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ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE ALONG A COLONIAL FRONTIER:

CAPITALISM AND THE NEW RIVER VALLEY, 1745-1789

by

B. Scott Crawford
B.S. May 1994, Radford University

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of
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HISTORY

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Approved by:

Jane T. Merritt (Director)

Carolyn J. Lawes (Member)

James R. Sweeney (Member)

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ABSTRACT

ECONOMIC INTERDEPENDENCE ALONG A COLONIAL FRONTIER: CAPITALISM AND THE NEW RIVER VALLEY, 1745-1789.

B. Scott Crawford
Old Dominion University, 1996
Director: Dr. Jane T. Merritt

Historians have generally placed the beginning of capitalism in the United States in the early- to mid-nineteenth century. This assumes that the industrialization of the New England states fostered in a modern economic environment for the country as a whole. However, evidence of modern economic principles existed on the Virginia frontier as early as the mid-eighteenth century. As frontier settlers aspired to emulate eastern society, they not only sought to recreate a lifestyle similar to the one they left behind, but also set up similar governing practices, which in turn created social stratification similar to that which existed in the Tidewater region. Virginia's frontier participated in a web of trade relations where goods were both exported and imported from the region and traditional, local trade relationships waned. What emerged was a frontier interdependent with the east as trade kept both regions tightly connected, leaving little room for an autonomous, independent backcountry to develop.

Principal sources used for this study include Virginia frontier family papers, inventories, court orders, colonial newspaper advertisements, and journals.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

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LIST OF TABLES

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PREFACE

The historiography regarding the economic evolution of the United States has generally assumed that the North led the country into modernity by the mid nineteenth century. While the North's industrialization did foreshadow the economic trend that later engrossed the country as a whole, the South's role in this transformation is equally important. Because the whole nation eventually embraced a modern, capitalistic economic system, there is a need to study those factors which allowed the more traditional southern society to evolve in that direction.

The colonial Virginia frontier, especially the New River Valley, provides an excellent case study to pursue such an objective. The region's county records are complete and in good condition. Unlike eastern Virginia, where a series of wars destroyed court houses, leaving a substantial gap in probate records, Augusta, Botetourt, and Montgomery Counties retain a complete set of deed and order books along with inventories and muster rolls. Such sources provide the historian with critical information concerning the economic transformation of the frontier during the colonial and early federal periods. Through such records, the historian can provide more insight into general economic transformation of the United States as a whole and what factors contributed to the South's ability to adapt to a modern economic environment after the American Civil War.

Within such a context, the Virginia frontier provides the historian with a unique opportunity to reevaluate the current historiography. In order to understand the economic situation in place today within the United States, we must understand how such a system

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came into existence. The general belief that the North, and in particular the New England states, served as the model for the United States' economic development is incomplete. Such a model only partially explains development within other regions of the country, thereby ignoring factors peculiar to these regions that could have either enhanced or stifled economic modernization. Only in this setting can the historian come closer to the ever elusive "truth" as more evidence is both interpreted and debated within an intellectual setting.

With few exceptions, the South has been ignored by historians as a possible case study of the economic evolution that occurred during America's colonial, federalist and antebellum periods. This is probably due to the perception that the North experienced modernization at a quicker pace than did the South. The South's reliance on slave labor and its non-industrialized, agrarian nature, fixed it in a traditional world. The North's movement away from agrarianism and adoption of the factory system provided an environment that served as a blue print for the economic layout that the United States would later contain as a whole.

Even though the North foreshadowed the economic trends of the United States, the South did contain capitalistic characteristics. For one, the South was tied extensively to both inter-colonial, and later inter-state, markets, along with world markets. Credit, a modern concept, was acquired by planters in order to facilitate economic expansion. Most importantly, the South fought for the same ideals as the North in the American Revolution which were conducive to capitalism. The South accepted the Constitution, a document intended in part to encourage a healthy free market system, thus a pre-capitalist, if not capitalist, mentalite does become evident. This study examines the factors which directly

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contributed to the transformation of the economy within a Southern community along the Virginia frontier.

As pointed out by Allan Kulikoff in The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism, the researcher must answer several questions before undertaking such an endeavor.[1] Most importantly, they must define their terms clearly in order to set boundaries for the researcher to operate in and provide a context in which historians can debate the interpretation presented. Terms such as "capitalism," "modernization" and "traditional" need defining. The terms "traditional" and "modern" are fairly easy to pin down and describe. A traditional society is one which is overtly communally oriented, where localism is a key element. Traditional societies are agrarian in nature and rely on family or slave labor, or some combination of the two. Wage laborers are typically rare or non-existent in a traditional society. Markets are local and operate through barter and exchange; the market is not driven by profit. As a society moves away from these attributes and begins to take on characteristics that are more individually motivated and impersonal, containing markets that are profit oriented and tied to regional and even world wide trade routes, "modernization" is said to occur.[2]

Exactly when a society becomes "modern" and capitalism dominates a region's economy is harder to determine. Historians agree that a truly modern capitalistic economic system did not fully emerge in the United States until the late nineteenth-century, and one can easily argue that the economy is constantly changing as government takes on new roles

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[1] See Allan Kulikoff, The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992).

[2] See Richard D. Brown, Modernization: The Transformation of American Life 1600-1865 (Prospect Heights: Waveland Press, Inc., 1976).

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within the economy or when the world market changes.[3] Thus the argument lies not whether a truly capitalistic society was in existence during the colonial and federalist periods, but rather as to the degree the economy was changing and what capitalistic characteristics were evident.

Allan Kulikoff, in his book The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism, goes to great lengths in arguing that a general definition of capitalism needs to be created in order to confine the economic debate in a reasonable context. Kulikoff hesitates to use the word "capitalism" since its meaning is so broad. He asserts that the terms commercial or market economy fit better. Central to Kulikoff's analysis of the transformation of the economy is the existence of class struggle. In order to fully understand the economic movements of the colonial and antebellum periods one has to examine the rise of classes and their interactions. It is through this conflict that a commercial economy took shape.[4] Kulikoff also brings out an important idea in that the Revolution was central to economic transformation. It would appear the founders did envision a large, commercial republic. Federalist 10, drafted by James Madison, argued the need for a strong commercial environment to contain the undesired effects of political factions.[5]

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[3] The domestic economy continues to transform as the level of governmental intervention changes. The economy existing today is vastly different from the one that existed at the turn of the century. This is seen most clearly in regard to the government's position on worker's rights and the multitude of regulations that negate the free markets ability, or inability, to maintain a "fair" working environment. On the world market, the present movement towards economic blocks, such as N.A.F.T.A., represent a continually changing economic situation.

[4] Kulikoff, Agrarian Origins, 1-33.

[5] For a greater discussion on Federalist 10 and how it argued to contain factions, see Martin Diamond, The Founding of the Democratic Republic (Itaska, Illinois: F. E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1981).

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Kulikoff argues that the key to the economic transformation was the American Revolution. To Kulikoff the Revolution was a bourgeois revolution as the owners of the means of production created a government conducive to a commercial economy. This becomes evident when looking at the founder's willingness to support internal improvements, create a national bank, and encourage interstate trade. What emerged was conflict between those wanting a large, commercial republic and those interested in keeping a more traditional society based on community and family, with a degree of access to markets. The success of federalist policies pushed a commercial economy forward which completely emerged after the American Civil War. The Civil War helped form a modern nation as more traditional economic aspects such as slavery, were eliminated and the market took on a new importance. Out of this came more class conflict as the proletariate grew and ex-slaves migrated to cities looking for work.[6]

Within this study, several characteristics are used to measure capitalist tendencies. Possibly the most important characteristic involves setting the New River Valley within a world context. In her book The First American Frontier, Wilma Dunaway approaches the economy of Southern Appalachia using Immanuel Wallerstein's world system model. By using this model, Dunaway studies Appalachia's economy in relation to a world environment where capitalistic economic forces pushed certain powers to expand in the search for markets which in turn led to the creation of future areas from which expansion could continue. Thus according to Dunaway the original settlers in Appalachia were motivated to move there via capitalistic forces. Once in the region a landless proletariat emerged alongside a gentry, bourgeois class providing a degree of class conflict that

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[6] Ibid., 99-126, 223-225.

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exemplified the capital-labor relationship aspect of the world system model.[7]

The world system model takes a perspective in which no one particular region operates within a vacuum but is rather tied to a global network. This model has three main attributes. First, the economy is expanding in international proportions as a tri-structural relationship emerges. In other words, at the center is the core, or the states from which growth emerges. These states then establish colonies, or peripheries, in order to compete against other core states. These areas, while underdeveloped at first asprire to become like their core parents. In time, these regions move into a semi-periphery status as they become powerful enough to encourage growth, but not quite as strong economically to seriously contend with the core. At this point new peripheries unfold as they are born from the semi-periphery.[8]

The second characteristic inherent to the world systems model deals with the core's natural inclination to expand and the effect this expansion has on the peripheral regions. As states within the core expand, whether due to competition or through temporary alliances, they come into contact with cultures and peoples within the periphery. As raw materials are extracted from the region and a network of trade is established capitalistic characteristics encompass the peripheral culture. Reaction against the core and the relationship developed contribute to the world system model as "progress" is either slowed down or advanced and an increase in the number of states develops.[9]

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[7] See Wilma A. Dunaway, The First American Frontier: Transition to Capitalism in Southern Appalachia, 1700-1860 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

[8] Dunaway, 10-21; Terence K. Hopkins and Immanuel Wallerstein, World-Systems Analysis: Theory and Methodology (Beverly Hills: Sage Publications, 1982), 11.

[9] Hopkins and Wallerstein, World Systems Analysis, 11-12.

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The third and final aspect of the social structure within the world systems model deals with capital-labor relations, or the relationships between those who control the means of production and the worker. It is within this context that decisions from the household to the state are made based on the type of relationship existing between capitalist and laborer. Dunaway approaches this relationship as Karl Marx did. Dunaway sees the gentry class in Appalachia as the bourgeoisie exploiting a landless proletariat.[10] Yet, when examining the non-industrialized economy of 18th century Virginia it seems that Marxian class conflict is not applicable. We must ask ourselves whether or not the gentry saw themselves as, or for that matter were seen by the "proletariat" as, capitalists exploiting their labor. As such, it hardly seems appropriate to use 19th century Marxist labels to describe 18th century relationships.

However, Marx should not be totally discounted. In his essay on Wage-labor and capital, Marx discusses the importance of profit within the capitalist system.[11] It is here that possibly the foundation of capitalism rests, for without the incentive to make a profit, the capitalist would cease taking economic risks -- risks which in turn provide the labor force with work. Rather than looking strictly at class conflict, which early capitalists probably did not see themselves, profits and capital investments should be examined. Through the extension of credit one could re-invest in his land and produce more. If credit was used in such a manner, possibly a hint of the mentalite of the farmer comes into view. Using this along with the capital-labor relationship (used to determine the degree of wage labor versus

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[10] Dunaway, First American Frontier, 66-121; Hopkins and Wallerstein, World Systems Analysis, 12.

[11] See Karl Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital: Value, Price and Profit (New York: International Publishers, 1933).

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slave labor and how individual families shaped their lives within this environment) a more realistic picture of the economic environment along the Virginia frontier takes shape. This in turn adds fruther evidence as to the general economic transformation the country went through as a whole as capitalistic principles and theories developed throughout the nation.

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INTRODUCTION

The past twenty years have witnessed a growing scholarly debate over the emergence and transformation of capitalism in the British North American colonies, and later in the United States. At issue is when the colonies, or states, begin to assume the characteristics of a "modern" society; more specifically how did the economy move from a traditional, household economy to one of wage labor and extended markets? Historians agree this process was largely complete by the end of the nineteenth-century. Contention arises, however, over the degree and rate of the transformation during the colonial, early national, and antebellum periods prior to the American Civil War. Some argue that capitalistic characteristics began to emerge in the early eighteenth century. Still others opine that capitalism did not take hold until after the American Civil War, when Congress abolished the institution of slavery.[1] Taken together, these works have greatly advanced the information concerning the social and economic history of the United States. At the same time, however, the research remains incomplete, and has generated new questions that need to be answered.

