull all and Every other testament Ratifying and confirming this and no other to be my last Will and Testament In witness whereof I have hereunto set my hand and seal the Day and Year first above written.

ROGER DYER (*Seal*)

Signed sealed in the presence of us

William Miller

Adam Hider

William Gibson

\*Recorded in Augusta County, Virginia—Will Book II, p. 301. (Copied from original records at Staunton, Va. summer 1936.)

<sup>1</sup> Pattoned, means not patented as yet, and deed not recorded.

<sup>2</sup> Messuages: (pronounced mes' waj) is used as a term in law and means: (singular) a dwelling house with the adjacent buildings and curtilage (the yard within the fence surrounding a dwelling house), and the adjoining lands appropriated to the use of the household. *Webster's New International Dictionary*, 1927 Edition.

<sup>3</sup> Hannah Keister, wife of Frederick Keister. The land in Hampshire County was sold to Roger Dyer by one Enoch Cornwell, 15th May, 1755. It was granted to Enoch Cornwell by the Lord Proprietor of the Northern Neck of Virginia (Lord Fairfax) 5th October, 1748. Frederick and Hannah Keister sold it 15th May, 1763 to James Seers of Hampshire County, Virginia. Hampshire County Records: Deed Book I, pp. 149, 150, 197. Court House, Romney, West Virginia.

<sup>4</sup> Hester, later written Esther, was wife of Matthew Patton.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah was the widow of Henry Hawes, also spelled Haas, Haaz, Horse, Haus, Haaps, Horze.

At a Court held for Augusta County March the 21st, 1759—this last will and testament of Roger Dyer dec'd. was proved by the oath of William Gibson one of the witnesses thereto and ordered to lie in the office for further proof.

Teste—

At a Court held for Augusta County May the 16, 1759, This last will and testament of Roger Dyer decd. being this day further proved by the oath of Adam Hider another of the witnesses thereto was admitted to record and on the motion of Hannah Dyer the executrix therein named who made oath according to law certificate is granted her for obtaining a probat in due form she having with Abraham Smith & Ephraim Love her securities entered into and adknawledged their bond.

Teste—

## The Appraisal of Roger Dyer's Estate\*

Pursuant to an order of Court to us directed we have appraised the Estate of Roger Dyer Deceased viz

	£	S.	D.
gold Coin .....	24	13	10
Cash .....	42	—	—
Matthew Patton Cash Note for.....	56	—	4
Christian Grafts Bond with Interest pensilv <sup>a</sup> money <sup>1</sup> .....	57	2	4
Michael Grafts Bond with Interest pensilv <sup>a</sup> money .....	182	—	—
Thomas Smiths Bond with Interest pensilv <sup>a</sup> money .....	127	11	—
Herman Shout & Nicklas Smiths Bond w. Interest .....	3	17	6
Peter Horze Note for.....	7	3	9
Thomas Smiths Receipt for 2 Notes rec <sup>d</sup> pensilv <sup>a</sup> money.....	8	10	—
Jesse Harrison's Bond for.....	3	16	—
James Lockharts Bond for.....	18	—	—
Balance of Mich <sup>l</sup> Mallows Bond.....	3	11	2
John McCoy's Bond for.....	1	3	—
Frederick Keysters Bond for.....	16	8	6
William Graggs Bond for.....	1	—	6

\*Records of Augusta County, Virginia—Will Book II, p. 330. Copied from original records at Staunton, Virginia, summer 1936.

<sup>1</sup> Currency values varied from one colony to another,—“With interest pensilva. money” means that the notes or bonds were signed in Pennsylvania, and those signing them probably still lived in that colony.

	£	S.	D.
Thomas Campbells Bond for.....	4	13	—
William Semples Bond for.....	1	2	—
Johnston Hills Bond for.....	5	17	3
Robert Ralstons Bond.....	2	8	4
Mich Dicken & W Correys Bond for.....	7	13	—
W <sup>m</sup> Smith Note w Interest			
pensilv <sup>a</sup> money .....	17	5	6
John Salsberrys Note pen. Money.....	11	—	—
Joseph Shylese note w Interest			
pensilv <sup>a</sup> money .....	4	8	8
Frederick Keysters recp for.....	3	13	6
Rob <sup>t</sup> Scotts receipt for provisions <sup>1</sup> .....		11	—
John Smiths Note pensilv <sup>a</sup> money.....	2	17	—
Hannah Dyer Exer D to y <sup>e</sup> Estate.....	9	3	3
Cash .....		12	—
Hugh McGluchlen D <sup>r</sup> .....	10	1	—
Arthur Johnson D <sup>r</sup> .....		2	4
Daniel Love D <sup>r</sup> .....		16	8
John Cravens D <sup>r</sup> .....		10	—
Margaret Cravens D <sup>r</sup> .....		3	4
John McCluar .....		4	6
one cross cutt saw.....		10	—
a Mattock axe & dung fork & Sith anvel.....		10	—
a pr of Tongs 2 old augurs & shovel handle.....		5	—
one spade .....		3	6
old iron .....		1	—
2 basons 2 bottles.....		5	—
6 <sup>l</sup> of Flax yarn.....		15	—
yarn spools & knive.....		1	6
Flax .....		4	6
Wool & Wallet.....		3	—
Trousers & Bagg & Canister.....		3	—
June McCoy D <sup>r</sup> .....		9	—

The above Inventory signed by us this 14th day of Aug 1759

DANIEL HARRISON  
MATTHEW PATTON  
ADAM STEPHENSON

At a Court Cont<sup>d</sup> held for Augusta August the 16<sup>th</sup> 1759 This Inventory or appraisment of the Estate of Roger Dyer dec'd was returned into Court & admitted to record.

<sup>1</sup> Robert Scott was captain of militia in Augusta County, Virginia, 1756-1758. This indicates that Capt. Robert Scott and his company were in a campaign against the Indians in that section of Virginia where Roger Dyer lived, and that provisions were secured from Roger Dyer. Virginia Magazine of History and Biography: Vol. 30, p. 399 (1922).

## The *Sail* Bill of Roger Dyer's Estate\*

	£	S.	D.
James Lockart to one chair.....		11	10
William Sample to Claveses.....		2	—
William Gragg to Chains.....		9	—
Margrt McGloughlan to One Crook.....		12	1
William Gragg to Claveses.....		6	—
Arthur Johnson to Sundrys.....		6	1
Daniel Love to One Pan.....		4	3
John McClure to one pair Stillards.....		4	6
Fraderick Keister to Ring and Waggen.....		13	6
William Gragg to Sundrys.....		3	6
James Magill to Sundrys.....		3	9
Daniel Love to Chains.....		13	11
William Samples to Sundrys.....	1	—	3
David Nelson to One Mare & Colt.....	3	16	—
James Lockart to One Mare.....	7	10	2
James Lockart to One Horse.....	9	15	—
Michael Mallo to One Horse.....	3	6	—
Pat Frazier to Sundrys.....	3	1	6
Frederick Kester to Sundrys.....	4	11	—
Michael Mallo to Sundrys.....	4	17	6
Frederick Keister to Sundrys.....	5	1	6
Hannah Dyer to One Mare.....	3	6	—
John Cunningham to Sundrys.....	3	10	6
Frederick Kester to Sundrys.....	3	13	—
Robt Rolestone to Sundrys.....	2	15	1
Johnson Hill to Sundrys.....	2	11	3
Frederick Keister to Sundrys.....	2	9	6
John Cravens to Sundrys.....		10	3
Frederick Keister to Sundrys.....	6	11	3
Rob <sup>t</sup> Rolestone to Sundrys.....	1	10	—
Jesse Harrison to Sundrys.....	2	—	—
Hannah Dyer to Sundrys.....	3	6	—
Hannah Dyer to Sundrys.....	1	1	—
Matthew Patton 1½ yd. Cloth.....		11	10
Hannah Dyer to ¾ yds. cloth.....		11	10
Hannah Dyer to 1 Cagg.....	1	1	9
Hannah Dyer to putter <sup>1</sup> of books.....		16	—
Hannah Dyer to Baggs and Blankets.....		13	—
Hannah Dyer to hemp and Yarn.....	1	2	6
Hannah Dyer to 1 lb. powder.....		1	10½
Jeremiah Harrison to 1 hackel.....		12	—

<sup>1</sup> It was impossible to determine from original record whether this was *putter* or *puller*. It appears to mean some kind of container of books.

\*Will Book No. 3, Augusta County, Virginia, p. 129. Copied from original records at Staunton, Virginia, summer 1936.

	£	S.	D.
Hannah Dyer to 1 Yearling heifer.....	1—		
Matthew Patton to One Horse.....	9—		
Hannah Dyer to One Horse.....	6—		
W <sup>m</sup> Cravens to 1 pr. of fire tongs.....	4—	3	
Hugh McGloughlin 1 Grape.....	5—	5	
Hugh McGloughlin 1 Spade.....	5—	1	
Robt. Poage to 1 Ax.....	4—	6	
Bryce Russell to 1 Howe & Auger.....	1—	6	
Thomas Harrison to 1 Mattock.....	6—	1	
Wm. Cunningham to Old Lumber.....	1—	1	
Matthew Patton to Old Lumber.....	1—	2	
Rob <sup>t</sup> McGarry to old Lumber.....			8
John Dunkle to old Lumber.....	1—	9	
Hugh McGloughlon to 2 Basons.....	7—	6	
Thos. Harrison to Spools.....	4—	6	
Matthew Patton to 1 X Cutt Saw.....	2—	0	0
John Montgomery to 1 Bagg.....	2—		
	<hr/>		
	£109—	4—	8½

	£	S.	D.
Roger Dyers D <sup>r</sup>			
To paid Clerk Notes.....	1—	1—	3
To p <sup>d</sup> John Wright Crying the Vandue <sup>1</sup> .....		5—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Alex Herring for Corn.....		13—	4
To p <sup>d</sup> Mich <sup>l</sup> Mallo for hunting horses <sup>2</sup> .....		18—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Mich <sup>l</sup> Mallo for 1 days Attendance at Vandue		1—	6
To p <sup>d</sup> Robt. Minnis for whiskey <sup>3</sup> .....		3—	10
To p <sup>d</sup> John Hogshead.....		11—	8
To p <sup>d</sup> Daniel Harrison for whiskey for Vandue....		15—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Sarah Stevenson for do. <sup>4</sup> .....		10—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Adam Rader for praising the will.....	1—	10—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Wm. Gibson for Do.....	1—	10—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Secretary Nelson 1 Clerk Note.....		2—	6
To p <sup>d</sup> Jno Madison 1 Clerk Note.....		3—	9½
To p <sup>d</sup> Mich <sup>l</sup> Mallo for horse hunting.....		19—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Do. for Do.....	1—	1—	
To paid for praising the Estate.....		9—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Adam Harper for horse hunting.....		18—	
To p <sup>d</sup> Frederick Kester for Do.....		18—	
To p <sup>d</sup> for Clark, Notes.....	1—	5—	
To p <sup>d</sup> for drawing of the account.....		2—	6

<sup>1</sup> "Crying the Vandue" means conducting the sale.

<sup>2</sup> On the borders of settlement for many years in colonial times, horses were allowed to range in open country. They were marked, and usually belled.

<sup>3</sup> It was customary to furnish whiskey to those attending the sale.

<sup>4</sup> Sarah Stevenson was widow of William, who had died since 1757. See p. 18.

	£	S.	D.
To Traveling to pennsylvania 20 days <sup>1</sup> .....			
1758 Attendance at August Court 4 days.....			
To Do at November 4 days.....			
To Do March 4 days.....			
To Do May 4 days.....			
1760 To Attendance at August Court 4 days....			
1761 To Attendance at August Court 4 days....			
to 6 Days Spent on Roger Dyers account.....			
To p <sup>d</sup> James Dyer for hunting horses.....			
		9—	
			7— 6
			£19—10—074

At a Court held for Augusta County May 18, 1762 Hannah Dyer produced this account of h<sup>r</sup> administration of the Estate of Roger Dyer dec'd which being Examined and allowed by the court is ordered to be Recorded.

Test.

<sup>1</sup> Someone went to Pennsylvania to settle Roger Dyer's business there, but so far it has been impossible to learn who it was. Records of Lancaster County, Pa., if procured, would furnish information.