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[1] See Richard I. Melvoin, New England Outpost: War and Society in Colonial Deerfield (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1989); Daniel B. Thorp, "Doing Business in the Backcountry: Retail Trade in Colonial Rowan County, North Carolina," William and Mary Quarterly 48 (1991): 387-408; Allan Kulikoff, The Agrarian Origins of American Capitalism (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1992) for examples of the extremes within this debate. Melvoin and Thorp put forth evidence pointing to early signs of capitalism while Kulikoff sees the transformation of the economy not completed until after the American Civil War.

The journal model used is Kate L. Turabian, A Manual for Writers of Term Papers, Theses, and Dissertations.

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According to Gregory Nobles, possibly "the most influential article in American history published in the past two decades" is James Henretta's "Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America."[2] Henretta's article was revolutionary in the sense that it put forth the idea of the mentalite of rural farmers. Rather than depending on statistical computations to understand the economic choices of the rural farmer, Henretta calls for an approach that attempts to see economic life in ways the farmer himself would have and thereby attempt to understand the farmer's mentalite. Henretta thus asks how the surrounding environment (political, social, and physical) shaped the views of those participating in the economy. Henretta re-examines research and conclusions put forth by James Lemon, who focused on the importance of the individual in colonial and early American life. To Lemon, individual freedom and self-interest outweighed the good of the community. This intense individualism sparked an entrepreneurial drive that led frontiersmen to forsake community in the hopes of finding their own economic advancement. In a sense, these families were developing the characteristics of early capitalists.[3]

Such an interpretation seems to agree with conclusions drawn by Frederick Jackson Turner, who developed the most influential thesis pertaining to the frontier to date. Turner's frontier thesis asserts that the American frontier developed independent from the eastern settled regions of North America. The frontier's isolation allowed for an independent, democratically oriented, equalitarian society to form and led the nation

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[2] Gregory Nobles, "Capitalism in the Countryside: The Transformation of Rural Society in the United States," Radical History Review 41 (1988): 164.

[3] James A. Henretta, "Families and Farms: Mentalite in Pre-Industrial America," William and Mary Quarterly 35 (1978): 3-4.

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towards democratic principles. For it was the frontier that made Britain's North American colonies unique and more susceptible to the revolutionary ideology associated with the Enlightenment. As the colonies became independent states, the frontier spirit stayed alive and well as Americans moved west, to a frontier which inspired individualism and equalitarianism.[4] As Turner puts it:

> From the time the mountains rose between the pioneer and the seaboard, a new order of Americanism arose. The West and the East began to get out of touch of each other. The settlements from the sea to the mountains kept connection with the rear and had a certain solidarity. But the over-mountain men grew more and more independent.[5]

To Turner the mountains which separated the frontier families from the coast provided a shield which allowed those families to find independence from eastern societies' values and norms. The importance of communal relationships declined as sparse settlement patterns inspired individualism, which in turn supported an equalitarian, and eventually democratic, mind set. James Lemon's findings take this individualistic, independent attitude further by arguing that in addition to democratic tendencies developing so too did capitalistic tendencies. The important findings central to both of these theses is that the frontier operated in an environment conducive to individualism and independent from eastern society.

Henretta asserts that these conclusions are incomplete and not entirely accurate. According to Henretta, Lemon's statistical data failed to support many of his assumptions. While Lemon downplayed the role of community in the frontier settler's life, Henretta

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[4] See Frederick Jackson Turner, The Frontier in American History, (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 1920).

[5] Ibid., 18.

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argues that settlement patterns reflected strong leanings toward communal integrity. Central among these communal tendencies were linguistic and religious ties, as one sees with New England Puritans and to some degree Quaker and Seventh Day Baptist settlements in New Jersey. These linguistic and religious ties extended beyond settlement patterns and into the realm of economics. To illustrate this point, Henretta analyzes the account book of a Henry King from Second River, New Jersey. The account book of King's, a shoemaker among other various trades, contained listings of clients exclusively of people of Dutch origin, thus leading Henretta to conclude that other factors determined where clients did their business. In this case it appears that linguistic ties determined how the market took shape, rather than price. Henretta maintains that community was so important that it ranked along side the fertility of the soil as a factor in determining settlement and who settlers did business with.[6]

Another discrepancy in Lemon's research that Henretta points out deals with the economic goals of the inhabitants of Pennsylvania during the eighteenth-century. With his emphasis on classic "liberalism," Lemon argued that the average migrant to the frontier expected to own land. If they did not achieve this desired goal, the settler became angry, frustrated and motivated to move on. Yet Henretta points out that such conclusions fail to incorporate the perceptions of the settlers themselves concerning both their goals and ability to obtain such goals. In particular, Lemon did not adequately focus on age and wealth in a manner true to the way the settlers conceived of such notions. Without giving serious attention to the constraints of age and wealth that existed during the colonial period, and accepted by the settlers themselves, a true reflection of colonial economic life is not

[6] Henretta, "Families and Farms," 4-5.

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possible. It is through this approach, by looking at economic restraints, that a true indication of the economic consciousness, or mentalite, of the rural farmer can become evident.[7]

According to Henretta, these economic restraints can be either factors pertaining directly to the individual or created within the natural environment. Age and wealth were generally constraints relating to the individual that either interfered with or supported an individual's ability to succeed financially. Factors such as a frontier environment could be considered natural constraints on the economy as distance prohibited access to markets. The way these factors played out affected the rural farmer's consciousness. While Lemon's statistical evidence points to individualism and entrepreneurship, Henretta concludes that a community, family oriented economy took shape.[8]

Henretta concludes that the colonial economies were not as modern as Lemon suggests. The rural farmer's surroundings shaped his mentalite. With this being the case, he was not interested in finding profit, but subsistence. Any surplus was used in an exchange economy where families came together and traded for what they did not, or could not, produce on their own. Age came into play as younger children awaited prefixed inheritance norms. They simply accepted that youth brought on dependence to one's elders. In such a system it is unlikely a young man who moved to the frontier expected immediate success. This individual would have realized a responsibility he owed to both family and community. He would not have been an upwardly mobile entrepreneur, motivated out of self-gain. The average farmer would have worked within the constraints

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[7] Ibid., 6.

[8] Ibid., 5-21.

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existing around him and measured success in terms prevalent during the period. He did not seek profits, but survival, and as such he was not a capitalist.[9]

Henretta points to the early nineteenth-century as the period in which a new mentalite formed and capitalism took shape. Economic constraints that had existed during the eighteenth-century were lifted and this caused a new attitude among farmers. Three factors contributed most to this changing attitude. First, the market economy expanded. Second, rising land values brought on a new importance associated with profit making. The final factor contributing to a changing mentalite consisted of the domination of middlemen in the agricultural and westward migration process. Change came slow as the family remained a stabilizing force. Yet, change did come and the class conflict associated with capitalism emerged out of the movement toward a profit oriented economy.[10]

Evidence presented in this thesis tends to support Henretta's conclusions regarding the importance of community and family life along the frontier. Rather than seeking an independent society, Virginia frontier families tended to emulate eastern society and support one another both through local trade and in working relationships. However, whereas Henretta sees little evidence of capitalistic tendencies developing in the colonial period, this thesis will argue that the communal interaction and emulation of eastern society, which occurred along the Virginia frontier, fostered the development of a capitalistic market economy in the eighteenth century. It was through economics that the frontier remained tied to the east, as goods were both imported and exported from the region. Trade was not simply a localized event, occurring only between neighbors. Rather

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[9] Ibid., 14-20.

[10] Ibid., 24-27.

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the New River Valley, during the eighteenth century, was involved in a world market as goods produced along the frontier found their way to the eastern colonies and England. All the while, goods that were decorating the homes of eastern Virginia were also used by frontier families as imports reached the frontier. Thus throughout the colonial period the frontier was tied to the east through trade and connected to markets that were not only regional in nature but also extended to the other side of the Atlantic. This import-export connection with the east was fueled both by a desire on the frontier family's part to emulate eastern society, which produced a need for imports, and close communal and family ties, which provided for close labor relations that allowed the frontier to produce exports desired in eastern and world markets.

The importance of family and community to economic behavior becomes evident in other research on various frontier regions. Both Daniel H. Usner, Jr., and Richard I. Melvoin discuss the importance of exchange and community along two very different frontiers. In Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy, Usner examines the settlement and cultural interaction within the lower Mississippi Valley through 1783. Usner argues that a "frontier exchange economy," took shape among Europeans, Africans and Indians who settled in the region. Usner found a highly traditional, non-market oriented society which encouraged cultural exchange and interaction and maintained strong community ties. European settlers in a frontier environment exchanged goods and interacted as various groups bartered for basic needs.[11]

Community played an important role in the "frontier exchange economy" that

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[11] Daniel H. Usner, Jr., Indians, Settlers, & Slaves in a Frontier Exchange Economy: The Lower Mississippi Valley Before 1783 (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1992).

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developed in the Lower Mississippi Valley. Usner does not portray a picture of a rugged frontiersman who depended only on himself and had no use nor care for community. Usner shows us an environment through which subsistence farming was practiced and any surplus was used to obtain goods not already possessed. This exchange crossed cultural boundaries and came in many forms. Usner puts food exchange as the most important aspect of the frontier exchange economy. On one level, a cultural exchange took place as both Europeans and African slaves began to practice farming techniques taught to them by the Indians. On another level, exchange occurred on local markets where all three cultures came together and exchanged their own unique food supplies. This in turn created an environment from which evolved unique food combinations that contained characteristics of all three major cultures. In essence, a "middle ground" was created as different cultures met and exchanged both goods and ideas. This enhanced community ties as groups pulled together out of necessity.[12]

Such an economic environment does not appear to have many "modern" characteristic. Usner presented no evidence of entrepreneurship or heavy reliance on external markets, and the chief means of transaction consisted of barter and exchange. The absence of markets did not allow for modern economic development. A subsistence-surplus economy took hold through which exchange became a necessity. Barter, rather than money, became the chief means through which transactions occurred. Wage labor

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[12] Ibid., 149-218; See also Richard White, The Middle Ground: Indians, Empires, and Republics in the Great Lakes Region, 1650-1815 (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991). White examines the frontier as a cultural meeting ground. Within the frontier two or more cultures meet and a degree of exchange occurs as each tries to deal with and understand the other. Usner would seem to go along with this concept as he emphasizes the degree to which interaction between cultures occurred and the amount of exchange that existed.

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did not exist in the lower Mississippi as planters turned to slave labor to meet their needs. It was community and the interactions of various peoples that produced such an economic environment. Individualism played a small, if any, role within such a setting.

Along the Virginia frontier, however, this "frontier exchange economy" did not take hold as strongly as it did in the region Usner studied. For one, the interactions with Native Americans tended to be hostile since no major tribes of Native Americans actually lived in the New River Valley at the time of European settlement. Slavery also did not play a major role in Virginia's backcountry's labor force. Thus an exchange economy centered around multi-culture interactions never existed as it did in Louisiana. Rather, wage labor developed and played a more central role in the frontier's economy. Along the Virginia frontier the "frontier exchange economy" tended to take the form of local exchange. Local trade existed and thrived as neighbors bartered for goods not readily available to their families. This thesis will argue that the frontier family was not self-sufficient, but depended on neighbors or eastern merchants to provide for various goods. This exchange took the form of Usner's exchange economy and created an environment that was based on interdependency rather than independency. Community and family were central to this economic environment.

Richard Melvoin reached similar conclusions in New England Outpost. Melvoin examined colonial Deerfield, Massachusetts and the impact of war and the frontier had on the town. Melvoin suggests that Deerfield became very community oriented, as in the lower Mississippi Valley. Due mainly to its frontier status, and to a degree, because of the ever-present danger of Indian attack, community in Deerfield outweighed the needs and desires of the individual. What emerged was a town that became, as Melvoin states,

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something "more than democratic." Most Deerfield male citizens had the power to vote, but when they did, according to Melvoin, consensus ruled, not the majority. The town seemed to act as if it were an individual, with little room for any of its members to rise individually.[13]

Within such a community barter became the dominant method of economic activity and community interdependence took on a greater degree of importance in the settlers' lives. Deerfield practiced subsistence farming and the close communal bonds caused an intense interdependency amongst the town members and settlers. Deerfield was extremely poor, which forced its inhabitants to become closer due to a sameness in condition. They needed one another for survival. As an exchange economy, Deerfield citizens ran up a series of debts. This brings to light another important aspect of the colonial economy: a lack of specie. Deerfielders went so far at to pay their taxes with crops. Because of this Melvoin concludes that Deerfield's economy was primarily one of barter with a complex system of exchange.[14]

This close, communal interdependence did not last long. Melvoin suggests that by 1729 the frontier had moved farther west, and with its absence the economy and political life changed. In politics, the majority began making decisions rather than by consensus. As this took shape, Melvoin opines that conflict rose and communal ties disintegrated. An increase in higher quality roads connected Deerfield to the east which in turn opened new markets. Land prices rose, which resulted in economic disparity as some of Deerfield's citizens became extremely poor and more dependent on those who had land. While barter

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[13] Melvoin, New England Outpost, 169.

[14] Ibid., 172-177.

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and exchange remained in Deerfield's economy, Melvoin alludes to a modern economic system taking shape as class divisions emerged. With more markets opening, the search for profits, rather than simply subsistence, became a prime objective.[15]

While Melvoin asserts that capitalism was taking form as early as 1729 in Deerfield, Christopher Clark finds something quite different as to the timing of the arrival of capitalism in North America. In The Roots of Rural Capitalism, Clark examines rural Massachusetts' economy and the transformation it experienced after the Revolution and through the antebellum period. Clark maintains that a non-capitalist, household economy existed in rural Massachusetts and it was only the outbreak of the Civil War which transformed Massachusettes into a modern, capitalist economy. Clark defines a capitalist economy as one in "which labor is commonly hired for wages by the proprietors of land or industrial enterprises, and there exists in society a significant number of people whose principal means of livelihood is the wage work that they can obtain." With colonial and post-Revolutionary rural Massachusetts relying on a household economy, wage labor hardly existed. The household economy created a subsistence-surplus system in which both independence and interdependence came together. Individuals owned their land and grew enough for their families. At the same time, they exchanged their surplus on local markets for goods they did not have.[16]

Demographic changes that began after the Revolution transformed this rural economy. A growing population and a decrease in land availability changed the nature of

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[15] Ibid., 252-257.

[16] Christopher Clark, The Rural Roots of Capitalism: Western Massachusetts, 1780-1860 Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1990), 3-58.

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the economy. As more of a family's land was divided into smaller plots, children inherited less and began to develop other skills. Manufacturing took on a new importance as families needed additional income in the home. After the 1820s, changes in the family enhanced the economic transformation. Families began getting smaller, which in turn caused less of a need for home production. In short, families began to purchase what they once made at home.[17]

What completed this economic transformation were the panics of 1819 and 1837. Particularly after the 1837 panic, a new reliance on cash rather than exchange took hold. Soon after a rise in the number of merchants occurred and market ties to the east became firmly established. As these characteristics developed, Clark suggests, class divisions became evident. The surplus portion of the farmer's production rose and increasingly played an important role in the market. With this, farmers cultivated cash crops which produced the need for more labor. Within this framework, wage labor was found to produce more for the market. By the Civil War, wage labor had become the norm in the North and for the first time a considerable number of residents of rural Massachusetts were living at home and working elsewhere. This marked the final stage in Clark's transformation of Massachusetts' rural economy.[18]

Central to Clark's thesis is the role the family played in this transformation. The family did more than simply react to a changing environment; it helped bring on the rise of wage labor. As the family reacted to changing demographics, it changed the look of the economy. Children learned new skills, women became involved in home manufacturing

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[17] Ibid., 121-191.

[18] Ibid., 195-313.

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and farmers sought cash crops. Taken together, these factors produced a need for wage labor. This in turn created a more modern economy.

While Clark presents an excellent argument and hits on many key issues dealing with the changing economy, he may be overgeneralizing due to his methodology. One has to wonder if rural Massachusetts typifies economic changes which occurred throughout the nation. Clark maintains western Massachusetts ideally represents the nation due to the large emigration from the area. As individuals emigrated to other regions within the United States, they took with them their values and societal norms. Yet this does not account for the diverse regional economies that were present. If we apply Henretta's mentalite to these Massachusetts emigrants, they would undoubtably change certain ways of thinking as new environments influenced their economic ability. Thus an individual moving to the South was confronted with different problems and economic constraints, which in turn would influence how they perceived the new economic structure in which they were working. Research by J. H. Soltow and Daniel B. Thorp suggests that a different economic atmosphere existed in the South during the colonial period; one that showed a degree of capitalist tendencies not found in Clark's research on the northeast.

Daniel Thorp's study of Rowan County, North Carolina, suggests that capitalistic, profit oriented tendencies existed as early as the 18th century within the taverns. Thorp suggests that the tavern keepers of North Carolina's backcountry served a vital role in the economy. Taverns linked local producers with outside markets, acted as distribution centers for locally produced products, and served as banks by providing access to both credit and cash. This allowed for a modern economy as they made markets available and credit stimulated economic growth. Credit also allowed for the economy to function

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without a reliance on barter and exchange. What is more important, however, Thorp argues that the tavern keepers had a capitalistic attitude in the way they priced items. Retailers accounted for labor, delivery, spoilage, and compensated for bad debts when they set the consumer price for an item. They even added in a little to insure they made a profit. Price negotiation was negligible as retailers made it quite clear they would not go down on any prices.[19]

T. H. Soltow presents a similar argument in his research on Scottish merchants in Virginia. The Scottish merchants in Virginia played a similar role as the tavern keepers in North Carolina. They were motivated by profit and went to extreme lengths to insure they obtained the best price they could on tobacco. Merchants attempted to monopolize the market as merchants from neighboring counties got together and attempted to fix prices at a certain level thus decreasing competitive pricing. The merchants also practiced a similar pricing method as the North Carolina tavern keepers in that they accounted for the hidden costs that went into an item, all the while insuring they made a profit. While Soltow discusses the importance of exchange and barter within Virginia's economy, he does note that the merchants were a source for credit. Credit is presented as beneficial to the overall economy as it allowed smaller planters access to funds in order to enlarge their land and labor holdings. In time this allowed for the planter to earn greater profits.[20]

Confronted with such findings, one has to wonder how representative the north east is of all the economic regions in the United States. It would appear that fewer communal ties

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[19] Thorp, "Business in the Backcountry," 386-408.

[20] J. H. Soltow, "Scottish Traders in Virginia, 1750-1775," The Economic History Review 12 (1959): 83-98.

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were evident in the southern backcountry. This affected the economy in such a way that entrepreneurial characteristics became evident in the tavern owners and Scottish merchants. Yet the main discrepancy between the works discussed thus far lies in the way each historian defines capitalism. While Clark recognizes wage labor as the determining characteristic of a capitalistic society, it appears Soltow and Thorp view profit and market pricing as attributes assigned to capitalism.

While the current research is at times contradictory, some generalities can be drawn about the transformation of the economic life of the British North American colonies and later United States. It would appear the family and community, rather than the individual, was a primary factor in the colonial and early United States' economy. The household was at the center of economic activity. Small markets existed through which excess goods were exchanged for items that were needed. Credit also played an important role as a lack of specie created the need for individuals to find other means to increase their land and labor holdings. These factors, along with geographical location and technology, influenced the mentalite of the common settler, and only by examining how the individual operated in such an environment can we begin to see how the economy was transformed.

This thesis will examine such factors and how they influenced the economic development in the New River Valley during the colonial and early national periods. Chapter One explores the history of the settlement of the New River Valley with European and Euro-American peoples and the societal ties they established with Eastern Virginia. It is argued that a definitive social hierarchy, similar to that which existed in the east, crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains with frontier settlers. Chapter Two examines the economic development of the New River Valley and the concrete ties between backcountry and

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eastern world markets through both import and export trade relations. This, along with the western emulation of eastern society as examined in Chapter One, creates serious doubt to the validity that the frontier developed in a vacuum with little or no ties to the core and semi-periphery societies from which the periphery grew. Rather the settlers moving into the New River Valley desired to create an environment similar to that from which they came and depended a great deal on both eastern and world markets for survival as goods were imported and exported from the Valley that allowed for successful emulation and economic survival. Chapter Three changes focus slightly in order to examine labor relations that existed along the frontier during the period in question. Through labor relationships, I show that not only were eastern practices copied, in the form of slave, indentured and convict servitude, but some modern economic elements such as wage labor co-existed with traditional work forces.

Finally, the concluding chapter will bring together all of the evidence presented and suggest that frontier settlers had a strong desire to re-create societies existing in the east and Europe, which in turn created an economic environment that was quite modern in character. Ties to eastern and world markets allowed for modern economic relationships to take hold as the valley not only participated in local trade but became directly linked to regional and world markets. All the while, a transition was occurring as traditional labor forms co-existed with various degrees of wage labor. By examining such relationships, certain modern, and capitalistic elements surface. Although the frontier economy was overwhelmingly traditional, in time these traditional elements dissolved. This work will determine what factors brought about the economic transformation and what elements of capitalism existed along the frontier that foreshadowed the eventual demise of the

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traditional economy.

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CHAPTER I

EXPLORATION, SETTLEMENT, AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE NEW RIVER VALLEY, 1745-1789

Beginning in the 1730s and 1740s, groups of pioneers began to settle within the valleys of Virginia, to the west of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The valleys offered a natural migration route that could take these pioneers into North Carolina or what would become Kentucky and Tennessee. These valleys were considered the frontier, an area with vast amounts of land open for settlement. Here was the edge of Britain's North American colonial westward expansion, an area where cultures met and danger was always present. Along the frontier, the "safe" world from which the settlers came was left behind. The frontier did not have a large population center with surplus manpower which could be drawn upon for protection. As they moved into the frontier, European culture met Indian culture. This at times was a source of contention as Indians tried, particularly beginning in 1754 with the outbreak of the French and Indian War, to control the exodus of pioneers moving westward. Yet at other times a source of trade was opened for both Indian and European as cultures met and exchanged goods.

As with any area that is a frontier, in time it ceases to be so. This occurs when either one culture becomes dominant in a region by either destroying the other cultures present or forcing them to move away, or when assimilation between the various cultures occurs. With the disappearance of conflicting cultures, the dominant culture has firmly established itself within the frontier area, thus allowing for the society to establish a culture

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representative of the culture from which it came. With this, the area ceases to be a frontier, but becomes the base from which people move further west. In other words, migration from the "core" settlements in the East creates a "periphery." In time the periphery takes on the characteristics of its core parent and becomes a semi-periphery region, from which future peripheries will grow.

Such was the case in the western valleys of Virginia in the 1730s and 1740s when groups began moving westward from other more settled areas in Eastern Virginia and Pennsylvania. Many were motivated by the chance of finding land, or possibly wanted to take advantage of the abundance of game found to the west. A few families, such as the Prestons, Lewis', and Breckenridges, acquired vast tracts of land which became the basis for their large fortunes. Virginia created new county governments. As populations grew within these western regions, members of the larger land holding families filled the new political positions.[1]

Since such a different way of life existed on the frontier, did the existing social hierarchy which had evolved in the east migrate with these pioneers into the valleys of Virginia along the frontier? To find the answer to this question, one must start at the beginning, with those first expeditions into the valleys west of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

These men were exploring the region west of the Blue Ridge Mountains in the present-day locations of southwest Virginia and southern West Virginia, which consisted of

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[1] F. B. Kegley and Mary B. Kegley, Early Adventurers on the Western Waters (Orange, Virginia: Green Publishers, Inc., 1980), 153; Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 52-53; Turk McCleskey, "Across the First Divide: Frontiers of Settlement and Culture in Augusta County, Virginia 1745-1770" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1990), 24.