## Brief Genealogical Notes

### The Family of Roger and Hannah Dyer

#### Children:

William Dyer

died April 1758\*<sup>1</sup>

married c.<sup>2</sup> 1754 Margaret Hiatt

Hester Dyer born c. 1731

died 1820\*

married c. 1749 Matthew Patton  
born 1730 died May 1803\*

Sarah Dyer

married c. 1754 Henry Hawes (Haas)  
d. 1755\*

married c. 1764 Robert Davis  
died c. 1818

Hannah Dyer

died c. 1820

married c. 1755 Frederick Keister (Kiestler)  
born 1730 died 1815\*

James Dyer born 1744

died 1807\*

married c. 1767 Phebe Ann Harrison  
married 13 October 1780\* Jane Ralston  
married c. 1797 Nancy Jane Hall  
born 1776 died 1853

---

<sup>1</sup> \* means that the date is authentic, and the date, either in historical documents, family Bibles, Court Records, or on tombstones has been seen by the author.

<sup>2</sup> Circa, which means approximately this date.

## Line of William and Margaret Hiett Dyer<sup>1</sup>

Children:

Roger Dyer born 26 August 1755\* died 30 June 1810\*  
married c. 1776 Susannah Blizzard b. 23 June 1754\* died 19 Nov. 1843\*  
They had seven children:

Margaret Dyer  
Ruth Dyer  
Mary Dyer  
William Dyer  
John Dyer  
Hannah Dyer  
Elizabeth Dyer

John Dyer<sup>2</sup> born c. 1757

married c. 1780 Jane Morral (Morrel)

They had nine children, but the names of only seven are known:

William Dyer  
Samuel Dyer  
Mary (Polly) Dyer  
Robert Dyer  
John Dyer  
Morrel Dyer  
Joseph Dyer

## Line of Hester Dyer and Matthew Patton

Children:

Roger D. Patton

died 1812

He and his wife had nine children:

Benjamin Patton  
James Patton  
Margaret Patton  
Sarah Patton  
John Patton  
Eliza Patton  
Mary Ann Patton  
Matthew D. Patton  
William Patton

Matthew Patton, Junior born c. May 1750

married Rebecca May

They had ten children, but the names of only nine are known:

William Patton  
James Patton  
John Dyer Patton  
Benjamin W. Patton  
Matthew Patton, Junior (3d)  
Robert Patton  
David S. Patton  
Rebecca Patton  
Philip Patton

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Dyer married 2nd c. 1759, John Cravens, and had 7 children: Hannah, Mary, Peggy, William, Robert, James, and Joseph Cravens. She married 3d 20 March 1782\* Dennis Lanahan.

<sup>2</sup> Information about this family obtained through Mr. Lemuel Dyer Lilly, a descendant of John Dyer, of Columbus, Ohio. Secured from Will Book "A." page 28 Franklin County, Ohio.



James Patton

married Elizabeth \_\_\_\_\_

They had three children whose names are known:

John Patton  
Matthew Patton  
Mary (Polly) Patton

John Patton

married 29 August 1786\* Mary Hopkins

married Hetty \_\_\_\_\_

They had six children whose names are known:

Hetty (Hester) Patton  
Sarah Patton  
Ann Patton  
Matthew Patton  
May Patton  
Margaret Patton

Sarah Patton<sup>1</sup> born 10 May 1762 died 14 November 1795

married 1786 James Gay, Junior born 1758 died 1840

They had four children:

Esther Dyer Gay  
Benjamin Patton Gay  
John Gay  
James Gay

Ann Patton born 1763 died 7 February 1813

married 29 January 1784\* Daniel Harrison born 2 September 1760 died  
16 March 1823

They had six children:

Margaret Harrison  
Benjamin Harrison  
Sarah Harrison  
Patton Daniel Harrison  
Hannah Harrison  
Ann Harrison

William Patton

The names of two children are known:

James Patton  
Rebecca Patton

Esther Patton<sup>2</sup> born 1769

married 1789 John Hume born 1752 died 24 May 1824

They had six children:

Sarah Hume  
William Patton Hume  
Elizabeth Patton Hume  
Julia Patton Hume  
Matthew Dyer Hume  
Robert Hume

Benjamin Patton

married Margaret \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup> Information from a descendant, Mrs. Frank G. Harris (Grace Sims), of Columbia, Missouri.

<sup>2</sup> Information from a descendant, Mrs. R. M. Clark (Sara Graves), R. R. No. 4, Lexington, Kentucky.

## Line of Sarah Dyer and Henry Hawes

Children:

Hannah Hawes born c. 1755 died c. 1852

married c. 1778 George Cowger died 1788\*

married c. 1791 Jacob Trumbo born c. 1750 died 1831\*

Hannah and George Cowger had three children:

Hannah Cowger

Henry Cowger

John Cowger

Hannah and Jacob Trumbo had two children:

Elizabeth Trumbo

Jacob Trumbo, Junior

## Line of Sarah Dyer Hawes and Robert Davis

Children:

John Davis

married 7 December 1787\* Mary Morrel (Morral)

They had five children:

Isaac Davis

John Davis

Robert Davis

Jane Davis

Elizabeth Davis

Samuel Davis

Drowned when a child.

Robert Davis

Died before maturity.

Sarah Davis

married John Morrel (Morral)

Incomplete information regarding children.

Elizabeth Davis

married Samuel Morrel (Morral)

Incomplete information regarding children.

Rachel Davis

died 1861

married Samuel Dickinson (Dickenson)

The names of six children are known:

Robert Dickinson

Henry Dickinson

Elizabeth Dickinson

Hannah Dickinson

Sarah Dickinson

Rachel Dickinson



Mary Keister

married Gabriel Kyle

Incomplete information regarding children.

Frederick Keister, Junior born 1774 died 1857

married Ann E. Propst

married 3 June 1851\* Belinda Gum<sup>1</sup>

The children of Frederick and Ann Propst Keister were six:

Eli Keister  
John Keister  
Jacob Keister  
Christina Keister  
Hannah Keister  
Mary Keister

The children of Frederick and Belinda Gum Keister were two:

Martha Keister  
Byrd Keister

George Keister born 5 February 1776\* died 18 July 1854\*

married 18 February 1800\* Susannah Peck born 4 March 1780\*

died 18 July 1843\*

married 12 October 1843\* Mary Ann Jordan born 17 September 1823\*

died 18 April 1899\*

The children of George and Susannah Peck Keister were twelve:

William Keister  
George Keister, Junior  
Jacob Peck Keister  
John Davis Keister  
Polly Ann Keister  
Susan Keister  
Margaret Keister  
Sarah Keister  
Elizabeth Keister  
Hannah Keister  
Hester Keister  
Frederick Keister

The children of George and Mary Ann Jordan Keister were six:

James K. Polk Keister  
Jesse Keister  
Benjamin Keister  
Martin Keister  
Solomon G. Keister  
Mary Ann Keister

<sup>1</sup> Other records call her Malinda Grim. The author copied this name and date from the *original* marriage record in Highland County, Virginia (1936).

Line of James Dyer, and Phebe Ann Harrison  
Jane Ralston  
Nancy Jane Hall<sup>1</sup>

Children:

William Dyer born 20 February 1768\* died 20 August 1859\*

married 19 March 1799\* Margaret Riddle born 1776\* died 2 April 1861\*

They had six or seven children:

James Dyer  
William Dyer  
Roger Dyer  
Deborah R. Dyer  
Catherine Rebecca Dyer  
Mary (Polly) Dyer  
Phebe Dyer (?)

John Dyer born c. 1770

married 10 September 1799\* Elizabeth Harrison

Incomplete information about children.

James Dyer, Junior born c. 1772

married 7 January 1797\* Margaret Dyer born 12 March 1777\* died 22  
January 1835\*

They had six children:

James Dyer  
Ruth Dyer  
Philip Dyer  
Susan Dyer  
Elizabeth Dyer  
Mary Dyer

Roger Dyer born 28 December 1774\* died 15 January 1864\*

married 10 January 1804\* Ruth Dyer born 15 November 1778\* died 30  
August 1873\*

They had eight children:

Zebulon Dyer  
James Roger Dyer  
Morgan Dyer  
Mary Elizabeth Dyer  
Susannah Lair Dyer  
Diannah Dyer  
Matilda Ann Dyer  
Allen Dyer

Zebulon Dyer born 10 December 1776\* died 18 September 1853\*

married Rebecca Waggoner (Waggener) born c. 1782 died 27 July 1822\*

married 22 January 1824\* Naomi Harrison

Children of Zebulon and Rebecca Waggoner Dyer were eight:

John James Dyer  
Andrew W. Dyer  
Edmund W. Dyer  
Mary Waggoner Dyer  
Rebecca Dyer  
Louisa P. E. Dyer  
Sarah Dyer  
Catherine (Kitty) Dyer

<sup>1</sup>Nancy Hall Dyer married 2nd c. 1809 William Currence of Randolph County, Va. They had three daughters: Mary (Polly), Nancy H., and Catherine Currence.

Phoebe (Phebe) Dyer

married Philip Fisher, Junior

They had no children.

Reuben Dyer

married 6 September 1810\* Elizabeth Cunningham

Information about children is incomplete

Matthew Dyer born 8 December 1788\* died 22 June 1853\*

married 10 November 1814\* Rebecca Lincoln born 3 January 1790\*

They had no children.

Hannah Dyer

married Cornelius Riddle (Ruddle) died 1876

They had four children:

James Dyer Ruddle  
Jennie Ruddle  
Reuben Ruddle  
Mary B. J. Ruddle

Hester (Esther) Dyer born 1791\* died 20 April 1865\*

married 17 December 1810\* Abraham Trumbo born 1786\* died 7 October 1865\*

They had five children:

Jane Trumbo  
Ambrose Trumbo  
Margaret Trumbo  
Rebekah Trumbo  
Jackson Trumbo

Benjamin Dyer

married Mrs. Elinor Patton (a widow) c. 1812

They had one son:

Albert G. Dyer

Peachy Dyer

married 8 December 1818\* Emily (Amelia) Pendleton

Incomplete information about their children.

Parkham Dyer

Died when quite young.

Jane Dyer

married 4 March 1814\* James Campbell

Incomplete information about their children.

Elizabeth Dyer<sup>1</sup> born 2 July 1805 died 8 July 1889

married 15 March 1821 Jacob Ward, Junior born 26 July 1796 died 19  
January 1865

They had seven children

Levi Dyer Ward  
Catherine Ward  
Mary Ward  
Jemima Ward  
Louisa Dyer Ward  
Morgan Blaine Ward  
William Thomas Ward

Son

He is supposed to have died at the age of 4 years.

---

<sup>1</sup> Dates secured from Mrs. Joseph Bierer (nee Taylor) of Morgantown, W. Va.

## New Interpretations of Fort Seybert

Braddock's defeat left the entire Virginia frontier exposed. There was irony in the building of the road "laboriously cleaved through the wilderness to reach the French and Indians" for it "now proved equally convenient to the latter as a pathway to the English border".<sup>1</sup>

Washington felt the grave consequences of this defeat, and upon his return to Fort Cumberland he wrote to Augustine Washington saying, "I doubt not but you have heard the particulars of our shameful defeat which really was so scandalous that I hate to have it mentioned."<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Washington wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie (July 18, 1755): "I tremble at the consequences that this defeat may have upon our back settlers, who, I suppose, will all leave their habitations unless there are proper measures taken for their security."<sup>3</sup>

No time was lost on Washington's part. He immediately set out to raise an army from Volunteer recruits in the various county seats, as he felt there were too few men to guard the frontier adequately. Col. Dunbar took the British Regulars, almost immediately after Braddock's disaster, into Winter Quarters at Philadelphia. The Virginia troops who survived Braddock's disaster were few.

In August 1755 the Virginia Assembly voted £40,000 for the public service. The governor and council immediately resolved to increase the Virginia Regiment to 16 companies, and augment the forces to 1000 men.<sup>4</sup>

A fort was set up quickly at Winchester and one at Fort Dinwiddie, the latter on Jackson's River, a tributary of the James. Before other forts could be erected and companies of soldiers organized, the Indians, encouraged by their surprising victory with the French at Great Meadows, began to commit depredations on the back settlers. By October 11, 1755, Washington wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie that "70 or near it of our People are kill'd and missing and several Houses and Plantations are destroyed".<sup>5</sup> The people were "frightened out of their senses".

When Capt. Thomas Waggener made a three day march that fall from Alexandria to Winchester with 50 Recruits he said that it was with difficulty that he passed the Ridge (Blue Ridge) for the Crowds of People who were flying as if every moment was death. He endeavored to stop them, but they believed that even Winchester was in flames.<sup>6</sup> Washington considered that the Blue Ridge Mountains would soon be the Virginia frontier.

In October 1755 Capt. Charles Lewis marched through a part of Hampshire County with a company of Virginia soldiers on the way to Fort Cumberland. He kept a Journal of the journey. On October 21st they "crossed the great Cape Capon, a

<sup>1</sup> Thwaites, Reuben Gold, "France in America", p. 190. American Nation Series, Vol. 7 (1905).

<sup>2</sup> Writings of Washington, Vol. I, p. 157. George Washington Bicentennial Edition (1931). Edited by John C. Fitzpatrick.