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vast, fertile land, which was, for the most part, uninhabited by Indians. This had not always been the case, however, as numerous pieces of evidence point to pre-European occupation of the region. Archeologists have found numerous remains of Native American settlements in Waynesboro, along Lewis Creek, located below Staunton, and at Jarman's Gap. Of particular importance to understanding early Native American occupancy of the area is the Shannon Site, an archeological dig located in the Ellett Valley five miles east of Blacksburg. It appears that the Native American's living in the valley built a palisaded village with an open plaza in the center. The village was oval shaped measuring 322 feet north to south and 210 feet east to west. The poles of the palisade were anywhere from .3 feet to .9 feet in diameter and spaced .5 to 1 foot apart. The structure overlapped in several places, indicating repair and or rebuilding. Close to the walls inside the palisade were 11 houses or small structures, thus leaving the center of the village open. The small diameter of the holes around these structures suggest that small saplings were run into the ground and bent over, then tied creating a dome shaped structure. Bark, animal hides and/or leaves were then placed over the dome providing the inhabitant with shelter from the elements. The larger houses had refuge pits or fire pits inside while smaller structures had similar pits outside nearby. Two entrances were present in the village with the one located in the north-west corner providing easy access to the spring running nearby. There was no evidence of the palisade having been burned which suggests that the village was abandoned by the Native Americans who left the palisade intact. Since there were no European trade goods in the area, the village probably was abandoned sometime prior to

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1671.[2]

White settlement of the Virginia frontier began when a series of expeditions were encouraged and sponsored by the Virginia Royal Government. In 1654, Colonel Abraham Wood led an expedition across the Blue Ridge and Allegheny Mountains. The Government of Virginia gave Col. Wood permission to try and establish trade with the Indians living west of the Alleghenies.[3] Wood and his party moved westward from Fort Henry, located at the falls of the Appomattox at the current site of Petersburg. Through the "Trader's Path," Wood and his party made their way towards the Alleghenies. Several theories hold that Wood's expedition crossed the Alleghenies at the present-day location of "Wood's Gap," located in Floyd County. From here, Wood moved down the Little River until it connected with a different body of water, which Wood named Wood's River." By 1750, Wood's River became known as the New River.[4]

After Wood's expedition of 1654, several more expeditions came from eastern Virginia to explore the west in search of the Indian Ocean, which until 1744 was still thought to be just on the other side of the Alleghenies. These expeditions included Captain Henry Batte's in 1666, Thomas Batts in 1671, and Governor Spotswood and the Knights of the Golden Horseshoe in 1716. In 1730, John Salling was captured by Cherokee

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[2] Patrick Lovegrove, "The History of Indians in Augusta County," Augusta Historical Bulletin 27 (1991): 5; Joseph L. Benthall, Archeological Investigation of the Shannon Site Montgomery County, Virginia (Richmond: Virginia State Library Publications, No. 32, 1969), ix, x, 1, 2, 19, 20-27.

[3] David E. Johnston, A History of Middle New River Valley Settlements (Huntington: Standard PTG Pub. Co., 1906), 8.

[4] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 1; Charles W. Crush, The Montgomery County Story 1776-1957 (N. Manchester: The Heckman Bindery, Inc., 1957); Johnston, A History, 8.

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Indians and taken across the New River, making him the first white man to actually cross the river. In the Spring of 1742, John Peter Salley arrived in the Valley on his way to the Mississippi, where the French captured him and took him to New Orleans. With settlement beginning to take place in the Valley in the early 1740s, surveyors began moving into the area. For example, in 1749 when Dr. Thomas Walker, Christopher Gist, and Colonel James Patton crossed the New River and surveyed land for various companies they were intent on selling western land for profit.[5]

Although Native Americans had occupied the New River valley prior to European settlement, the area had been primarily abandoned by the time Europeans began to move into the region beginning in the 1740s. Some Indians, the Canawhas, lived in present-day Floyd and Carroll Counties, while to the south lived the Cherokees, and in the north lived the Shawnees. Mainly, however, Indians came to the region from the south and north in order to hunt or fight with neighboring tribes. While surveying the border between Virginia and North Carolina in the late 1720s, William Byrd made mention of this when he entered the southern Virginia frontier and wrote that his group was "now near the Route the Northern Savages take when they go out to War against the Cataubas and other Southern Nations."[6] As settlers moved into the region skirmishes occurred between the immigrants and Indians. The first recorded incident of fighting between the settlers and the Indians was in 1742, costing the Indians seventeen men while the settlers lost eight. For the most part, however, the area remained relatively peaceful with good relations existing

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[5] Johnston, A History, 8-9; Crush, Montgomery County Story, 3-4; Kegley, Early Adventurers, 3.

[6] William Byrd, William Byrd's Histories of the Dividing Line Betwixt Virginia and North Carolina, ed. William K. Boyd (New York: Dover Publications Inc., 1967), 218.

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between settler and Indian until the outbreak of the French and Indian War.[7]

In 1744, with the Treaty of Lancaster, the Six Nations of Iroquois, who used the western lands of Virginia as a route to invade other Indian nations, renounced any claim they had to land in Virginia, thus opening the valleys of Virginia for settlement.[8] In the Spring of 1745, the Wood's River Company took advantage of this peace with the Iroquois and obtained a grant of 100,000 acres. The Wood's River company consisted of twenty men who were in charge of selling the land to potential buyers. James Patton, John Buchanan, and George Robinson, all members of the Wood's River Company, signed the terms of the Wood's River Grant. Under the grant, anyone who bought land before May of 1748, could buy it for four pounds and five shillings per hundred acres. The buyer would pay some money down by May 1, 1748, and complete the payment by April of 1749. Anyone who bought land had to be living on it by April 15, 1748, and pay twenty-five shillings upon moving there. Anyone buying land was also forbidden to sell that land until six months after their purchase, in order to increase the stability of the region. John Buchanan was made surveyor and Peter Rentfroe was given the job of showing potential buyers the land. Land sales began in 1746, and by 1753, most of the good land had already been purchased. The outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, ended land sales, and the Proclamation of 1763 completely prohibited westward settlement. The various land companies for the most part adhered to the law, however settlers did tend to

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[7] Henry E. Albert, Log Cabin Heritage (Pulaski: B.D. Smith and Bros., Printers, Inc., 1976), 2-3; F. B. Kegley, Kegley's Virginia Frontier (Roanoke: The Southwest Virginia Historical Society, 1938), 154; Johnston, A History, 8.

[8] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 8.

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ignore the Proclamation and continue moving west.[9]

In addition to the Wood's River Company, the loyal Land Company, Greenbrier Company, and the Ohio Company were formed. The Virginia government granted land along the Greenbrier River to the Greenbrier Company, which appointed Andrew Lewis as their surveyor. In 1748, the Ohio Company was established. Five hundred thousand acres of land, which lay between the Monongahela River and the Kanawha River, were granted to this company. The most successful company was the Loyal Land Company, led by Thomas Walker, which was formed in July of 1749.[10] These companies carved out the land west of the Blue Ridge Mountains and Alleghenies and sold the land to settlers trying to better their opportunities or expand on possessions already owned. No one knows for sure when the first settlers actually entered the New River Valley, but there were settlers in the Valley prior to the Wood's River Grant. The earliest hard evidence that settlements were established before 1745, was found in 1780 as settlers were moving into present-day Giles County. Here was found the remains of a cabin and headstone which read "Mary Porter was killed by the Indians November 28, 1742."[11] The Porters may have been the first group to move into the area, no one knows for sure. Due to this evidence, it can be reasonably safe to assume that white settlers were living in the New River Valley at least as early as 1742, and possibly even as early as the late 1730s.

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[9] Ibid., 8-10.

[10] Ibid., 13-15, 24, 25, 27.

[11] Heavener, German Settlement, 20, 21, 29; Albert H. Tillson, Jr., "The Localist Roots of Backcountry Loyalism: An Examination of Popular Political Culture in Virginia's New River Valley," The Journal of Southern History 14 (August 1988): 391, 392, 395.

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After the Wood's River Grant, Buchanan traveled through the Valley and met with settlers already living in the area. Buchanan found the Ephrata Brethren living in Dunker's Bottom (present day Claytor Lake), Jacob and Adam Harmon living on the New River, and the appraisal of the estate of William Mack of "Mack's" or Max Meadows was done by Buchanan, thus establishing a residence near present-day Fort Chiswell. All of these people had moved into the area sometime prior to 1745. In 1745, before the Wood's River Company was fully organized, Patton set up the Draper's Meadows settlement. Patton convinced George Draper to settle there along with his family. Shortly thereafter, the Drapers were joined by Thomas Ingles, Henry Leonard and James Burk.

Between 1730 and 1760, the number of Germans, Scots, and Irish increased along the Virginia frontier. By 1749 the New River Valley and the surrounding regions contained 1,423 adult white males, and by 1755 this number had grown to 2,273 adult white males.[12] The first white settlers in the New River Valley were most likely the Germans. Many of these Germans were driven away from Palatinate Germany due to religious disputes. From there, they went to Pennsylvania, then would cross the Potomac near Harper's Ferry, and finally work their way down the Shenandoah Valley. Adam Miller settled in Massanutten in 1726, and after this more Germans began moving into the Shenandoah Valley. From here, these groups slowly moved down into the New River Valley.

Out of all the ethnic groups settling in the New River Valley, the Germans tended to settle most in distinct, ethnic based communities. This was seen at Tunker's Bottom,

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[12] Albert H. Tillson, Gentry and Common Folk: Political Culture on a Virginia Frontier 1740-1789 (Lexington: The University Press of Kentucky, 1991), 9.

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settled sometime prior to 1745 on the "Horseshoe" of the New River near present-day McCoy, when the Germans settled there as a distinct community. Germans eventually spread to Prices Fork. Here again they lived as a community. This area became known as the "German New River Settlement." The Germans tended to practice subsistence farming, and rarely intermarried with or sold land to other ethnic groups residing in the Valley. In addition to living in close-knit communities, the Germans attempted to retain as many of their own cultural practices as possible. These German communities continued to write hymn books and sermons and speak in German up until 1840. German settlers also tended to copy the architecture of southwest Germany. Family life for the Germans centered around the *Kuche*, a place in the home which served as both a kitchen and a family meeting room. As a result of the close community ties of the Germans and their practice of preserving their heritage, they were rarely seen in government circles, which tended to be made up of the English-speaking groups.[13]

This strong reliance on community and cultural preservation might also have produced a degree of suspicion and distrust by the German's ethnically diverse neighbors. Leonhard Schnell and Robert Hussey, two Moravians traveling through Virginia on their way to Georgia, wrote in their diaries that while staying the night at an English home they were persistently questioned by their host who took them "to be spies." The following day the host and his neighbor "escorted," with rifles, the Moravians to a local justice. Upon reading the Moravian's passports the justice allowed them to continue on their way without

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[13] Johnston, A History, 9-11.

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any further mishaps.[14] The Englishmen could have harbored such suspicions due to the isolationist tendencies of German settlers. With their strong degree of community and ethnic awareness, other ethnic groups saw the Germans as something foreign and possibly threatening.

While Germans accounted for a large number of the immigrants in the Shenandoah Valley and were possibly the first settlers in the New River Valley, they were not the most numerous ethnic group in that region. For the most part, Scots, Irish, English, Scots-Irish, and Welsh made up the largest percentages of settlers moving into the New River Valley and upon settling there generally made thier living either by hunting or farming.[15] Those who hunted found an abundance of game. Again, William Byrd during his surveying trip between Virginia and North Carolina, continually noted the presence of plentiful game. On one day alone Byrd noted that his party shot four deer and four turkeys while "Robert Hix saw 3 Buffalos, but his gun being loaden only with Shot cou'd do no Execution." Later in the expedition the party successfully killed one deer and "the Men knock't down no less than 4 Bears & 2 Turkeys" leading Byrd to conclude that "this was truly a Land of Plenty both for Man & Beast."[16] This abundance of game did not go unnoticed by Moravians traveling through the region either. Joseph Spangenberg and Matthew Reutz mentioned in their diaries that their party was "frequently visited by the elks, which are numerous in those mountains," while Leonard Schnell and John Brandmueller noted that

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[14] Robert Hussey and Leonhard Schnell, "Moravian Diaries of Travels Through Virginia," ed. Rev. William J. Hinke and Charles E. Kemper, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 11, (April, 1904): 379.

[15] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 5.

[16] Byrd, Histories of the Dividing Line, 169, 209.

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their host gave them "some of their bear meat, which can be found in every house in this district."[17]

With such an abundance of game, settlers could supply clothes, food, and furs for markets in the East. Hunters could track down buffalo, elk, deer, wild turkeys and pigeons, wolves, panthers, and bear. All of these animals were found in an area known as the "Barrens" located in Kentucky which the hunters reached through the Cumberland Gap.[18] Hunters typically left to go on a hunting trip, either alone or in small groups, during the month of October and returned the following March or April. As game moved farther away, hunting trips would last longer, possibly as long as two years. Hunters that participated on such expeditions were known as "Long Hunters." A hunter's typical apparel consisted of a hunting shirt, leggings, and moccasins. The hunter carried with him powder and lead for his rifle, screwplate and files for repairing his gun, traps, blankets, and various other supplies. With him he would take two pack horses to help him carry his equipment, and a dog, for sniffing out game. Hunters would enter an area in groups of fifteen to thirty men. Once in an area and having set up a base camp, they broke down into groups of twos and threes and spread out across a large area.[19]

Those that chose to make a living farming instead found that the soil in the New River Valley was not sufficient for growing tobacco, so tried other cash crops instead. Farmers

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[17] Matthew Reutz and Joseph Spangenberg, "Moravian Diaries Through Virginia," ed. Rev. William J. Hinke and Charles E. Kemper, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 11 (January, 1904), 239; John Brandmueller and Leonhard Schnell, "Moravian Diaries Through Virginia," ed. Rev. William J. Hinke and Charles E. Kemper, The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 11 (October, 1903), 122.

[18] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 81-83; Johnston, A History, 10-11.

[19] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 82-83.

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typically grew corn, wheat, flax, hemp, and rye. Corn was used for bread, but wheat was the preferred ingredient for making this product. Rye was used for bread also, but in addition it was used to produce whiskey. By the Revolution, hemp and flax were the biggest cash crops grown in the Valley. Beginning in 1770, the average hemp producer grew 100,000 pounds of hemp a year. The tools the farmer used consisted of hoes, spades, plows, and mattocks, with scythes and sickles used for harvesting hay and grain.[20]

With the soil in the Valley producing blue grass and wild cane, which is ideal for horses and cattle, livestock became an important supplemental agricultural product for the settlers. The horse played an extremely important role in frontier life for the pioneers. Between 1745 and 1769, out of fifteen appraisals, every estate had at least two horses with an average of thirteen per estate. Between 1745 and 1769, out of sixty-four estates, 526 horses were reported, with an average of 8 horses per estate.[21] The inventories of Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties during the years 1770-1790 show a total of 150 estates out of 172, 87.2% of the inventories, listing at least one horse (see Table 2.4). The tax list of 1790 for Montgomery County reveals similar evidence of the large number of horses in the New River Valley. In 1,707 estates of record, 6,459 horses were listed. This comes out to an average of 3.17 horses for every taxable male over sixteen years old, and 3.8 horses for each household taxed. Robert Davis had the most horses, numbering 45, with William Preston being second, having 40 horses. One hundred and twenty-four of the Montgomery County estates had no horses at all, which was 7.3 percent

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[20] Ibid., 159, 161, 162.

[21] Ibid., 153.

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of the taxed estates.[22]

The large number of horses within the New River Valley was above the average number of horses in other communities. For example, in Chester County, Pennsylvania, each farm had an average of 2.7 horses in the year 1765. Falmouth Maine's farms contained an even smaller number during the year 1760 when each farm had an average of one horse. In Kentucky for the year 1800, the average number of horses for each grown male was two. One possible reason for the need for horses in the New River Valley was the fact that travel on the New River was impossible for any distance. Several falls on the river impeded navigation. Another problem with travel on the river was that it flowed west, away from the fertile valleys; the river simply flowed the wrong way to help with transportation. Horses were vital for transportation of both goods and people. Horses were also used to pull plows, wagons, and carts. There is some evidence that horses were also used as a source for entertainment due to the existence of a racetrack in present-day Radford beside the New River which was built between 1780 and 1793.[23]

Just as there were a variety of economic activities, there was class variation as well. The average family lived in a small, one-room log cabin which had a fireplace on one end. The parents slept with the younger children in front of the fireplace, while the older children often slept in a loft. Food was kept in the cabin inside sacks which were hung from the rafters in order to keep out mice and rats. The degree of poverty in the area led

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[22] Botetourt County Court House, Fincastle, Virginia, Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Court House, Christiansburg, Virginia, Will Book B, 1-152; Netti Schreiner-Yatis, Montgomery County Tax Table, Virginia—Circa 1790 (Springfield: By the author, 1972), 1-42.

[23] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 154-155.

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William Byrd to write that the home of Cornelius Keith was the "wretchedest Scene of Poverty I had ever met with in this happy Part of the World. The Man, his Wife and Six Small Children, Liv'd in a Penn, like so many Cattle, without any Roof over their Heads but that of Heaven." Byrd noted that "when it rain'd, or was colder than Ordinary, the whole Family took refuge in a Fodder Stack."[24] These poor living conditions were not overlooked by the Moravians either. Leonhard Schnell and John Brandmueller noted that "The manner of living is rather poor in this district. The clothes of the people consist of deer skins. Their food of Johnny cakes, deer and bear meat. A kind of white people are found here, who live like savages." Generally the average pioneer had one set of clothing, thus washday usually came about every one or two months.[25]

Not all settlers in the New River Valley lived in this manner. A small percentage of the population consisted of the rich land owners. These families had larger homes and typically had servants to do many of their chores. The average dinner for this gentry class consisted of three types of meat, soup, vegetables, bread, fruit, and possibly wine. These landowners owned fairly large farms which for the most part, but not entirely, were self-supporting.

Although there were relatively few slaves in the New River Valley, it was these large landowners who owned the bulk of them. According to the 1782 Montgomery County tax list, out of 1,339 tax paying free males over 21 years old, 565 slaves were shown. The average number of slaves owned by a slave holder on this list was 3.62 and the slave

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[24] Byrd, Histories of the Dividing Line, 304-305.

[25] Brandmueller and Schnell, "Moravian Diaries," 123; Albert, Log Cabin Heritage, 5-6.

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holding group made up 11.65 percent of the taxable population. The tax lists of Montgomery County representing the years 1788 and 1790 show similar, yet smaller, percentages of slaves and slave owners. During these years, slave owners made up 8.45 and 9.4 percent of the tithables with the average slave holder owning 2.45 slaves and 2.7 slaves, respectively. By 1790, the largest slave holders were William Preston, who had twenty-two slaves listed on the tax tables, and Andrew Boyd, with ten slaves listed. William Preston was considered the wealthiest man in the county, and after his death he left behind quite a rich estate which included 7,022 acres of land. Andrew Boyd had acquired at least 2,740 acres of land by 1790. James McGavock, who listed six slaves on the tax table, had acquired around 3,800 acres of land. Thus the larger landowners owned the most slaves.[26]

While it is possible that these slaves were used to help out in the fields with the production of hemp and flax, some evidence suggests that other roles were found for the slaves. In the early 1760s, the importation of slaves peaked, yet hemp production did not fully take off until 1767, thus slave importation began before the production of hemp. In 1767, when hemp production peaked, 250 individuals were certified for hemp production. Of the 250, approximately 30 owned slaves, implying slaves were not heavily involved in hemp production. It would seem that slaves along the frontier were used in other capacities rather than as field hands. In whatever way slaves were used, the fact remained that the rich landowner was the one who controlled the land, the majority of slaves, and the

[26] Mary B. Kegley, Tax List of Montgomery County, Virginia 1782 (Roanoke: by author, 1974), 1-37; Netti Schreiner-Yantis, Montgomery County, Virginia Tax Lists - - - A, B & C For the Year 1788 (Roanoke: by author, 1972), 1-16; Schreiner-Yatis, Tax List, Circa 1790, 1-42.

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political power.[27]

As immigrants moved into the Virginia frontier, they tended to emulate the social-political structure of the settlements in the east. The wealthiest also controlled the political environment. With the movement west, a need for county governments arose. In 1745, Augusta County was formed out of Orange County. Augusta County encompassed all land west of the Alleghenies to the Pacific Ocean, obviously an unenforceable claim. In 1770, Botetourt County was formed out of Augusta County which was in turn partitioned into Fincastle and Greenbrier Counties in 1772. Fincastle County only existed for four years, at which point it was divided into three new counties: Washington, Kentucky, and Montgomery.[28] In 1745, however, the New River Valley was in Augusta County and the wealthiest landowners held the political power.

For example, the three men who signed the Wood's River Grant, James Patton, John Buchanan, and George Robinson, were named as justices of the newly formed Augusta County. All three of these men had also settled in the county as early as 1738. In 1745, James Patton owned at least 474 acres of land in Augusta County, and by 1753 he had acquired 1,990 more acres in the region. Between the years of 1746 and 1754, Patton sold 31,291 acres of land, by 115 separate deeds. The total of these purchases added up to a little over 2,050 pounds, Virginia currency. Much of this land had come from the 100,000 acres acquired in the Wood's River Grant. John Buchanan had 634 acres in the county while George Robinson possessed 892 acres. John Lewis, another justice in Augusta

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[27] Ibid., 1-42; Albert, Log Cabin Heritage, 6; Tillson, "Localist," 391; Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 65, 69, 87, 275, 276, 350; McCleskey, "Across the First Divide," 154-155.

[28] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 44.

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County, owned 2,071 acres in Augusta County and was among the first settlers in the area. Of eight justices who left records, all had a substantial amount of land in Augusta County; thus it is possible that these individuals owned more property in the eastern counties of Virginia. A similar trend occurred among the other offices of the county. Wealthier individuals held government positions in Augusta County. James Patton was, in addition to being a justice, named as both Sheriff and County Lieutenant. William Thompson, who had 947 acres of land, was named Surety. John Buchanan held the position of Deputy Sheriff, and as mentioned was also a justice. Henry Downs, who had been given a grant for 50,000 acres of land, was also named Deputy Sheriff. Constables for the New River Valley included George Draper, Peter Rentfroe, James Calhoun, William Leapard, and Adam Harman. George Draper had set up the Draper's Meadows settlement, James Calhoun acquired at least 610 acres of land by 1749, and Adam Harman had considerable land holdings along the New River. Andrew Lewis, a captain in the Augusta militia, was the surveyor for the Greenbrier Company, which had been granted 100,000 acres of land.[29] These men had land, and as in the east, they retained the power in county politics.