<sup>3</sup> Ford, Worthington Chauncey [1889], "Writings of Washington", Vol. I, p. 175.

<sup>4</sup> Dinwiddie Papers: Vol. II, pp. 184-185. Virginia Historical Society Collections [1884].

<sup>5</sup> George Washington Bicentennial Edition, Writings of Washington, Vol. I, p. 205.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 205, 206.



beautiful prospect and the best land I ever yet saw."<sup>1</sup> The next night they encamped "at a poor man's house, entirely forsaken, and the people driven off by the Indians. We found there a plenty of corn, oats, and stock of all kinds; even the goods and furniture of the house were left behind". They marched from Patterson's Creek and "passed many deserted houses". They had two women ducked for robbing a deserted house.<sup>2</sup>

Early in December some of the soldiers volunteered to gather corn from the deserted fields. Capt. Lewis said "I saw the most horrid shocking sight I ever yet beheld. At a house adjoining to the cornfield we saw the bodies of three different people who were first massacred, then scalped, and after thrown into a fire. \* \* \* We saw \* \* \* the orchards cut down, the mills destroyed, and a waste of all manner of household goods. These people were, in my opinion, very industrious, having the best corn I ever saw, and their plantations well calculated for produce and every other convenience, suitable to the station of a farmer".<sup>3</sup>

So it continued, especially from spring to fall, for more than three years. While attempts were being made to build forts and protect the people, Indians, accompanied by Frenchmen, were constantly ravaging and killing the people. Many fled; those who stayed lived in constant terror.

In November 1756 Washington wrote to Governor Dinwiddie in a plea for more adequate protection as follows:

"In short, they (inhabitants) are so affected with approaching ruin, that the whole back country is in a general motion toward the southern colonies; and I expect that scarce a family will inhabit Frederick, Hampshire, or Augusta County in a little time."<sup>4</sup>

Washington worked under inconceivable handicaps trying to build up the militia and protect the settlers. He was the man alone who stands out as the protector of the frontier, fittingly called the "Guardian of the West",<sup>5</sup> a title less known for him than "Father of the Country". From the first winter of the war he expressed himself on the defensive position of the Virginia frontier. He thought that trouble would continue as long as they were on the defensive, and urged the importance of building up an army large enough, sufficiently strong, and well equipped, to follow an offensive plan of marching west to attack the French.<sup>6</sup>

However, Washington continued with plans to protect the frontier. By May 1756 a number of forts had been built, for he writes of garrisons necessary at the following forts: Mendenhals Fort, the mouth of Sleepy Creek, the mouth of Little Cocc (Cacapehon), Ashby's Fort, Cock's Fort, Pearsals, Harness's Fort, Waggener's Upper Fort, Enoch's. He mentions also a fort at Kirkendals.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Journal of Captain Charles Lewis, Virginia Historical Society Collections, New Series, Vol. XI [Proceedings 1891] p. 208.

<sup>2</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 214-215.

<sup>4</sup> Sparks, "Writings of Washington", Vol. II, p. 179.

<sup>5</sup> Thwaites, R. G., "France in America", p. 191.

<sup>6</sup> The War in America with the French is attributed in part to Gov. Dinwiddie of Virginia, and possibly other colonial governors. Gov. Dinwiddie encouraged English trade on the Ohio waters. Some of the English traders carried on business on soil definitely named as French in the Treaty of Utrecht. Journal of Capt. William Trent [1752], Edited by Alfred T. Goodman [1871], p. 74.

<sup>7</sup> Ford, W. C., "Writings of Washington", Vol. I, pp. 274-275.

On 27 July, 1756, at a Council of War held by Militia officers at Augusta Court House a plan was made for building forts along the frontier in Augusta County for the protection of inhabitants.

A fort was to be built at Peterson's on the South Branch of Potomack nigh Mill Creek, another at Hugh Man's Mill on Shelton's Tract (Upper Tract), another at the most convenient place and pass of greatest importance between Hugh Mans' Mill and the house of Matthew Harper on the Bullpasture. One was to be constructed at Matthew Harper's and one at Capt. John Miller's on Jackson River.

The distance between the forts was as follows:

From the County Line (between Augusta and Hampshire) to Peterson's 2 miles.

From Peterson's to Hugh Mans' Mill, 18 miles.

From thence to Trout Rock, 17 miles.

From Trout Rock to Matthew Harper's, 20 miles.

From thence to Capt. Miller's, 18 miles.

From thence to Fort Dinwiddie, 15 miles.

On south other forts continued.<sup>1</sup>

Also in 1756 the Virginia Assembly voted to erect a chain of twenty-three forts along the frontier. Washington was opposed to such a plan and expressed himself in a letter to Gov. Dinwiddie, 23 September, 1756:

"I did from the beginning express my sentiments against having small garrisons in a chain of forts along our frontiers. We have a frontier of such immense extent that to build forts at convenient distances would employ such numbers of men, and divide our troops into such trifling parties, that no one part could defend itself, much less the inhabitants were the country invaded.

"The most effectual way that I can see though none can answer while we act defensively is to have no more than three or four large strong forts built at convenient distances, upon our frontiers: in which strong garrisons must be maintained, that parties able to cope with the enemy may be sent out, and these parties kept in constant succession ranging and scouring the country."<sup>2</sup>

Although opposed to the plan voted by the assembly Washington had already attempted to carry out the plans for these forts, and presented a list in the fall of 1756. Of these twenty-three forts, four were to be located on the Upper South Branch; one at Trout Rock, one at the Upper Settlement (Upper Tract), one at Fort Defiance, one at Fort Pleasant, and on the lower South Branch a fort at Parker's.<sup>3</sup> He wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie: "Besides, most of the forts are already built by the country people or soldiers, and require but little improvement save one or two, as Dickinson's and Cox's."<sup>4</sup>

On 14 August, 1756, he wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie saying "we have built some

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Magazine of History and Biography, Vol. 15, pp. 274-251 [1907-08]. Article contributed from Court Martial Record of Augusta County by Newton Argenbright, Clerk of Corporation Court of City of Staunton, Virginia, January, 1907. Edited by Charles E. Kemper. (This valuable old book is now, [1937] in possession of Mrs. Irene Argenbright at Staunton, Virginia.)

<sup>2</sup> Sparks, Jared: The Writings of Washington [1834], Vol. II, pp. 186-187.

<sup>3</sup> Ford, W. C. Writings of Washington, Vol. I, pp. 372-373.

<sup>4</sup> Sparks: Writings of Washington, Vol. II, p. 198.

forts and altered others as far south on the Potomac as settlers have been molested and there remains one body of inhabitants at a place called Upper Tract who need a guard. Thither I have ordered a party. Beyond this, if I am not misinformed there is nothing but a continued series of mountains, uninhabited until we get over to the waters of the James River, not far from the fort which takes its name from your Honor and thence to Mayo River."<sup>1</sup>

This plan for erecting forts did not include the Upper South Fork Valley, as the line of forts extended south along the South Branch, the western extremity of settlement at that time.

However, a lack of colony assistance did not mean that the settlers up and down the other valleys were unprotected, for they "forted in" themselves. To "fort in" meant to fasten the barricades on doors and windows, and open the loop holes above the second story for firing. Nearly all the houses had facilities by which they could be "forted in", and at strategic places the country people built stockades around large cabins or houses where they could gather in time of alarm, sometimes aided by the militia in building these small forts. In July, 1756, Washington wrote to Capt. Thomas Waggener saying that he had been informed that there was a fort now kept by the country people, "about 20 miles from your upper one, in a proper place". He asked Capt. Waggener to take it in behalf of the country "if it will do with little alteration or amendment. \* \* \*"<sup>2</sup>

Such a fort was Fort Seybert, one built by the country people. Undoubtedly the fact that John Patton, Jr. had had a mill at the river's edge influenced the choice of the site of Fort Seybert. A road of some description was always built to mill, and consequently the settlers could use the same road to get to the fort for safety. It is assumed that Jacob Seybert used the mill after buying the land from John Patton, Junior. The fort was built about 100 yards from where the mill stood, and there was a good spring fifty to sixty yards from the fort.<sup>3</sup>

Probably another strategic reason for choosing the site of Fort Seybert was that two Indian trails converged near there, and the Indians were wont to find their old pathways.

Fort Seybert, supposed to have been erected in 1756, in the early days of alarm, is described as follows:

It "was located on the west side of the South Fork, and situated on an elevation which sloped rapidly to a ravine on the north and descended abruptly over a ledge of rocks to the river bottom on the south-east. Westwardly a gradual incline sloped back to the mountain.

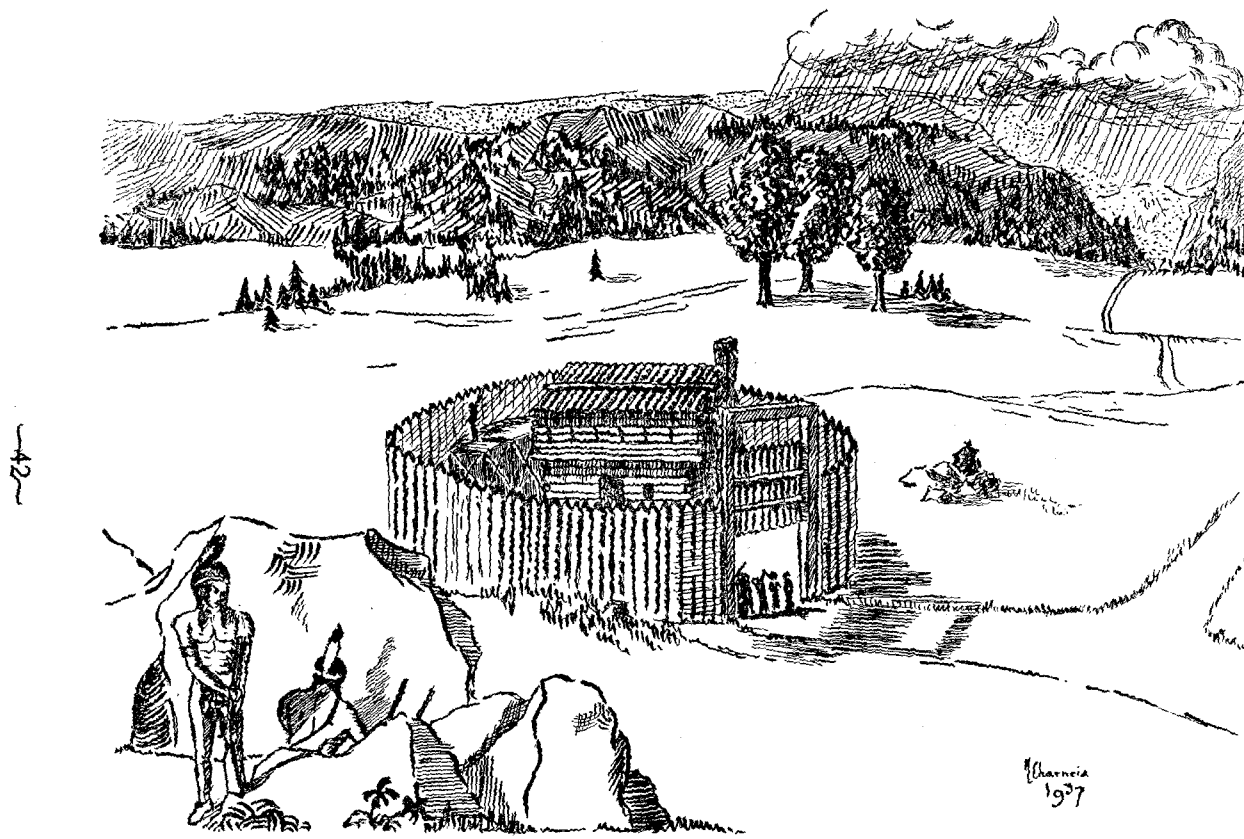
"The defense consisted of a circular stockade some thirty yards in diameter, consisting of logs or puncheons set on end in the ground, side by side, and rising to a height often of twelve feet. A puncheon door closed the entrance. Within this stockade stood the two storied block house twenty-one feet square. From the upper loop holes the open space about the fort could be swept by the rifles of the defenders".<sup>4</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Sparks, Jared: Writings of Washington, Vol. II, p. 179.

<sup>2</sup> George Washington Bicentennial Edition: Writings of Washington, Vol. I, p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> Within the last fifty years, people when plowing in the field at the river at Fort Seybert have found "tight rocks". The tradition is that they marked the site of an old mill. Information from J. Clemm Miller [1936], Fort Seybert, W. Va.

<sup>4</sup> From story by Alonzo D. Lough of Fort Seybert, W. Va., which appeared in *The Daily Independent* of Harrisonburg, Va., June 13, 18 and 19, 1919, also in *Moorefield Examiner*, Moorefield, Hardy County, W. Va., 1932.