Through the control of both county politics and land, the gentry class along the frontier was able to maintain a social hierarchy which mirrored that of eastern Virginia. By

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[29] Crush, Montgomery County Story, 17; Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 31-44, 86, 117-125; Kegley, Early Adventurers, 14, 45, 46; Augusta County Deed Books: 1:35, 1:375, 1:491, 1:512, 2:65, 2:521, 2:735, 2:738, 2:845, 3:13, 4:37, 4:76, 4:80, 4:84, 4:88, 4:92, 4:95, 4:99, 4:104, 4:108, 4:112, 4:116, 4:120, 4:124, 4:127, 4:131, 4:135, 4:139, 4:142, 4:146, 4:150, 4:153, 4:157, 4:160, 4:165, 4:169, 4:462, 5:36, 5:38, 5:41, 5:44, 5:46, 5:49, 5:52, 5:55, 5:58, 5:61, 5:70, 5:73, 5:76, 5:79, 5:81, 5:84, 5:87, 5:90, 5:92, 5:95, 5:98, 5:101, 5:103, 5:106, 5:109, 5:111, 5:114, 5:289, 5:303, 5:306, 5:309, 5:312, 5:332, 5:376, 5:460, 5:509, 5:511, 5:514, 5:517, 5:533, 6:32, 6:35, 6:38, 6:41, 6:45, 6:48, 6:51, 6:55, 6:58, 6:61, 6:64, 6:67, 6:70, 6:73, 6:76, 6:79, 6:82, 6:85, 6:88, 6:91, 6:94, 6:136, 6:139, 6:141, 6:144, 6:147, 6:150, 6:152, 6:155, 6:158, 6:160, 6:163, 6:166, 6:168, 6:438, 6:462, 6:465.

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owning land and renting large parts of their property, the large landowners decided who could and could not buy land, which limited opportunity and reinforced a social hierarchy. Throughout the first twenty-five years of Augusta County's existence, two-thirds of all adult males who could be taxed owned no land at all. Only 16 of 216 indentured servants who served their time before 1770, went on to become freeholders in Augusta County.[30]

Such a dynamic existed because of the process by which one obtained land. In order to purchase land, one had to have the county surveyor mark a tract of land and then submit the survey to Williamsburg, where the secretary would issue a Freehold Patent. Both established landholders and surveyors could deny newcomers the help they needed in purchasing land. Surveyors could hold certain tracts for others or take too long in submitting a survey, allowing someone else to beat the person out. Established landowners could deny the help needed in attaining property because they either had land of their own to sell or simply did not want more competition in the area. The gentry were so successful in controlling property that only one out of every four potential land purchasers acquired any land at all. Connections were needed and additional land holdings were preferable if one was to buy land in Augusta County.[31]

Since few people were able to purchase land, many rented land to farm; they became tenant farmers. Since few people had the opportunity to acquire land, renting land became a common practice which brought about relationships on the frontier between landowner and non-landowner similar to those in the east. Tenants paid rent by cash, crops, or

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[30] Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (July 1990): 452, 462, 463.

[31] Ibid., 452, 462, 463.

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service. The rentee and renter renewed their agreement annually, giving complete control to the landowner. This reinforced the idea of a social hierarchy by always showing what level in society a person occupied.[32]

One last element of society reinforced and reflected this social hierarchy: the local militia. On the Virginia frontier, the possibility of an Indian attack was always present. This was not a major problem until the outbreak of the French and Indian War in 1754, when troops were raised in order to defend the settlers from possible Indian attacks. Not surprisingly, the men who led these troops and raised the various ranger companies were the same men who held political power in the region, the large landowners. The companies that were raised along the frontier tended to mirror the form, leadership, and composition of the military units created in eastern Virginia. In both, the poor tended to make up the ranks, while the rich, established landowners took the command.

During the French and Indian War, the Virginia frontier was left vulnerable to Indian attack, as it bordered regions controlled by French and their native allies. The result of events developing along the frontier which sparked the conflict that within two years would have global implications as France and England reached their climax of colonial warfare. The Virginia Council perceived a threat as the French encroached in the Ohio River Valley. When the French refused to abandon the area, Governor Dinwiddie took the Council's advice in January, 1754, and declared war. Dinwiddie recruited one hundred men from Fredrick and Augusta Counties and placed them under the command of George Washington, who in turn led these men to the frontier. Captain William Trent was ordered to raise as many men as he could "to annoy the enemy" and build a fort at the forks of the

[32] Ibid., 454, 457, 459, 461.

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Ohio River. Ten thousand pounds were appropriated by the House of Burgesses for the defense of the frontier. With this funding, Dinwiddie put forth the Proclamation of 1754 which put aside 200,000 acres of land that was to later be divided among the soldiers who served in the Provincial Army.[33]

Dinwiddie had a tough time passing these measures, for it was felt by some representatives that the French presence in the Ohio Valley was not a real problem, but had been made to appear so in order to further the goals of the Ohio Company. The Ohio Company had already sent men into the disputed region in order to construct a stockade, thus the feeling that the Ohio Company was pulling Virginia into a war was strongly felt by many in the Assembly. Another problem which arose was that it was not clear as to whether the land in question belonged to Pennsylvania or Virginia. As such, if the land was outside Virginia's borders, it would be illegal to send the militia into that area. A volunteer provincial army was organized which negated the need to call out the militia, thus making an invasion of the disputed territory legal. On the frontier, volunteer ranger companies were formed in order to garrison forts and protect the settlers. Local and provincial officials were to call out the militia only in the most extreme emergencies.[34]

Having acquired the 10,000 pounds, Dinwiddie began to rase six companies of men which would ideally consist of fifty men in each. These men assembled in Alexandria and were put under the command of Colonel Fry. In March, 1754, George Washington was made Lieutenant Colonel of the Virginia Provincial Army. This changed in May of 1754

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[33] George Washington, The Papers of George Washington, W.W. Abbot (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1983), 2:55-65.

[34] James Russell Wade Titus, "Soldiers When They Chose to Be So: Virginians at War, 1754-1763" (Master's Thesis, Rutgers University, 1983), 50-52.

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when Colonel Fry was thrown a horse and died. At that time Washington was made commander of the Virginia Army.[35]

While in Alexandria, Washington prepared his troops for their march to the Ohio River Valley. Washington's letters reported to Governor Dinwiddie that supplies were short and the men who volunteered came from poor backgrounds. Washington mentioned that tents were needed due to a lack of linen in the area to make any. Also mentioned as being needed were "Cutlasses, Halberds, Officer's half Pikes, Drum's &ca." Even more important, and more illuminating as to what type of people made up the army, Washington mentioned in two letter to Dinwiddie, one dated March 7, 1754, the other dated March 9, 1754, that the men were in need of clothes. Washington wrote that the ". . . Enlisted, are of Loose, Idle Persons that are quite destitute of House, and Home, and I may truly say many of them Cloths." Washington went on to say that many were lacking shoes, stockings, shirts, and coats.[36]

As to the question of clothing, Washington felt that uniforms would have been quite helpful in remedying the situation. Uniforms would take care of clothing all the men, and by making the uniforms red, the Indians would have been intimidated. Washington reasoned that the Indians would associate the red uniforms with blood, thus representing the soldiers as being great warriors and giving the troops a psychological edge.[37]

In addition to being undersupplied and the men being underclothed, Washington

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[35] Ibid., 50-52; Washington, Papers of George Washington, 2:63-65; Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 207-208.

[36] Washington, Papers of George Washington, 2:71-72.

[37] Ibid., 2:71-72.

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related to Dinwiddie that the men had inquired as to when their payment began. Washington mentioned this in both of his letters to Dinwiddie, suggesting an urgency to resolve the question. This could indicate that money was a prime motivating force in the men's decision to volunteer for service in the army. Dinwiddie responded to Washington that there were no more pikes, cutlasses, or halberds for the officers, that uniforms were acceptable, but there was no time to make any so they had to be sent to the troops after they left Alexandria, and that the solders' pay began the day they enlisted.[38]

Washington led his men into the Ohio River Valley and on July 3, 1754, was defeated at the Great Meadows. While the frontier and the New River Valley remained quiet throughout the Spring and Summer of 1754, beginning in September reports began to surface of Indian depredations. These first reports were small incidents involving Indian parties robbing settlers along the frontier. Dinwiddie dispatched Captain Andrew Lewis to the frontier with forty to fifty men in order to try and protect the settlers' property. Colonel Patton instructed Lewis where these troops should be deployed and there were no major problems with Indians along the frontier until after General Braddock's defeat on the Monongahela. This defeat left the frontier virtually unprotected.[39]

General Braddock arrived in America and assumed his position as Commander in Chief of all British forces in North America in February of 1755. From May through June of that year, Braddock led an army into the Ohio River Valley with the objective of extracting the French. On July 9, events took a turn for the worse as Braddock's men marched into an ambush along the Monongahela, which resulted in both his defeat and

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[38] Ibid., 71-76.

[39] Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 208-210.

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death. The frontier was now left open to attacks by Indians as it was left virtually unprotected.[40]

Between October 1754 and August 1755, twenty-one individuals were killed along the frontier, seven wounded, and nine captured. Colonel Patton was among those killed when the Shawnee Indians attacked the Draper's Meadows settlement in July 1755. In addition to Patton, Mrs. George Draper, Casper Barrier, and a child of John Draper were killed in what was later known as the Draper's Meadows Massacre. In this event, James Cull was wounded and Mrs. William Ingles, Mrs. John Draper, and Henry Leonard were captured. The Indians set fire to the buildings in the settlement and then headed back north. On their way they killed an old man, put his head in a bag and left it on the porch of Philip Lybrook. The Indians then went down the New River, crossed it above the mouth of Bluestone, followed Paint creek to the Kanawha, and then followed the Ohio back to their camp.[41]

In order to take steps towards protecting the frontier, Dinwiddie gave Colonel Patton, who was county lieutenant until his death at the Draper's Meadows Massacre, blank commissions in order for him to establish leaders who would raise groups of volunteers to protect the frontier. As in the East, wealthier individuals or those who had relatives with some degree of political power received these commissions. William Preston was the first to receive a commission as Captain which lasted from July 14, 1755 until June 24, 1756. Preston formed a company of rangers which included two lieutenants, two sergeants, and fifty additional enlisted men. Preston's lieutenants were Audley Paul and David Robinson.

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[40] Ibid., 209-210.

[41] Ibid., 210; Johnston, A History, 19-21.

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His sergeants included George Elliot and John Walker, who were the first two to enlist. Archibald Buchanan was listed as the companies corporal. Audley Paul's widowed mother had married Colonel David Stewart of Augusta county, thus giving him a possibly influential relative. Paul had been with Braddock when he met his defeat on the Monongahela and while fighting there lost his horse. In 1757 Paul erected a fort along the frontier known as Paul's Fort. By 1792, Paul had come to possess at least 522 acres of land. David Robinson possessed at least 645 acres of land when the French and Indian War began. He acquired 167 more acres in 1756 and after the war gained 2,000 acres for his service. In 1769 he was made a justice of the newly-formed Botetourt County. John Walker had acquired 1,372 acres of land by 1754 and had been a captain in the militia; he was captured at Fort Vause, located in present-day Shawsville, in 1756. Archibald Buchanan, listed as a weaver, later gained 200 acres of land for being the eldest brother and heir of James Buchanan, who served on the Sandy Creek Expedition.[42] The officers of the company had substantial land holdings.

Preston's frontier militia company of 1755 had many similarities to that of the Virginia Provincial Army, again emulating Eastern Virginia society. Statistics have been compiled for the Provincial Army of 1756 and 1757 using "size-rolls," which list the size, occupation, birthplace, and age of each enlistee.[43] Using a similar "size-roll" for Preston's company of 1755, one can see that the makeup of the three military units were more alike than unlike. In Preston's company, four men fell between the ages of 15 and 19, thirty-

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[42] Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 45, 76, 98, 103, 109, 142, 210-213, 232, 275, 279, 381, 436.

[43] Titus, "Soldiers When They Chose to Be So," 165.

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eight between 20 and 29, six between 30 and 39, four between 40 and 49, and no men were above the age of 42 nor below the age of 18. The average age of the company was 26.3 years old. The vast majority of the company was not born in Virginia. Twenty-four listed that they came from Ireland, twelve from England, eight from Pennsylvania, three from Germany, and one came from New Jersey, Scotland, and New England, respectively. Only two listed that they were born in Virginia. Sixty-seven and three tenths percent of the soldiers listed no occupation. Eight men, 15 percent, from the company ended up deserting. Seven of these eight had also listed not having a profession, while one listed his occupation as being a carpenter.[44]

Both Provincial Armies had an age grouping similar to Preston's company. Seven and six-tenths percent of Preston's men were 15 to 19 years old, while 11.1 percent and 8.4 percent of the soldiers in the 1756 and 1757 armies, respectively, fell in that same age bracket. In all three groups the highest percentage of men were 20 to 29 years old. As in Preston's company, the majority of soldiers in the Provincial Armies listed that they were from someplace other than Virginia. The percentage, however, was not as large as that of Preston's company. The army of 1756 was composed of 58.6 percent immigrants while the army of 1757 was composed of 59.7 percent immigrants. Preston's company consisted of 96.1 percent immigrants. A possible explanation for this was that Preston was on the frontier. More immigrants moving into Virginia possibly settled on the frontier in the hope of finding land. In the Provincial Armies, 5 percent of the soldiers listed that they had no job. In Preston's company, 67.3 percent listed no occupation. This discrepancy can be explained, however, by the fact that 60 percent of the jobs listed on the Virginia Provincial

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[44] Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 212.

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Army "size-rolls" were considered to be low-ranking jobs in the social order.[45] Therefore, when the 5 percent of nonworking soldiers from the Provincial Army "size-roll" is added to this number, 65 percent of the soldiers in the Provincial Army were in the lower classes. This is a closer comparison to the 67.3 percent unemployed members of Preston's company, which would also be in the lower classes. The provincial armies, however, had a higher desertion rate than the frontier militias. In mid-July of 1757, 25 percent of the new recruits deserted within their first three months of service. Preston suffered a 15 percent desertion rate over the course of a year.[46] Different stages of the war could account for this disparity. In all, those joining the Provincial Armies and the men in Preston's company on the frontier had similar backgrounds. The average soldier was an immigrant, between 20 and 29, and at the lower end of the social scale. These men were led in both the east and on the frontier by the large landowners of the individual counties.

Preston's muster role of 1757 lists a whole new set of men. Unfortunately, since it is not a "size-roll," little can be determined about these men . Only one, Thomas Cloyd, was on both the 1755 roll and the 1757 roll.[47] Also, none of the legible names on the 1757 roll can be found in the deed books in the Augusta County courthouse nor do they appear on the 1790 Montgomery County tax list. More than likely, though, these men fit the same mold as those on the 1755 roll. The fact that their names were not found in the deed books probably means they were poor, lower-class settlers either squatting on someone

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[45] Ibid., 212; Titus, "Soldiers When They Chose to be so," 165.

[46] Kegley, Virginia Frontier, 212; Titus, 165.

[47] Preston Family Papers (Blacksburg, Virginia: Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, Microfilm), reel 234. Hereafter cited as Preston Papers.

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else's land or possibly renting. These men were not listed as holding positions in county government, nor were they holing any higher rank than private in the ranger company. Although Thomas Cloyd went on to possess land, he seemed to be the exception. The rest of these men more than likely spent their days trying to exist on someone else's land, or possibly moved on to Kentucky. Either way, they were caught in a definite social hierarchy similar to the one which existed in the east.

The affluent landowners were the ones named to hold offices within a county, command the local militia, and had the power to control who could and could not acquire land. Although the lifestyle on the frontier varied greatly from that of the east, with less elaborate homes, the absence of major towns, and a constant threat of attack by Indians, the idea of a certain hierarchical structure in society still existed. Through the acquisition of land, a gentry class emerged to whom the lower classes paid deference. By controlling land, the gentry put the lower class into a position where they had to pay rent, thus reinforcing the roles each class played in the social structure by annually reminding the lower class of their place in society. Again, large landowners with political power reinforced this social structure – giving that class a degree of respect in the community while again showing who was in control.

With a military threat almost always present, particularly after 1754, the Virginia government gave commissions to the large land owners to raise the necessary body of men for the protection of frontier settlements. It was felt that the large landowning class was the logical choice to have the power to raise a body of men to fight and defend the frontier. Here the Virginia government reinforced the social system of the east on the frontier by automatically granting leadership to the same type of men who held power in the east. In

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the ranger companies formed by the gentry of the frontier, the same type of men that joined the Provincial Armies in the east signed up. Again, poor, landless individuals went into battle led by a rich landowner. Albeit the large landowner on the frontier did not have the same amount of power as the big tobacco-producing plantation owner of the east, he did have power along the frontier all the same, enough power to make the social system existing in eastern Virginia a social system existing in all of Virginia. In essence, the periphery, or frontier, emulated the semi-periphery in eastern Virginia. Yet this process did not end simply with a reproduction of an eastern Virginia social hierarchy. Frontier families remained connected with the east, and to the world, through an exchange of goods. Within this market structure, western Virginia families both exported goods that were in demand within regional, provincial and world markets, and imported goods popular in easter Virginia. The frontier did not operate within a vacuum, but was rather a part of a greater economic market as periphery, semi-periphery and core were pulled together through trade. This in turn fueled the frontier's motives and abilities to develop, which in time allowed this region on the periphery to become a semi-periphery and later part of the core.

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CHAPTER II

TIES TO EXTERNAL MARKETS: IMPORTS AND EXPORTS IN THE NEW RIVER VALLEY, 1745-1789

The Virginia frontier was not situated within a vacuum, operating in an environment solely left to itself. Ideas from both the Old World and eastern Virginia came together and created a region that was on the periphery yet aspiring to emulate the semi-periphery of eastern Virginia and the core of Europe. This is evident in the way the social hierarchies so prevalent in the Tidewater region crossed the Blue Ridge Mountains and took hold along the frontier. Yet such social structures were not the only ways in which these pioneers copied their neighbors to the east. Ties to the semi-periphery and core remained intact throughout the region through a variety of methods. Most important, the frontier retained a trade connection through the import and export of various agricultural products and manufactured goods. By exporting products unique to or in great supply on the frontier, the region firmly connected itself with a market of provincial and world proportion. The importation of goods from Europe and eastern Virginia both strengthened these market ties and provide further evidence that the society which took shape along the frontier aspired to emulate the semi-periphery and core societies. These economic ties allowed the frontier communities to survive and in time become the base for further westward expansion.

One of the most important venues for the Virginia frontier economy was the local ordinary, or tavern. Daniel Thorp asserts that the ordinary provided a means through which settlers could find access to goods from outside the region and find potential buyers

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for their own goods.[1] As county government moved west, the justices of the new counties realized the importance of creating an environment that adequatly supported economic growth. Court justices moved quickly to provide individuals with licenses granting them permission to set up ordinaries. Between 1774, when Fincastle County broke away from Botetourt County, and 1790, county justices granted 25 ordinary licenses in Fincastle and Montgomery Counties; areas which encompassed the New River Valley. On the first two days of the first court session alone, Fincastle County justices granted 5 ordinary licenses. William Ingles was the first to receive such a license, which was granted on the first day the justices met, while Charles Diverex, Joseph Drake, Samuel Simpson, and James Hollos all received licenses over the next two days.[2] Within these institutions the frontier traveler or eastern merchant found both room and board as they journeyed either east with their goods or moved through the region peddling merchandise, respectively. The ordinary proved to play a vital role in the economic life which existed along the frontier. Justices were quick to establish these institutions, showing their desire to create an economically active region that retained ties to eastern markets.

Another indication of the settlers interest in retaining access to eastern markets is the speed with which the frontier settlers moved to establish a road network throughout the region. The justices of Fincastle County named 5 overseers of roads on the first day of the first court session alone, and named a total of 234 overseers between 1774 and 1790. Two roads in particular provided the frontier settlers access to eastern markets. The Great

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[1] Daniel B. Thorp, "Doing Business in the Backcountry: Retail Trade in Colonial Rowan County, North Carolina," William and Mary Quarterly 48 (1991): 387-408.

[2] General Index to Montgomery County Court Order Books, 34; Montgomery County Order Books, 1:1-13.

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Wagon Road ran along the Virginia frontier to Philadelphia while the Three Notch'd Road headed east to Richmond. Settlers constructed these roads as a means of crossing the various rivers running through the region. By June of 1779, Montgomery County justices had granted licenses to William Inglish (Ingles), Samuel Pepper, John Craig, and David Herbert to establish at least four ferries in the region. These men were allowed to ferry people and wagons across the New River for 4 shillings per man and horse.[3] Such activity indicates the desire on the part of the settlers to improve the region as both roads and ferries allowed for easier access to both local and eastern markets. This development further solidified the connection between east and west as travel between the regions became less of a burden.

These roads and ferries facilitated local, regional, and, indirectly, world trade. Goods produced along the frontier headed east and manufactured products from the core and semi-periphery headed west increasing goods available to the average frontier family. Inventories taken between 1770 and 1790 in Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties indicate that frontier families clearly desired to achieve a standard of living similar to that in the east and that the frontier home was typically not self-sufficient. Rather than producing their daily necessities, such as clothes, utensils, and furniture, it appears that many frontier families obtained goods either locally or from the east. Table 2.1 lists a variety of selected items found in the Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery County inventories during the period 1770 through 1790. Of the total inventories examined, 118 represented families with no slaves or servants, 28 represented families with one slave or

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[3] Montgomery County Index of Order Books; Montgomery County Order Books, 1:3 and 3:42; Howard Newlon Jr., "The Evolution of Transportation in Virginia" Augusta Historical Bulletin 16(1980): 8.

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TABLE 2.1

Botetourt County, Fincastle County, and Montgomery County inventories: List of ownership of designated items, 1770-1790

SELECTED ITEMS	0 SLAVES		1 SLAVE		2+ SLAVES	
	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS
Scales/wieghts	3	2.5	2	7.1	3	11.5
Looms	15	12.7	9	32.1	10	38.5
Spinning wheels	27	22.9	12	42.9	19	73.1
Beds	44	37.3	12	42.9	15	57.7
Feather Beds	14	11.9	8	28.6	10	38.5
Chairs	17	14.4	10	35.7	12	46.2
Tables	14	11.9	10	35.7	15	57.7
Plates	53	44.9	17	60.7	14	53.9
Utencils	28	23.7	12	42.9	9	34.6
Pots/kettles	57	48.3	16	57.1	21	80.8
Tea Access.	10	8.5	1	3.6	4	15.4
Tea Pots	8	6.8	6	21.4	10	38.5
Carts/Waggons	23	19.5	10	35.7	15	57.7
Shears	12	10.2	2	7.1	1	3.9
Plows	32	27.1	8	28.6	17	65.4
Hoes	27	22.9	4	14.3	10	38.5
Axes	41	34.8	12	42.9	12	46.2
Scythes	12	10.2	6	21.4	7	26.9
Tools	25	21.2	6	21.4	13	50
Total Number of Inventories	118		28		26	

Sources: Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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servant, and 26 represented families holding 2 or more slaves or servants. Such a division allows for any possible class differences in regard to what possessions were listed to become evident. For example, families owning 2 or more slaves or servants were over three times more likely to possess a spinning wheel than families who owned no slaves or servants. Generally families owning 2 or more slaves or servants were more likely to possess each item listed than those families owning 1 or no slaves or servants. The three exceptions to this were shears, utensils, and plates. A higher percentage of families owning one slave or servant possessed these items than did the other two groups.

The frontier family that moved into the region could only bring with them what they could carry. A family settling along the frontier could not have brought with them items such as beds, tables, chairs, or tables. However after establishing a residence many families appear to have obtained these items from somewhere. It is possible that many of these items were made by the individual frontier family, after setting up a home. Yet it is interesting that such a discrepancy exists in many of the items as to the likelihood that a particular class would possess such an items. A family possessing two or more slaves or servants was over three times more likely to possess a feather bed than a family owning no slaves or servants, and almost one and a half times more likely to possess said item than a family owning one slave or servant. Similar discrepancies exist for every item, except for shears, plates, and utensils as noted above, thus the families with more slaves tended to possess more luxury items.