NEW DRAWING OF FORT SEYBERT

It is doubtful whether Fort Seybert ever had a strong garrison. Undoubtedly parties of Rangers wandered up the South Fork Valley at times. Many of the residents of this vicinity were voted payment by the Virginia Assembly in September, 1758, for service, and for provisions they furnished the militia.<sup>1</sup>

They probably provided their own garrison, and since so many were voted payment for provisions as well as service, companies of Rangers must have ranged in that river valley, also. It was customary for the militia to secure provisions from the residents as they moved about, giving their receipts for such provisions. These receipts were later presented for payment. Sometimes the amounts were not paid. Not only were provisions secured, but horses were secured from the country people. Frequently horses so "impressed" were lost or killed.

Several of the men in the Upper South Fork community were officers in the militia of Augusta County. John Patton qualified as Captain of a Company of Foot 1 March, 1750,<sup>2</sup> but he did not live there in 1758. Matthew Patton qualified as a Lieutenant of Foot, 23 November, 1753.<sup>3</sup> William Dyer qualified as a Lieutenant of Foot 15 May, 1754.<sup>4</sup> Jacob Seybert is said to have been commissioned Captain of Militia in Augusta County in 1757.<sup>5</sup>

Not only did the settlers have to garrison themselves against the dangers, but they had trouble securing ammunition to use. Arms were given out to the country people, but often collected later. In June, 1757, Washington wrote to Gov. Dinwiddie: "I am importuned by the country people inhabiting the small Forts for Supplies of Ammunition. I have refused them all, until I know your sentiments. Ammunition is not to be purchased; and indeed some of them are too poor to buy, if it was. Therefore they apply to me. If your Honor thinks proper to order me to deliver it out to such people as I conceive will appropriate it to a good use, and in such quantities as we may be able to spare, I will do it; but not without."<sup>6</sup>

The unprotected condition of the Upper South Branch and the South Fork was called to the attention of Gov. Dinwiddie in the fall of 1757. Gov. Dinwiddie wrote to Washington 2nd September, 1757: "I am sorry the Enemy have appeared on the Branch and of their having kill'd five and captivated eight, this I fear will be the case by surprising the poor unguarded people"<sup>7</sup>

The day before, 1st September, 1757, Major Andrew Lewis, who had been ordered to "Regulate the Militia of this County (Augusta)" wrote to Washington:

"there is one place y<sup>t</sup> vacant which is not garrisoned, ye consequences may be bad, that is ye So Branch or So Fork Between Capt Woodward's Old Station and Prestons (Capt. Preston was stationed in the Bullpasture). As ye governor has not given me a Direct Answer nor I Believe wont I am afraid that place must be Deserted."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Hening Statutes, Vol. VII, pp. 179-201. Unfortunately, the lists are too detailed to publish here.

<sup>2</sup> Chalkley, Vol. I, p. 56.

<sup>3</sup> Chalkley, Vol. I, p. 70.

<sup>4</sup> Chalkley, Vol. I, p. 63.

<sup>5</sup> Lough, Alonzo D., Fort Seybert Massacre.

<sup>6</sup> George Washington Bicentennial Edition, Vol. II, p. 50, Writings of Washington.

<sup>7</sup> Hamilton S. M., "Letters to Washington" [1898] Vol. II, p. 188.

<sup>8</sup> *Ibid.*, Vol. II, pp. 186-187.

How bad the consequences were the next spring Washington found out too late to do anything about it, although Capt. James Dunlap and a company of militia were in the vicinity of Fort Upper Tract in April, 1758. After the damage had been done Washington received a letter from Capt. Mackenzie which told of all the Indian tracks they had seen earlier, headed toward Virginia.

Lieutenant Gist, who was in charge of a company of Scouts, with six soldiers and 30 Indians (there were a few Indians in the employ of the colonists) marched the 2d of April, 1758, from the South Branch toward Fort Duquesne. After a tedious march, occasioned by deep snows on the mountains, they got on the waters of the Monongahela, where Mr. Gist was lamed by a fall from a steep bank and rendered incapable of marching. Some of the party stayed with him, and the rest, all Indians, divided themselves into three parties and separated. Ucahula and two others found a large Indian encampment about fifteen miles on "this side" of Ft. Duquesne. From the size of it and the number of tracks they judged it to be at least 100, making directly for the frontier of Virginia as they again discovered by crossing their tracks. After the parties had joined and were marching in Lieutenant Gist came upon the track of another large party pursuing the same course.<sup>1</sup>

These must have been the Indians who, following their familiar paths, descended upon Fort Upper Tract on April 24th. That day they killed a number of people whose names are given in "The Preston Register" as:

Capt. James Dunlap at South Branch, Josiah Wilson, John Hutcheson, Thomas Caddon, Henry McCullom, John Wright, Thos. Smith, Ro. McNully, Wm. Elliott, Mrs. Elliot.

On April 27th they killed more people at Upper Tract, or on the South Branch near there. They were: Ludwick Falck (Fulk, Fultz) and wife, Adam Little, ——— Brock, John Ramsey, Wm. Burk, ——— Reeney, William Woods, John McCully, Thos. Searl, James Gill, John Guy (Gay) and a stranger. They burned Fort Upper Tract. Little else is known of this disaster.

By April 28th they had wrought havoc on Fort Seybert, and the Register states that Capt. Seybert and 16 persons not known were killed on the South Fork, and 24 at the same place were missing-prisoners.<sup>2</sup>

Some reports say that the attack on Fort Seybert was not sudden, but that it had been invested with Indians for several days. With such large numbers on the Virginia frontier, surely some of them lurked in the vicinity of Fort Seybert while others attacked Fort Upper Tract.

The first that was known of Indians lurking in the vicinity of Fort Seybert was when William Dyer went out to hunt early one morning. He saw an Indian. He aimed and attempted to shoot, but his gun did not fire. While he worked with his gun so that it would fire, probably getting behind a tree to do this, an Indian shot him.

<sup>1</sup> Ford, W. C., Writings of Washington, Vol. II, pp. 16-17.

<sup>2</sup> Some records call the South Fork the South Branch—others give it So. Fork. Waddell: Annals of Augusta County, 2nd Edition, pp. 154-158 [1901]. Chalkley, Lyman: Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish Settlers, Vol. II, pp. 510-512. Morton, Oren F.: History of Pendleton County [1916], p. 43. The Preston Register is in the Wisconsin State Historical Society Library at Madison, Wisconsin.

Some say that he died there at the place where he was shot. Another tradition is that when he got home he had been shot, and died as a result of his wound before the Fort was surrendered.

It may be that his experience set the alarm of Indians in the vicinity and people hurriedly gathered in the fort for protection. One unfortunate aspect of this situation was that nearly all the men in the vicinity had gone a day or so before across the mountain on business, among them Matthew Patton, Michael Mallow, and probably Andrew Trumbo. Andrew Trumbo's home was in Brock's Gap, but he helped to guard this fort.<sup>1</sup>

There are a number of versions of the Fort Seybert massacre, the history of which DeHass<sup>2</sup> says fills such a dark page in the annals of Virginia history. The DeHass version is as follows:

"Seybert's fort served as a place of resort for the people of all the adjoining settlements. Into this they gathered in time of threatening danger, and remained during the seasons when the Indians were most troublesome. In May, 1758,<sup>3</sup> a party of Shawanese invested the fort, and demanded a surrender. Finding neither threatening words nor bullets of any avail, the cunning savages, after two days' trial, resorted to strategy, and, unhappily, with most fatal success. They made various propositions to the besieged to give up, and their lives should be spared; if not, the siege should be continued and every soul massacred.

"The promise of safety lured the unfortunate victims from their line of duty, and they yielded quiet possession of the fort. There were thirty persons at the time within the enclosure, and these the savages proceeded to secure. Instantly the whites realized the horror of their situation, and saw the inevitable doom which awaited them. In a moment of false security, they trusted to the promise of savages, and now were about to pay the folly with their lives. Of the whole number, all were massacred but eleven. Various accounts of the mode of massacre have been given but the following is doubtless most correct. Ten, whom they wished to save, were secured and removed from the fort, the others were tied hand and foot, and seated in a continuous line upon a log. Behind each of the unfortunates stood a stalwart savage, who, at a given signal, sunk his tomahawk through the skull of his quivering victim. The work was soon finished, and the fort destroyed. This horrible scene was witnessed by a youth named Dyer,<sup>4</sup> who was spared, although not of the number removed from the limits of the fort. He was taken to Logstown,<sup>5</sup> on the Ohio, and thence to the Shawanee towns on the Scioto. After nearly two years' captivity he escaped and made his way home. Of the other ten borne off as prisoners nothing satisfactory is known."

Chief among the other authorities for the story of the Fort Seybert massacre are Kercheval and Withers.<sup>6</sup> However, much hitherto unpublished information is to

<sup>1</sup> Shane's Interview with George Trumbo—Fort Seybert called by George Trumbo, "Blizzard's Fort".

<sup>2</sup> DeHass, Wills: *History of the Early Settlement and Indian Wars of Western Virginia*. Published 1851, Chapter 1, pp. 207-209.

<sup>3</sup> Other records state April.

<sup>4</sup> This was James Dyer, Roger Dyer's youngest child.

<sup>5</sup> Logstown was on the north bank of the Ohio, fourteen miles northwest of Pittsburgh, earlier Fort Duquesne. It was long a trading point of importance. Many important councils with the Ohio Indians were held there.

<sup>6</sup> Practically all stories refer back to DeHass, Withers, and Kercheval, including Koontz "The Virginia Frontier".

be found in the story written by Mr. Alonzo D. Lough<sup>1</sup> and in traditions still handed down through verbal stories of those living in the South Fork and South Branch valleys today. Many of them are descendants of those massacred or captured. Mr. Lough explains the Indian occupancy of the South Fork valley, and the massacre as follows:

"Prior to the year 1754 various clans or small tribes of Indians belonging to the general tribe of Shawanese roamed over the Valley of Virginia and the valleys and mountains of (present) Pendleton County. They established settlements and formed villages at various places for longer or shorter periods of time, but their dwelling was largely transitory. Individual ownership of land was not held, and that there was not even tribal ownership or much of it is shown by the fact that when certain Quakers desired to buy land of the Indians no tribe could be found that claimed ownership. This whole section was a great hunting ground into which they came, where they sojourned, and from which they removed at will, or of necessity.

"Evidence of Indian occupancy of the territory lying about Fort Seybert at an early period is found in the immense number of arrow heads scattered over certain plots of ground. These have been gathered up for 150 years and still the farmer finds them as he turns the soil, or walks abroad over the fields. Tomahawks are occasionally found. These relics have abounded most on the present lands of A. D. Lough and A. T. Conrad, on the former of which is an Indian mound, (formerly some six feet high and fifty yards in circumference) once filled with Indian bones, none of which lay below the level of the earth's surface. Two hundred yards distant was a small mound containing bones of one person of phenomenal size, supposed to have been a chief or a great warrior buried apart. The large mound has been leveled by generations of farming. Years ago the remaining bones were collected and deeply interred beneath the mound, where they molder undisturbed.

"Several never-failing springs nearby, soil suitable for their meager farming, the river at hand with its fish and the surrounding haunts of deer would have made this a favorable place for a village, and doubtless one existed here, but when, or for how long, can only be conjectured.

"Besides the Shawanese who dwelt in these villages, war parties of Delaware from the north and Catawbas from the south, hereditary and relentless enemies of each other, passed through from time to time on war excursions. A battle was fought between them near present Franklin, about the year 1735, in which the Delawares were defeated. With them on this excursion was a New York trader and adventurer, John Van Meter, the first white man to enter present Pendleton County.

"But in the year 1754 all the bands of Shawnese suddenly left the valley of Virginia, and present Pendleton County, and removed beyond the Ohio River. The cause of this emigration was that bands of Shawnese in Ohio had visited these Indians and invited them to come and live among them. Back of the invitation was the scheming and planning of the French along the Ohio, who had already won the western Shawnese to their support in the approaching inevitable conflict with the English for the possession of the Ohio and its tributaries, and who sought to detach the eastern Indians from the white people among whom they dwelt in comparative peace, and to secure their future aid. The plan succeeded. Naturally, the Indians were more favorable to the French

<sup>1</sup> Some of this is in History of Pendleton County [1916], by Oren F. Morton.



traders, trappers, and explorers than to the English settlers who were taking possession of their hunting grounds. Moreover, their experiences with the Jamestown colonists had made them suspicious of all English. When they removed in 1754 their peaceful relations with the settlers ended. When they returned soon after it was in bands traveling the war path, instigated by the French, and wreaking upon the settlers indiscriminately any vengeance they had stored up against individuals.

"Prior to the year 1754 also, settlers had established themselves on the South Fork, the first settler (though not permanent) on the river and in the county as well having been Abraham Burner, a trader, who built a cabin post below Brandywine across the river from the mouth of Hawes' Run. Settlers came into the South Fork Valley from the region of present Petersburg and Moorefield. By the year 1758 about 200 settlers lived in the two valleys nearly equally divided between the two, and located chiefly in the vicinity of Upper Tract and Fort Seybert.

\* \* \* \* \*

"One of the leading characters in the Indian raids in (present) Hampshire, Hardy, Grant and Pendleton counties was Killbuck. This chief, belonging to the same tribe that produced the greatest of all Indian chiefs, Tecumseh, was a leader of more than ordinary energy and capability. Before the beginning of hostilities he had lived among the settlers in these counties and was acquainted with many of them. Against one of them, at least, he held a grudge. Peter Casey once engaged him, for the sum of fourteen shillings, to bring back a runaway servant. Killbuck promptly delivered the servant but Casey refused to pay him the stipulated sum. In the altercation that followed Casey knocked Killbuck down with his cane. This was an indignity not to be borne by the lowest Indian, must less by a proud chief. But Killbuck dissembled his wrath. When war broke out he sought relentlessly to kill Casey but never found opportunity. Yet, according to the Indian standard, an injury or insult from one white man might be avenged upon anyone of the community to which he belonged. Therefore, Killbuck's warlike nature incited by his desire for revenge, led him hither and thither among the settlers with his band of warriors, plundering and killing on every hand.

\* \* \* \* \*

"Killbuck had a well-known reputation for treachery. Instances are cited of his treachery when on the warpath, yet it should be remembered that treachery then was simply a part of Indian strategy. Promises made then were made to deceive, while promises made in time of peace were scrupulously kept, even in war that might follow.

\* \* \* \* \*

"It is not known that this fort was supplied with defenders. In time of danger it was expected that the settlers would gather there for shelter and the men would constitute the garrison. The command was entrusted to Jacob Seybert, who, in March, 1757, was commissioned the first captain of militia in that section. Seybert had come from Frederick County, Maryland, four years before. He was one of seven brothers and had been born in Eisleben, Germany, the birthplace of Martin Luther.

"On the 27th of April, 1758, a party of French and Indians operating in the South Branch Valley, captured Fort Upper Tract. Twenty-two persons, including Capt. Dunlap, were killed and the fort destroyed by fire. It is not known that any

of the inmates escaped. None ever returned from captivity to tell the story, and from the amazing lack of history or tradition concerning the disaster (it is believed that the massacre was complete) even the site of the fort cannot now be definitely pointed out. Only brief documentary statements tell of the loss. Having done their work of destruction the invaders turned back.

"The morning of the 28th of April dawned upon Fort Seybert with a fog hanging over the valley of the South Fork, as if presaging the calamity that hung over the heads of the settlers. By an unfortunate conjunction of events, a part of the men were absent from the settlement, having crossed the Shenandoah mountain the day before. Probably because of their absence, the remaining men and the women and children were gathered within the fort. They knew that danger was imminent but unaware of the immediate presence of an enemy, while, stealing stealthily upon them, concealed by the fog, and protected by the forest, was a party of forty Shawnee warriors. They were not the band that had wrought the destruction at Upper Tract the day before, nor did they join them on their return. These had come from beyond the Ohio River, had crossed the Alleghanies and now descended upon the South Fork Valley as their field for desolation. At their head was the treacherous and revengeful Killbuck.

"It is probable that, according to the usual Indian plan in attacking a settlement, they had separated into several groups for the purpose of surprising and capturing the scattered settlers providing they were not all in the fort. One of these parties captured Mrs. Henry Hawes<sup>1</sup> at her home on what is now the Laban Davis place near Brandywine, opposite the mouth of Hawes' Run. She was taken on down the river toward the fort and as her captors conducted her along the high bank of the river above the present residence of A. D. Lough, she suddenly pushed the one next the river over the bank. He returned in a rage, threatening to kill her, but his companions restrained him and laughed at him, calling him a squaw man.

"Another tradition concerning the capture of Mrs. Hawes relates that she and a boy named Wallace had gone out from the fort in the morning to milk cows or shear sheep. They were attacked by two Indians who sought to take them captives. The boy did not tamely submit to capture, and while one Indian was engaged in a rough and tumble struggle to overpower him, Mrs. Hawes suddenly attacked the other with the sheep shears with such energy that he let her escape, and she and the boy both reached the fort.

\* \* \* \* \*

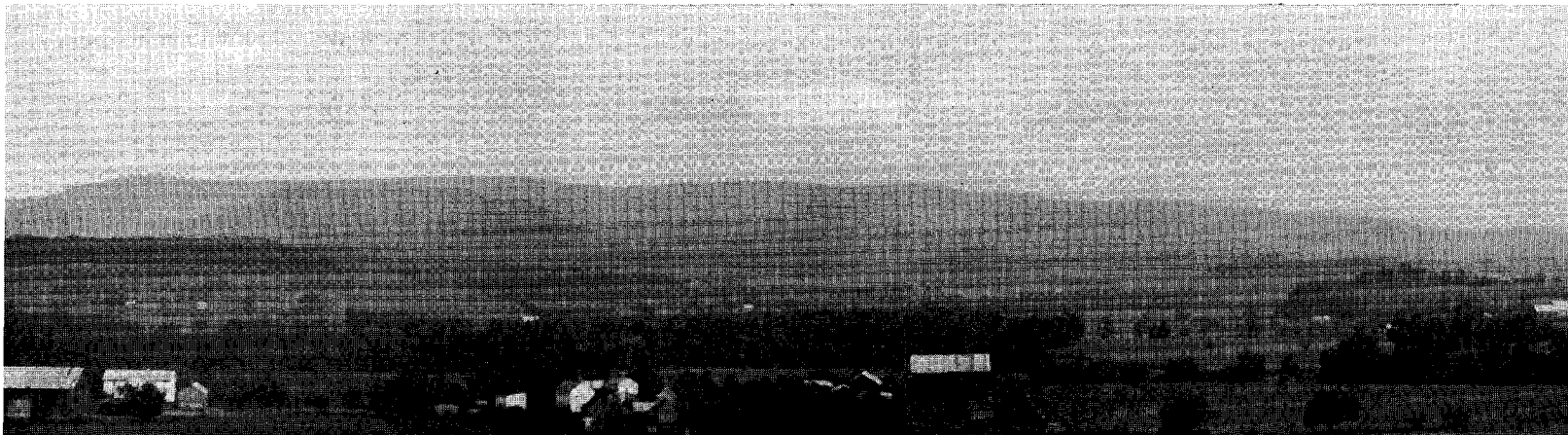
"The first violent act of the savages near the fort was the killing of William Dyer.<sup>2</sup>

"Mr. Dyer was out hunting when waylaid by the savages. He attempted to fire upon them but his flint lock missed fire and they shot him dead. It transpired afterward that an Indian, probably Killbuck, had been secreted under the bridge leading across a ravine to the spring when one of the women had crossed in the morning for water. He permitted her to cross and return unmolested.

"There is a tradition that a solitary horseman was riding toward the fort in the early morning, and, hearing the sound of firing and suspecting there was an Indian attack, hastened away to give the alarm to distant settlers. Also that a messenger was

<sup>1</sup> Sarah Dyer Hawes, daughter of Roger and Hannah Dyer, widow of Henry Hawes at this time.

<sup>2</sup> Eldest of the five children of Roger and Hannah Dyer. He had a wife and two young sons at this time.



↑  
THE SOUTH FORK VALLEY AT FORT SEYBERT

Picture taken from the site of the grave, looking east to the Shenandoah Mountain. Arrow indicates location of Fort Seybert.

*Photograph by W. D. Keister, August 30, 1936.*



secretly dispatched to Fort Upper Tract for aid, but when he came in view of the fort the smouldering ruins met his astonished gaze. There is also a doubtful tradition that a Frenchman was among the attacking party at Fort Seybert.

"Now that the presence of the foe was known, the settlers fastened the gate and put themselves on the defensive. An Indian peering up over the ledge of rocks under the brow of the hill eastward was espied by Nicholas, fifteen-year-old son of Capt. Seybert, from his position at a loophole, and fired upon. His head instantly disappeared and young Seybert soon saw feathers floating upon the stream below, from which he judged his bullet had hit its mark and cut loose the savage's head-gear.

"Killbuck now changed from attack to strategy and called out to Capt. Seybert in English that if they would surrender they would all be spared, but if not they would all be killed. Seybert entered into a parley with Killbuck, as a result of which he agreed to surrender without further resistance and turn over to the Indians the money and valuables in the fort. Killbuck agreed that the inmates of the fort should not be harmed. Some of the settlers favored this conditional surrender while others opposed it. Nicholas Seybert was bitter in his opposition and attempted by violence to prevent his father from making the surrender. Before the gate was thrown open he took aim at Killbuck and would have shot him dead but that his gun was knocked aside by his father. The bullet struck at Killbuck's feet."

According to Withers<sup>1</sup> the following is the story:

"On the morning of the fatal day, Colonel Dyer and his sister left the fort for the accomplishment of some object, and although no Indians had been seen there for some time, yet they did not proceed far, before they came in view of a party of forty or fifty Shawnees, going directly towards the fort. Alarmed for their own safety, as well as for the safety of their friends, the brother and sister endeavored by a hasty flight to reach the gate and gain admittance into the garrison; but before they could effect this they were overtaken and made captives.

"The Indians rushed immediately to the fort and commenced a furious assault on it. Captain Seybert (Sibert) prevailed (not without much opposition) on the besieged to forbear fire until he should endeavor to negotiate with, and buy off, the enemy. With this view, and under the protection of a flag, he went out, and soon succeeded in making the wished-for arrangements. When he returned, the gates were thrown open, and the enemy admitted."

\* \* \* \* \*

"There has been much conjecture as to why Capt. Seybert confided in the promise of an Indian on the warpath and did the almost unparalleled thing of surrendering to a savage foe. There might have been a shortage of ammunition, or provisions, or water within the fort. Doubtless it appeared to him impossible, with the few men in the fort—less than the usual number present—to defend this isolated place against forty armed and cunning redskins who would beset it day and night and most certainly effect an entrance sooner or later. He may have thought the women and children would fare better in the hands of the savages by a surrender than by capture."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> "Chronicles of Border Warfare," by Alexander Scott Withers: Reuben Gold Thwaites Edition [1895], pp. 86-89. First Edition published by Joseph Israel at Clarksburg, Virginia, in 1831.

<sup>2</sup> Lough, Alonzo D.: "Fort Seybert Massacre".

It was known to be weak, and incapable of withstanding a vigorous onset, and its garrison was illy supplied with the munitions of war."<sup>1, 2</sup> Continuing with Mr. Lough's account:

"The gate was now thrown open and Indians began to enter. Killbuck greeted Seybert by striking him in the mouth with the pipe end of his tomahawk, knocking loose his front teeth. This deed and the action of the savages showed the settlers too late what they might expect, and confusion followed. Young Seybert refused to surrender and was overpowered. A man named Robertson managed to secrete himself and was the only one to escape.

"The inmates were made prisoners, the money and valuables secured and the block house set on fire. A woman named Hannah Hinkle who was probably bedfast perished in the flames. The man Robertson escaped from the stockade, made his way unnoticed down the eastern bluff, followed the shelving rocks to the river, crossed over and fled across Shenandoah Mountain.

"The Indians took their prisoners up the slope toward the South Fork mountain about a quarter of a mile. Here they divided them into two groups placing in one group those whom they selected as desirable for captives. Nothing of mercy or humanity entered into their choice, only expediency from the Indian point of view. The object of the Indian in preserving captives was to adopt them and thereby strengthen his tribe. He wanted brave young men who would make valiant warriors. He wanted strong young women who could help the squaws do the work. He wanted no old people, no weaklings, no cowards. He preferred brunettes to blondes because they resembled his swarthy complexion more nearly. The fact that most of the captives preserved in Indian raids endured the hardships and privations to which they were subjected shows that the selections for physical fitness were well made.

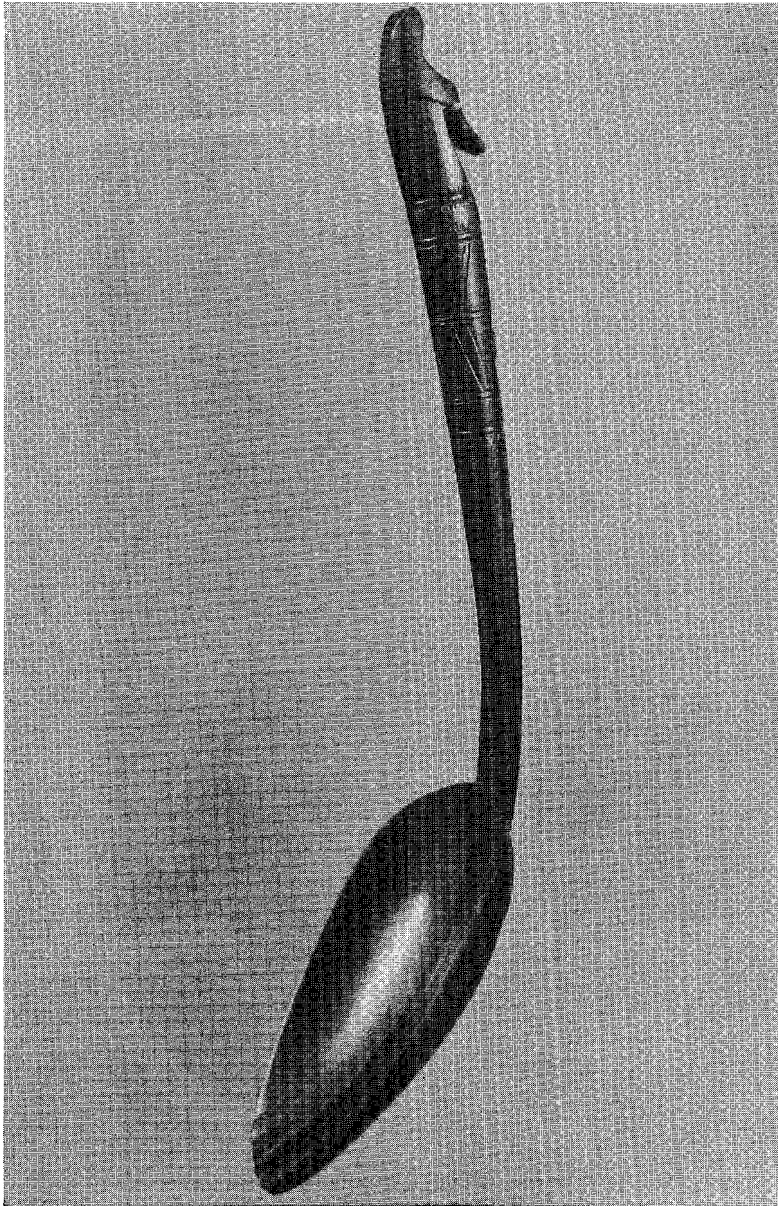
"At some point of time while the prisoners were being separated James Dyer, a fleet footed youth of fourteen, broke from among them and attempted escape by flight. So swift was he that his eager pursuers did not overtake him until he had reached the river about three quarters of a mile distant. Here in a cane brake, opposite the present dwelling of J. W. Conrad, he was overtaken. Because of his swiftness he was preserved.

"Having selected and bound their captives the remaining prisoners, doomed to perish, were placed in a row, probably seated upon a log. At the last moment Mrs. Jacob Peterson was saved by the interposition of a brave who chose to spare her, but was stoutly opposed by the other warriors. He carried out his purpose, however, and placed her among the captives and gave her a pair of mocassins in which to travel.

"About this time Roger Dyer, who was among the doomed ones, was struck in the mouth with a tomahawk. His daughter, Mrs. Hawes, also among the victims, saw him spit the broken teeth from his bleeding mouth, and fainted. When she recovered she had been placed among the captives and one of them placed in her stead. This change which saved her life was made because the Indians had among their many superstitions one which prevented their killing a person in a fainting condition.

<sup>1</sup> Waddell, Jos., A. M., *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia*, [1886], p. 159. Second Edition [1901] says that there was a shortage of ammunition in the fort. Kercheval says that there were only three men in the fort, although there were about thirty people gathered there. Probably many of them were children.

<sup>2</sup> Kercheval, Samuel: *A History of the Valley of Virginia*, Fourth Edition [1925], p. 91.



INDIAN SPOON CARVED OF BUFFALO HORN

It was brought back by Sarah Dyer Hawes upon her return from captivity and is in possession of the family of the late Mrs. L. M. Pope (Diannah Vista Trumbo) at Doe Hill, Highland County, Virginia.

*Photograph 1936 by Goodwin of Radford, Virginia.*

"The fatal moment had now come. The unfortunate victims were swiftly tomahawked, then scalped, and their bodies left lying where they fell—seventeen in all. The names of three have come down. Captain Seybert, Roger Dyer, and the Wallace boy. William Dyer had already been killed and a child was killed later.

"The Indians had now done what they came to do, and started quickly on the return. They put their eleven captives in line, bore their wounded warrior, and started Indian-file northward up the mountain side. As they climbed the mountain a child belonging to one of the women, whose first name was Hannah, became fretful. She was unable to quiet it and one Indian, annoyed by the crying, took it from her, and seizing it by its feet, swung it overhead and brought its neck down into the fork of a small dogwood, where it was left hanging, dead or dying. The captives were made to march on and none permitted to look back.

"The Indians encamped the first night in Greenawalt Gap, a distance of nine miles from Fort Seybert. Here the warrior, wounded by young Seybert, died and was left in a cave far up against the mountain side, where his bones could be seen years afterward.

"The second night's encampment was at Seneca. After that the journey was westward without recorded incident until they reached the Ohio River. Here young Seybert called attention to a flock of wild turkeys flying at a distance. Killbuck remarked that he had sharp eyes and asked if it was not he who had killed his warrior. Seybert replied that it was and that he would have killed him also if his father had not knocked his gun aside. Killbuck complimented the young man's bravery and told him that if he had killed him the warriors would have given up the attack and fled. He then told Seybert not to tell the Indians it was he who had killed the warrior. After a journey of nine days the band reached the Indian villages in Ohio near Chillicothe. The captives whose names are known were Nicholas Seybert, James Dyer, Mrs. Hawes, Mrs. Peterson and a Miss Hevener.

"The next day after the massacre a relief party of soldiers led by Captain Brock, doubtless notified by the escaped Robertson, arrived on the scene. They had come from the valley of Virginia via the gap which was thereafter named Brocks Gap.<sup>1</sup> They could only bury the dead. These were interred in one common grave near where their bodies lay, and a mound of stones erected over them. The stones were removed many years ago by a road overseer who was given permission to take any but these, but who reversed the terms of his permit. The outline of the grave may still be seen and near it are a number of other graves of settlers buried later.

"Washington estimated that sixty persons, all told, perished in the raids upon the two forts. An act was passed by the Virginia Assembly in 1758 to rebuild Fort Seybert but its provisions were never used for a fortress again and the remains of the fort disappeared.<sup>2</sup> Two of the cornerstones of the block house may yet be seen in J. C. Miller's yard where they have remained undisturbed and an arc of the palisade may be traced. While digging a post hole some years ago on the site of the fort a flowered

<sup>1</sup> Virginia Valley Records (1930), by John W. Wayland, p. 121, considers that the Gap was not named for a Captain Brock, but that there was a family of Brocks living in that vicinity very early. Further note: Early Augusta County Records (Chalkley, Vol. III) speaks of a Brock's Creek.

<sup>2</sup> Benjamin Kinley, carpenter, was voted 2 shillings and sixpence per day for 6 days rebuilding Fort Syvers, by the Virginia Assembly in September 1758 (Hening: Statutes Vol. VII, p. 180.)



teacup of colonial times was found at a depth of three feet. Mr. J. C. Miller is in possession of a rusty flint lock with the hammer standing cocked found west of the fort, which he thinks may have been in the hands of William Dyer when he was killed. That as his gun first missed fire and he drew back the hammer for a second trial, the bullets of the Indians struck him and the weapon dropped from his verveless grasp where it lay until decay of the stock separated lock and barrel. Mr. Miller also has a number of bullets picked up in the vicinity of the fort, some of which have the appearance of having been chewed, as the Indians are known to have chewed their bullets, to cause them to inflict more terrible wounds.

\* \* \* \* \*

"The Hevener girl was probably the first captive to return, but no details of her escape are known. After a lapse of nearly two years James Dyer had gained the confidence of his captors and was taken with them on trading expeditions. While in Fort Pitt on one of these expeditions, he was sent with an Indian to buy bread. Eluding the watchfulness of his companion, he entered a cabin and sought protection. The trader's wife hid him behind a chest and threw a pile of furs over him. The Indians spent the afternoon searching for him. In the course of their search they entered the cabin and began throwing off the furs one by one. When he was almost uncovered they ceased their examination, and he was safe. An English trooper conveyed him six or seven miles on horseback from which place he reached friends in Pennsylvania.<sup>1</sup>

"Mrs. Hawes was rescued by her brother-in-law, Matthew Patton. Mr. Patton took his cattle to market at Pittsburg (first Ft. Duquesne, later Ft. Pitt), and the dealer to whom he sold them told him an Indian tribe near there had a red-headed woman among them. Mr. Patton suspected this might be his wife's sister, and had the dealer arrange to have her come into his store, where he secreted her behind the counter and covered her with furs. The Indians began a search for her and entered the store, and as in searching for her brother, threw off part of the covering hides. Thoroughness not being characteristic of Indian habits they ceased in their searches before uncovering the fugitives. That night Mr. Patton, accompanied by Mrs. Hawes, left Pittsburg secretly and traveled until daylight, when he hid her in the thick top of a fallen tree. That day she heard a party of Indians in search for her at the root of the tree. Night came and Mr. Patton rejoined her and they traveled again. After that he provided her other clothes instead of her Indian apparel, and they traveled by day until their return.

"Mrs. Hawes had been with the Indians seven years<sup>2</sup> and had traveled to the Great Lakes and over much of the prairies of the middle west. She often spoke of the fine country she had traversed and said if she were a man she would not stay in Virginia<sup>3</sup>.

---

<sup>1</sup> A tradition handed down to the descendants of Hester (Esther) Dyer Trumbo, one of James Dyer's daughters, is that upon his escape from the Indians James Dyer became so hungry that he ran down a rabbit which he skinned and ate raw. Years later he thought about the rabbit, wondering whether it might not have been sick, else he could not have caught it. However, all stories pertaining to James Dyer emphasize his feetness of foot. Story from Mrs. Florence Mae Strawn (1937) of Ottawa, Illinois.

<sup>2</sup> Augusta County Records show settlement of Henry Hawes' (Horse, Haas) estate in 1764, and mention Sarah Hawes as now married to Robert Davis (Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 84.) Some traditions say that she was with the Indians 3½ years, others say 5 years. If married by 1764 it was probably 5 years.

<sup>3</sup> Another tradition is that she said she had been where there were beautiful and large bodies of water.

"Returned captives stated that they were treated with great hospitality and kindness, according to the Indian's ideas of these virtues and every effort was made to render them contented and willing to remain. Sometimes in the evening around the camp fire Killbuck would cut notches in the square corners of a stick and have them to count these, telling them each notch represented a paleface killed or captured at a certain place. This was probably done to impress them with the superiority of the Indians over the white people. He remonstrated with Mrs. Hawes for declining to eat horse flesh, reminding her that the horse was a much more cleanly animal than the hog."

There is another tradition regarding the rescue of Sarah Dyer Hawes, handed down among some of the descendants of James Dyer. It is that James Dyer learned where the Indians, with whom his sister was captive, were camping, and waited near a spring where she came for water. He arranged to meet her after dark, and had two horses secreted in the woods. With these horses to ride they returned to Virginia without being overtaken by the Indians.

There is a possibility that James Dyer could have been with Matthew Patton on his trip to sell cattle at Fort Pitt, and that both of them had a part in her rescue.

Sarah Dyer Hawes brought back with her on her return from captivity a beautiful, carved Indian spoon. It is about eight inches long, and looks like an ordinary tablespoon, except that the bowl is more shallow and larger. The handle has little bend to it, and has a hook or phlange, at the top whereby the Indians could fasten it to something in moving from place to place. It is made of buffalo horn and is almost transparent. It is very smooth, scraped with great care, and has a kind of shell design carved on the back of the bowl of the spoon. It is a handsome specimen of fine Indian carving.

Sarah Dyer Hawes had a daughter, Hannah Hawes, (born circa 1755) who was very young at the time of the capture. She was either with relatives near present Dayton, Virginia, at the time of the massacre, (that is a tradition handed down) or she was with the group of women and children who escaped from Fort Seybert to a fort on Beaver Creek, and later to another near present Dayton, Virginia.<sup>1</sup> Hannah did not recognize her mother when she returned from captivity several years later. She feared her at first, but is said to have recognized her later. Sarah Hawes became very brown from her exposure in the out door life with the Indians.

There are further traditions concerning the captives and their experiences with the Indians. Hannah Dyer Keister is supposed to have hidden with two small children, one an infant, among large rocks about 200 yards from the fort at the time of the massacre. This might bear out the story, told by one authority, that those in the fort broke and ran when they found they were being led to massacre. The place where Hannah Keister hid is called Galloping Run today. The boulders are huge, and several people could be secreted among them easily.<sup>2</sup>

Among the things which were taken from the fort by the Indians was an old iron pot, holding fully half a bushel, filled with gold and silver coins. Mrs. Mallow (probably the wife of Michael Mallow) was taken captive, and the Indians killed her crying baby near Greenawalt's Gap by placing its head in the boughs of a sapling, and letting the tree fly back.

<sup>1</sup> Margaret Dyer, widow of William, is supposed to have been with this group—Morton, Oren F.: "Centennial History of Alleghany County, Virginia" (1923) p. 196.

<sup>2</sup> Traditions from Mary S. Keister [1936].

Mrs. Mallow returned after six years, bringing with her a child born in captivity. She told that the heavy weight of the kettle filled with coins impeded the progress of the Indians so much after they left Fort Seybert that a stout pole was run through the handle and two Indians disappeared with it. In about two hours they returned without it. Some think that the treasure is still buried in the mountains, as the Indians did not go through that country again.<sup>1</sup>

It is further known that Mrs. Seybert, the wife of Jacob Seybert, was massacred and all of their children, Nicholas being the oldest<sup>2</sup> were carried into captivity.

There were two other sons and three daughters of Jacob Seybert. Pendleton County, West Virginia<sup>3</sup> records disclose the will of Nicholas Seybert, who was never married. He requested that his estate be divided into five parts. These parts were to go to the children of his brothers, George and Henry, and to the children of his sisters, Elizabeth, Catherine, and Margaret. His nephew, Jacob Seybert, was his executor, and witnesses were Jacob Havnor (Hevener) Adam Havnor, and Adam Stephenson. The story goes that two daughters and the three sons were captured.

After a year or more with the Indians Nicholas Seybert arranged for the escape of his brothers and sisters. He had become a trusty with the Indians, and was allowed to carry on fur trading with the French. One evening when a wagon load of furs was taken out of camp he put his brothers and sisters in the bottom of the wagon, piling furs on top of them. As the wagon was driven away he remained at camp, manifesting surprise when the Indians discovered they were gone. He pretended to be as disturbed as the Indians. That same night he made his escape.<sup>4</sup>

From 1768 to the early years of the Revolutionary War Nicholas Seybert owned a Tavern, or Inn, at Fredericktown, Maryland. He went into the Revolutionary Army from Maryland, was a Lieutenant, but dropped out there, and later joined a Virginia Regiment.<sup>5</sup> He spent the rest of his life on Straight Creek, in present Highland County, Virginia, where he and his brothers owned land.<sup>6</sup>

It is thought that John Reager (Reger) and his wife were massacred by the Indians at Fort Seybert, and it is known that the three children were taken into captivity at some time or other.

On 19 May 1758, less than a month after the Fort Seybert disaster, Matthew Patton was made administrator of John Reager, deceased.<sup>7</sup> On the next day Matthew Patton was made guardian of Hannah Haus (Hawes) orphan of Henry Haus (Hawes).<sup>8</sup> In 1763 Matthew Patton secured a deed to 407 acres of land on Mill Creek, a branch of the South Branch of Potomac.<sup>9</sup> On 21 November 1772 Matthew Patton deeded this same tract of land to John Likens and John Caplenger, Jr. The transfer of land is explained as follows:

<sup>1</sup> Traditions by Hugh Conrad, formerly of Fort Seybert, printed in the "Pendleton Times," Franklin, West Virginia 1 April 1927.

<sup>2</sup> Chalkley: Vol. III, p. 494, refers to Augusta County Deed Book 16, p. 184, which calls Nicholas Seybert eldest son, and heir-at-law, of Jacob Seybert, deceased.

<sup>3</sup> Will Book 3 p. 238, 10 August 1812—proved 5 April, 1813.

<sup>4</sup> Information (1936) from Seybert Beverage, Monterey, Va.

<sup>5</sup> Heitman, F. B., "Historical Register of Officers of the Continental Army" [1893], p. 362. Chalkley: Vol. 1, p. 202.

<sup>6</sup> Two of the sisters of Nicholas Seybert married men named Janes, who were also Revolutionary officers. Information from S. Beverage—1936.

<sup>7</sup> Augusta County, Va. Will Book 2 p. 253.

<sup>8</sup> Augusta County Will Book II, p. 253 from Chalkley Vol. III, p. 49.

<sup>9</sup> Augusta County, Va., Deed Book 11, p. 450.

"Whereas John Reager in his lifetime had purchased of James Wood and Robert Green a tract of land on North Mill Creek (407 acres) but before conveyance was made, the said John Reager was murdered by the enemy Indians, and his son and two daughters carried into captivity." Matthew Patton administered on the estate and obtained title to the land "but on condition if the heirs of John should return from captivity Matthew should reconvey the land \* \* \* \* Dorothy Reager and Barbara Reager did some years ago return from captivity, but John Reager, son and heir of John, deceased, has never yet returned nor has been heard of since he was taken, and it is doubtful if he is alive. Dorothy has since her return intermarried with John Lickens. Barbara has, since her return, intermarried with John Caplenger, Jr. Both deeds contain conditions to reconvey to John Reager, Jr. if he should return".<sup>1, 2</sup>

What happened to some of the other captives is still not known, and the names of the other massacred victims are still missing.

James Dyer, after his return, became very active in the affairs of Augusta, later Rockingham, and finally Pendleton County. He held county office in all three counties.

Hannah Hawes lived to be more than ninety-five years of age. She was first married to George Cowger, of Hampshire County, and second to Jacob Trumbo of Brock's Gap, Rockingham County. She had children in both marriages.

There is a well grounded tradition that she rode horseback across Shenandoah Mountain at ninety-six years of age to visit her Cowger children. Her son, Jacob Trumbo, wrote from Brock's Gap, Rockingham County, Virginia to his half-brother, Matthias Trumbo at Dayton, LaSalle County, Illinois 26 July 1851 as follows:

"Mother is still living and has good health but is drooping off in fleach weary fast. She has become quite poor. She still lives in her house but we keep some one with her \* \* \* \* to waite on her. I think that she will end her dayes in her house. She has been thinking of going to Cowgers but the distance and road is so bad that she had better Stay at home. Her mind is good for a person 95 and upwards of years".<sup>3</sup>

There is another tradition about the return from captivity of some one whose name is not known.

About the time of the Fort Seybert (Sibert) Massacre, a little girl of four years was captured and carried away by the Indians. Early one June morning about sixteen years later some captives were to be returned by the Indians. Messages had gone out that the prisoners would be brought to a designated place and settlers having relatives or friends, who they supposed were with the Indians, were to be there very early in the morning to get them. The captives were formed in line and the "word" was to get the one you were seeking.

A mother came to a young officer and said, "Sixteen years ago they stole my little girl just four years old. If she is living she must be in that group. I just know she is, but she is dressed like an Indian and has their paint on her cheeks. How will I find her?"

<sup>1</sup> Augusta County, Va., Deed Book 19, pp. 86, 88.

<sup>2</sup> An effort has been made to identify this John Reager with John Reger who was a bold Indian fighter in the Western Alleghanies "Border Settlers of Northwest Virginia" (1915) by Lucullus V. McWhorter. Correspondence with the author, Mr. McWhorter, has failed to secure the identification of them as one and the same John Reager (Reger)—the Indian fighter is supposed to have belonged to another family.

<sup>3</sup> This letter is in possession of Miss Maud Green of Dayton, Illinois. Miss Green is a granddaughter of Hannah Hawes' son, Jacob Trumbo, Jr.

The officer hesitated, and then asked whether there had been a favorite lullaby which had hushed her to sleep as a child. He told her to sing it if there was. The mother sang the first stanza in an anxious, trembling voice. The officer said "Control yourself. Sing it in your natural voice."

The woman began to sing the next stanza and a tall and stately "Indian lady" rushed to her, threw her arms around her, and exclaimed, "Mother!"

This young woman was not among the captives, and it was apparent that the Indians thought she would not be recognized. They hoped to keep her, thinking she was too small when captured to remember about it.<sup>1</sup>

Returning to the Fort Seybert and Upper Tract Massacres, news of these disasters was echoed and reechoed very quickly.

On 4th of May 1758 Washington wrote to the President of the Council, John Blair, (acting governor of Virginia from January to June 1758) as follows:

"The enclosed letter from Capt. Waggener will inform your Honor of a very unfortunate affair. From the best accounts I have yet been able to get there are about 60 persons killed and missing. Immediately upon receiving this Intelligence I sent out a Detachment of the Regiment and some Indians that were equipped for war, in hopes of their being able to intercept the Enemy in the retreat. I was fearful of this stroke, but had not time enough to avert it. \* \* \* I had wrote thus far and was going to send off an Express with this melancholy account when I received advice that the Particulars relative to those Murders had been transmitted from Augusta to your Honor."<sup>2, 3</sup>

On 5th of May 1758 the *Virginia Gazette*, published at Williamsburg, Virginia, carried a brief account of the burning of two forts and killing of a number of people: "The Indians lately took and burnt two forts where were stationed one of our ranging companies, forty of whom were killed and scalped and Lieut. Dunlap and 19 missing."<sup>4</sup>

On 8th of May 1758, Rev. Samuel Davies preached, by invitation, to the militia of Hanover County in Virginia at a general muster. This was with a view to the raising of a company for Capt. Samuel Meredith.

It was a stirring sermon, patently influenced by the recent massacres:

"In short, our frontiers have been drenched with the blood of our fellow-subjects through the length of a thousand miles, and new wounds are still opening. We, in these inland parts of the country, are as yet unmolested, through the unmerited mercy of Heaven. But let us only glance a thought to the western extremity of our body politic and what melancholy scenes open to our view! Now perhaps while I am speaking, now while you are secure and unmolested, our fellow subjects there may be feeling the calamities I am now describing. Now, perhaps, the savage shouts and war whoops of

<sup>1</sup> Tradition from S. Key Dickinson of Charleston, West Va. It is as it was told to his father, Demetrius Dickinson, of Barbour County, W. Va., when Mr. Demetrius Dickinson was visiting relatives in Pendleton County in September, 1883.

<sup>2</sup> Ford, W. C., *Writings of Washington*, Vol. II, p. 16.

<sup>3</sup> The report of Capt. Waggener, and the report sent to John Blair from Augusta County, should contain valuable information. An effort was made by correspondence in April, 1937, to locate them in the Library of Congress and Virginia State Library. It is hoped that they may be located at some future date.

<sup>4</sup> Withers: *op. cit.* p. 87.

Indians, and the screams and groans of some butchered family may be mingling their horrors and circulating their tremendous echoes through the wilderness of rocks and mountains." <sup>1</sup>

Similarly, Fisher Ames, in his speech on the western posts said: "I can fancy that I listen to the yells of savage vengeance and the shrieks of torture. Already they seem to sigh in the western wind; already they mingle with every echo from the mountains." <sup>1</sup>

In June 1758 the Virginia soldiers marched west, now on the offensive, to meet the French, and tradition is that the Indians were not seen again, on the war path, at least, in the South Fork and South Branch Valleys.

In the unmolested ways of living in those valleys today it is difficult to realize the havoc played by the massacres in 1758. Those little settlements were deeply affected by the losses and changes in their communities. In retrospect attempts are made to reconstruct the scene. Every previously unknown fact or tradition enriches and adds to the whole story. They aid also in understanding the hardships of the *back settlers* of Virginia.

---

<sup>1</sup> Campbell, Charles: History of the Colony and Ancient Dominion of Virginia (1860) pp. 498-99.

## James Dyer's Captivity

By Charles Cresap Ward\*

The story as we know it is that James Dyer was taken prisoner when 14 years old during the massacre at Ft. Seybert, Virginia, 1758, and remained with the Indians at Chillicothe, Ohio, for two years. That at the massacre of Ft. Seybert all the prisoners within the fort were bound or stretched or seated on a big log and tomahawked (most all of them), including James Dyer's father, Roger. James saw his father tomahawked. He, James Dyer, was outside the Fort at the time it was surrendered and, as I recollect it, the Indians got him first. That when they tried to capture him he started to run, and they took after him and chased him into the woods, but he out-distanced them. Then they made two wings of their Indians and surrounded him in a hollow or head of a stream. They winged him in on either side and he couldn't get up the steep hill. On account of being so fleet of foot they admired him so much they took him prisoner, and (perhaps) because of his unusual black eyes and hair. After the massacre they went on the march and I have very few details of the trip from Ft. Seybert to Chillicothe. They (the Indians) liked him so well that, in time, he became a sort of trusty,—he hunted and fished with them and alone. When the Indians would bring other white prisoners in from their depredations, their sport was to run the new prisoners against the boy, James Dyer, in a race. This was called "running the gauntlet". This is, two rows of Indians lined up a short distance apart and a hundred yards or more in length. They were equipped with sticks or branches of trees to whip the prisoners with as they ran between the lines. James Dyer related, it is said, that he always felt sorry for the new prisoners when they ran against him because he knew he could outrun them. As the prisoners ran along they were lashed and hit with the sticks, whips or whatever the Indians had in their hands, to make them run faster, and the Indians would let out awful yells. Anyway, the loser at the end of the gauntlet was tomahawked or killed, and many a white prisoner James Dyer saw killed after these races. It was his life against the new prisoner.<sup>1</sup> The Indians ate off of dried birch bark for plates and these plates were not washed, but before meals the Indians would pick them up and by smelling of them, tell whose plates they were.

James Dyer was sent out hunting and he always came back, but as he grew older he determined to make his escape and return to his people for he felt sure he could retrace his steps. One day in a gauntlet race he determined to escape, for he knew that the other person would be tomahawked. So at the end of the race he just kept going and didn't stop at the end of the line. He had run against every Indian in the camp and knew that there wasn't one that could catch him. He never stopped but dived into the woods and, of course, the Indians followed him immediately. It took him just two weeks to get home to Virginia from Chillicothe, Ohio. He traveled of a night and laid

\* The purpose of this statement is to tell as nearly as I can what I heard my great grandmother Elizabeth Dyer Ward (1805-1891), and my own father, Jacob Loman Ward (1848-1918), say regarding the capture and captivity of James Dyer (1744-1807), as told by Nancy Hall Dyer (b1775 Va. died subsequent 1850), wife of James Dyer, captive, and the mother of Elizabeth Dyer Ward. Elizabeth Dyer Ward's mind was as clear when she was old as when she was a girl. She was a small woman, slender, very pretty and always dressed up in black. On account of the distance the farms were apart, some three miles, the bad roads and no bridge across Tygarts Valley river, the visits were few as far as I was concerned. My father went as often as possible. Charles Cresap Ward was thirteen years old when his great grandmother, Elizabeth Dyer Ward died, who was said to have lived to be 86 years old. She had been living with her daughter Louisa Ward Taylor. (who had married Andrew Taylor,) at the old Ward home, which is now located in present Randolph County, West Virginia, and was inherited by the Honorable Blaine Ward Taylor.

<sup>1</sup> This has not been found in print by Charles C. Ward.

in the underbrush in the daytime, making his way by the bark on the trees. That is, he knew which was north and which was south, because the thin bark was always on the south. He lived on berries and roots,—he had no food with him. One day he came to a little house, near a settlement, and he was so hungry and weak, that after looking around he decided to ask the French woman for something to eat. Upon his entry, she was very kind toward him and very nice. He asked her for something to eat, something he could carry with him as he ran, for he knew the Indians were a short distance behind him, for he could hear them every now and then and knew they were right on his trail. But the woman insisted on him sitting down at the little table in the kitchen and that she would watch the door while he ate. But she was so interested in him, being a boy, to see that he got something to eat, and he was so busy eating, that the Indians were at the door before either one of them knew it. The woman told James to jump in the corner in a box or chest (something of the kind), and she threw skins over him—deer and bear skins,—that they used in those days. He got under these and the Indians came into the house or cabin and the chief of the Indians actually sat down on the skins on the box he was in. The story in our family is that James Dyer was afraid that the old chief could hear his heart beat as he sat there on the box.

The Indians insisted they knew James was there because they had trailed him right to the door. The woman complained that they were tearing her house all up and that he was not there now,—that they may have trailed him there. Finally she got the Indians outside. James Dyer knew when the woman got the Indians outside the cabin they would be back, that it was his only chance, so he ran out the back door. He knew the Indians, if they saw him, would not shoot him, but would want him for a prisoner. He knew when he went out that door if he had a few jumps the start they would never be able to catch him. They saw him as he went out and gave one war whoop and took after him. From that day on he never saw the Indians for he outran them.

When he came to the Ohio river, what few clothes he had, he tied on a stick, and put on his back, and swam the Ohio river,—reaching home, Virginia, as stated before, two weeks after leaving Chillicothe, Ohio.

CHARLES C. WARD<sup>1</sup>.

Los Angeles, California,  
January 24, 1937.

<sup>1</sup> I have tried without success to find this version of James Dyer's captivity. Some writers enlarge on this and some tell a different story, but this is as it came to me some forty-five or fifty years ago.



## The Grave at Fort Seybert

The victims of the Fort Seybert massacre were buried in a common grave on the hill several hundred yards behind the site of the fort.

The land was a part of Jacob Seybert's tract. Some years after the massacre, in 1768, Nicholas Seybert, son of Jacob, sold the land to John Blizzard.<sup>1</sup> One of John Blizzard's heirs sold the land about 1800<sup>2</sup> to Ferdinand Lair, a minister from Rockingham County. Ferdinand Lair willed the land to his grandson, John Miller, and through inheritance in the Miller family the land has come to J. Clemm Miller and his brother, Ed T. Miller. Like their father, Mr. William C. Miller, who was so well versed in historical tradition of the surrounding country, they take great interest in the site of the fort, and the grave. For years they have been eager to see a monument placed at the spot. In order to aid in erecting a monument they have given their consent to allow the land where the grave is, a fair sized plot, including the oak trees, to be fenced off. This land will be turned over to the Roger Dyer Family Association, provided perpetual care of the plot is arranged.

At the reunion of the Roger Dyer Family Association in 1936, a motion was passed for sending a resolution of appreciation to Mr. J. C. Miller and Mr. E. T. Miller for their consent in the use of this land. The resolution follows:

WHEREAS, we, the Roger Dyer Family Association, are grateful for the interest of Mr. J. Clemm Miller and Mr. Ed T. Miller in the erection of a monument at the grave of the victims of the Fort Seybert Massacre and appreciate their willingness to have the land used for purposes of a memorial.

Be it Resolved that, we, the Roger Dyer Family Association, extend our appreciation in form of a written resolution.

December 6, 1936.

---

<sup>1</sup> Augusta County Records—Deed Book X, p. 184, 3rd May, 1769 (Chalkley, Vol. III, p. 494): Nicholas Seybert, eldest son and heir-at-law of Jacob Seybert, deceased, of Frederick County, Maryland, sold to John Blizzard for £200 the 210 acres originally patented to John Patton, Junior.

<sup>2</sup> Deed recorded in Pendleton County, West Virginia.

## The Fort Seybert Memorial Monument

In the collection of Lyman C. Draper in the State Historical Society of Wisconsin a paper called "The Preston Register" is found. William Preston was an officer in the militia of Augusta County, and from 1748 for a number of years he was clerk of the court of Augusta County Militia. In "The Preston Register" which is "A Register of the Persons who have been either Killed, Wounded or Taken Prisoners by the Enemy in Augusta County, as Also such as have Made their Escape" this statement is found:

"1758 April 28

Capt. Sybert and 16 persons not known, South Fork.

24 persons at same place missing, South Fork, prisoners".

Undoubtedly, there is more to be learned about Ft. Seybert, and if some of the old records could be located, history would be much richer for the discovery, and the Pendleton community would find great satisfaction in a more complete knowledge of the facts. To locate more definite information would be like finding real treasure.

There is a tradition, uncovered recently, that Margaret Dyer, the widow of William Dyer, in company with other people of the South Fork at the time of the Indian raid in 1758, fled to a fort on Beaver Creek and afterward to one where the town of Dayton, Virginia, now stands.

The names of all those massacred and those taken into captivity are not known but it is hoped that authentic information regarding their names may be secured. It is known that buried on the hillside under the two beautiful oak trees, are Roger Dyer, William Dyer, Jacob Seybert and his wife, a boy named Wallace, and probably John Reager and his wife.

Through the years the outline of the grave has remained visible, and can be traced in the stones, level with the ground, which border it. The stones at each of the four corners are especially prominent. However, the grave is in an open field and sheep occasionally wander over it.

Since it is unlikely that federal or state funds could be secured to mark and enclose this spot, as several efforts have been made, the Roger Dyer Family Association is undertaking the raising of a sum of money to enclose the oak trees and grave with a high iron fence and erect a suitable monument at the grave. This is one of the most historic spots in Pendleton County, and one of the most historic spots in West Virginia. It is hoped that all of the descendants of Roger Dyer, and descendants of other victims of the massacre, as well as friends interested in keeping historic landmarks for posterity, may venerate the memory of the pioneers, who were victims of this tragic event, by contributing to the fund for the monument.



THE GRAVE AT FORT SEYBERT  
*Photograph by Dr. G. C. Trumbo, 1935.*

## List of Subscribers

Recognition must be given those who subscribed for their copies prior to the printing of this book.

Mrs. T. E. Adams	Harry Lee Dyer	Mrs. Glenn Moomau
Lena M. Adamson	Dr. James D. Dyer	Mrs. H. Gus Muntzing
C. Martin Alsager	Col. Jesse F. Dyer	Rev. J. D. Pope
Byrd D. Anderson	John R. Dyer	L. M. Pope
William D. Anderson	L. L. Dyer	Miss Lona D. Pope
Mrs. Kitty Dyer Anderson	Mary Gay Dyer	Miss Minnie Pope
Mrs. Martha Babbitt	Morgan O. Dyer	Mrs. Nora Pope
Mrs. Minnie Dyer Barger	Dr. N. H. Dyer	Mary Anderson Pugh
Gaile A. Barber	O. C. Dyer	Mrs. Oliver Raub
Mr. D. O. Bird	Otto M. Dyer	Mrs. T. Floyd Rexrode
L. C. Bird	W. M. Dyer	Mrs. Charles Edward Riggs
Mrs. Gordon Boggs	Mrs. Oswald Fellers	Mrs. Scott Brewer Ritchie
Russell K. Bolton	Mrs. O. W. Frazer	Mrs. Henry Roberts
S. L. Bowman	Mrs. W. C. Free	Mrs. Fielding G. Rogers
Charles F. Brenn	Mrs. A. S. Frye	Mrs. Albert Routa
Pearl Strawn Brenn	Mrs. Mary D. Gates	Mrs. Bertie A. Sayre
Mrs. W. H. Carter	Mrs. Anna R. Dyer Gray	Mrs. L. H. Shumate
Lee S. Cates	Maude V. Green	Mrs. W. G. Simpson
Mrs. R. M. Clark	Mrs. Milo J. Griffith	Estyl K. Smith
John M. Colaw	Mrs. R. L. Harmon	Ida F. Smith
Mrs. F. L. Conley	Mrs. Frank G. Harris	Mrs. J. M. Smith
Mrs. Ed. S. Conway	A. W. Hawley	L. Grace Smith
Roy B. Cook	Dr. Virgil R. Homan	Mrs. Jennie Stanard
Mrs. Stanley Corder	Mrs. Lura Hoppe	Mrs. Monzell M. Strader
Dice Cowger, Jr.	Mrs. A. H. Hunter	Mrs. Walter D. Strawn
Miss Clara S. Cowger	Mrs. Charles F. Hyre	W. NeVoy Strawn
J. Preston Cowger	E. L. Keister	Harry M. Strickler
Mrs. Sallie C. Coyne	Glenn A. Keister	Boyd B. Studler
Mrs. N. A. Cramer	Dr. Harry S. Keister	Mrs. C. K. Switzer
Mrs. George H. Crist	J. Claude Keister	Bertha Taylor
Laban C. Davis	Jessie E. Keister	Dr. Willis Taylor
S. Key Dickinson	John D. Keister	Mrs. Virgia Davis Temple
Mrs. J. E. DuBois	Mrs. John D. Keister	Miss Cleda Trumbo
Annie Dyer	Martha Keister	Dr. G. C. Trumbo
Anna Lee Dyer	Mrs. W. D. Keister	Jacob Fay Trumbo
Cyrus N. Dyer	W. H. Keister	Strawn Trumbo
E. Foster Dyer	Dr. H. C. Kincaid	Lynn Trumbo
Elnora B. Dyer	Mrs. C. Closson Lockwood	Walcott G. Van Etten
Flossie Dyer	Sue L. McWhorter	Charles Cresap Ward
George A. Dyer	Miss Minnie S. McWhorter	Mrs. Charles Cresap Ward
Lieut. Comdr. George C. Dyer	Mrs. Robert P. Martin	Mrs. Frank Watkins
Grant G. Dyer	Millie Hess Messenger	Mrs. Roy Westmoreland
H. H. Dyer	E. T. Miller	Mrs. J. Presley Wood
Harry E. Dyer	J. Clemm Miller	