Such a discrepancy could exist due to one of three reasons, or some combination of the three. One possible reason is that families owning more than two slaves or servants possibly had a larger pool of skilled labor to pull from in order to have such items built.

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Another possible reason for the discrepancy is that the families holding two or more slaves or servants possessed enough money to purchase these items either from local artisans or from eastern merchants. And finally, the discrepancy might simply represent a difference in standard of living expectations; poorer families owning no slaves or servants and those owning one slave or servant simply did not want the same level of "refinement" as those families owning two or more slaves or servants.[4] For whatever reason larger slave and servant owning families possessed items that allowed for a comfortable existence, two things become evident. For one, the frontier family aspired to obtain a similar standard of living as existed in the semi-periphery and core societies. Secondly, the frontier family was not entirely self-sufficient as the frontier family obtained many of the goods found on the inventories through trade.

Certain items listed on the inventories indicate that a level of refinement was aspired to by the frontier settlers. In particular, those families filling the role of gentry tended to own items that reflected their position in society. Thirty-eight point five percent of the families owning two or more slaves or servants owned tea pots, while only six point eight percent of the families owning no slaves or servants possessed such an item. As with most of the items listed, families owning one slave or servant fell somewhere in between these two groups, with 21.4% of these families owning tea pots. Ownership of such an item possibly indicated a level of refinement which reflected social standing rather than survival.

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[4] By "refinement" I mean any items that are not readily recognizable as items necessary for survival or daily living. Possession of such items simply allows the frontier family a means through which to achieve a higher standard of living and an opportunity to enjoy "the finer things in life." Such items also reflect one's standing in society as these items are generally not readily available and therefore require either time or money to acquire such items.

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The types of plates and utensils found along the frontier also indicate that a level of refinement existed in which families aspired to emulate eastern society (see Table 2.2). Rather than simply taking advantage of materials readily available that could serve as plates and utensils, such as wood and earthenware, a large number of settlers turned to other, more extravagant materials that were not produced by the frontier family. Of the 172 inventories existing for Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties between 1770 and 1790, 86 list pewter plates or utensils. This was the most common type of plate or utensil, while plates or utensils that the frontier family could possibly have produced in the home, those made of wood or clay, were only listed on 22 inventories. China and delftware were also represented on the inventories, with 7 households listing plates of that particular type. Two households contained silver plates or utensils, indicating an even higher degree of refinement and show of social standing. Households holding two or more slaves or servants were more likely to own plates and utensils made from delftware, silver, or pewter than were households owning one or no slaves or servants. The larger slave and servant holding households were also less likely to own wooden plates or utensils than the other two groups. That so many families owned plates and utensils that the individual family would not have made themselves brings about the possibility that many of these items were imported from the east. Thus the frontier family never reached a state in which total independence was achieved. As the frontier family aspired to a certain standard of living, the family was forced to turn to eastern merchants in order to acquire certain goods that allowed the settlers to live more comfortably.

Further evidence of the ties between frontier and eastern markets comes from what many of these inventories lacked, the necessary tools to manufacture clothing. Of the same

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TABLE 2.2

Botetourt County, Fincastle County, and Montgomery County inventories: Number of households listing type of plates and utensils, 1770-1790

	0 SLAVES	1 SLAVE	2 OR MORE SLAVES
TYPE OF PLATE OR UTENSIL	0 SLAVES TOTAL NUMBER	1 SLAVE TOTAL NUMBER	2+ SLAVES TOTAL NUMBER
Wood	9	2	1
Earthen	5	1	4
Pewter	52	14	17
China or Dealfware	5	0	2
Silver	0	0	2
Total Number of Inventories	118	28	26

Sources: Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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172 inventories, only 21 listed both spinning wheels and sheep, while twenty listed both looms and sheep (see Table 2.3). Of the 15 households listing shears, only 4 also listed sheep. With so few households listing all the necessary items used for manufacturing clothing in the home, it becomes evident that the frontier family relied on the market in order to obtain either finished products or various materials that the family could then manufacture into a finished product.

Frontier settlers could obtain needed materials or goods in one of four ways. First, and possibly the most reliable method, was to obtain goods through trade with neighbors. While the extent of this trade, or barter, cannot adequately be measured, we can assume such trade did take place as communal ties developed. Whether the relationship was between landowner and tenant farmer, as discussed in Chapter I, or between a particular neighborhood as families came together to help in harvesting and preparing crops for market, a sense of community was taking shape along the frontier. Within this environment, opportunity for local trade developed, and goods that one family lacked could possibly be found through trade with a neighbor.

In addition to local trade, eastern merchants provided a means through which frontier families could obtain a variety of goods. This connection to eastern markets served the gentry particularly well as they established a variety of relationships with eastern merchants. William Preston had numerous dealings with four eastern merchants which allowed him access to goods and business opportunities from which he would profit. The merchants with which Preston dealt were Edward Johnson, Felix Gilbert, William, Robert and James Donald, and Alexander and Peterfield Trent. Gilbert ran a store in Staunton, Virginia, while Johnson and the Trents were all based out of Manchester. The Donald's were

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TABLE 2.3

Botetourt County, Fincastle County, and Montgomery County inventories: Households listing sheep and equipment necessary for the production of wool clothing in the home, 1770-1790

LIVESTOCK AND RELATED ITEMS	0 SLAVES		1 SLAVE		2 + SLAVES	
	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS
Sheep	51	43.2	17	60.7	20	76.9
Wheel/Sheep	17	14.4	8	28.6	11	42.3
Loom/Sheep	7	5.9	5	17.9	8	30.8
Shears/Sheep	2	1.7	0	0	2	7.7
Total Number of Inventories	118		28		26	

Sources: Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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originally from Glasgow, Scotland, and also ran their business out of Manchester. Through these merchants, Preston ordered, and subsequently had delivered, numerous items which included leather shoes, Irish linen, sugar, nails, a Dutch oven, stockings, steel shoe buckles, china coffee cups, and wine glasses, just to name a few. Generally the various lists of merchandise consisted of non-essential items, however Preston did order various tools, linens, and other clothes.[5]

While these merchants provided Preston access to goods, the relationship also allowed Preston an avenue through which to find profit. Edward Johnson and Preston became business partners, as well as in-laws, and trafficked indentured servants throughout the backcountry. While a market for labor existed during the early years of settlement, by the 1770s that market had declined and the sale of indentured servants all but stopped.[6]

Preston and other gentry class members were not the only ones who dealt with eastern merchants. The numerous court cases instigated by these merchants against various settlers who were not paying their debts indicate the importance of frontier trade to both regions. Between 1773 and 1779, Donald and Company appeared thirty times in the Fincastle and Montgomery County courts in order to collect debts owed them by county residents. Generally the defendant was ordered to pay the debt in full, plus pay for costs and interest. On at least two occasions the defendant's estate was sold in order to cover their debts. Such was the case with Peter Rife, who did not appear at his hearing in May of 1774.

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[5] Maggie Holland, "Notes and Queries" Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 34(1926), 149; Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 155; Virginia Gazette, November 10, 1774, n. 1214, p. 4, col. 2; Preston Papers, reel 3, nos. 284, 293; reel 4, nos. 656, 758, 859.

[6] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 125.

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Rife's estate was sold in order to cover a debt of two pounds, eight shillings, and three pence.[7] That his estate was sold in order to cover such a small amount indicates that his estate was not of great value and that Rife was therefore not in the upper class. Generally a twelve foot by twelve foot cabin was valued at five pounds.[8] Since his debt was a little over two pounds, Rife's estate more than likely was valued somewhere between three and five pounds, indicating that he led a meager existence. This in turn establishes a connection between eastern merchants and settlers along the frontier not as well off as the gentry. Supporting this are the 29 other cases involving debts owed to Donald and Company, which indicate financially insecure individuals were caught up in the eastern trade circuit.

Another way in which goods found their way to the frontier was through pedlars. While no sales records were found indicating that pedlars were traveling through the region, and Montgomery County did not grant a pedlars license until 1803, an abundance of circumstantial evidence suggests that pedlars were quite active throughout the backcountry of Virginia. This evidence comes in three forms. First, the House of Burgess actively passed legislation restricting the movement of pedlars, indicating that their activities were noticeable enough to cause problems regarding certain forms of trade and therefore brought about legislation to control the situation. Secondly, numerous advertisements appeared in the Virginia Gazette and Pennsylvania Gazette warning settlers along the backcountry to be on the look out for escaped servants who posed as pedlars. Finally,

[7] General Index to County Order Books, Montgomery County; and Montgomery County Order Books, 1:1-114, 2:1-145, 3:5.

[8] Montgomery County Deed Book, book A, 147-148.

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there exists a lone record in the finances of William and Mary College that indicates pedlar activity between 1761 through 1765. Collectively, this evidence supports the conclusion that pedlars were traveling through the backcountry of Virginia and thus provided frontier settlers an opportunity to buy goods and further solidify the connection between west and east.[9]

Between 1738 and 1762 the House of Burgesses passed a series of laws pertaining to pedlars in order to restrict the movements of vagabonds posing as pedlars. The first legislation passed by the House of Burgesses dealing with pedlars was in November of 1738. The law noted the "divers" number of "vagrant and idle people . . . frequently found traveling about the country, under the name of pedlars." The law went further in outlining various problems incurred by these itinerant merchants, or alleged merchants, and required all pedlars to acquire a license from their county justices in order to peddle goods. This did not seem to adequately solve the problem, as the House passed more legislation in May of 1742. This time the law was more clear as to the exact problem pedlars were causing and in what region the problems were occurring. The law mentioned that many "vagrant people" were traveling from the northern to the southern colonies peddling horses. These pedlars then "either buy or steal, great numbers of nett cattle, which, in their return back they drive through the frontier counties, and often take away with them the cattle of the inhabitants of the said counties, under pretense that they cannot separate them

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[9] William Waller Hening, comp., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia. . . (13 vols.; Richmond, 1819-23), 5:54-57, 176-181, 355-357, 6:124-131, 7:283-288, 585-587; Virginia Gazette, August 4, 1768, n. 117, p. 2, col. 4; October 31, 1777, n. 144, p. 1, col. 2; Pennsylvania Gazette, March 4, 1735; June 15, 1758; June 9, 1763; March 30, 1774; "Finances of the College in 1755-1765," William and Mary Quarterly v. 11, ser. 1(1903); General Index to Montgomery County Order Books.

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from their own droves . . ." This brought legislation requiring both the licensing of pedlars and that the pedlar present each county justice a list of their cattle describing what each head looked like. The House continued to pass laws pertaining to pedlars through 1762, with each subsequent law requiring more regulation over pedlars and making fines and punishment stiffer for those pedlars who did not cooperate and follow the law. By 1762 a pedlar who sold goods without a license and refused to pay the set fine was then subjected to "thirty-nine lashes on his bare back, well laid on . . ."[10] The passage of such laws indicate that pedlars were moving along the backcountry, and while some operated outside the boundaries of the law, contact was established between itinerant eastern and northern merchants and Virginia frontier families. This in turn allowed frontier families to purchase those goods not readily available along the frontier.

The Virginia Gazette and Pennsylvania Gazette, two colonial newspapers, offer more insight into the management and activities of pedlars. Peddling in the backcountry was not always a safe avenue to find profit, as several articles in the Virginia Gazette and Pennsylvania Gazette gave notice of pedlars' deaths in the backcountry. Such was the case of Leonard Croucher, a pedlar who the Virginia Gazette reported was murdered along the back country in October of 1777. In August of 1768 the Pennsylvania Gazette reported that an "old German pedlar was murdered and robbed of his goods . . ." in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. At this time, Lancaster was part of Pennsylvania's backcountry and was a starting point from which one could enter the Virginia backcountry. Other advertisements in these newspapers warned frontier families to be on the look out for

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[10] Hening, Statutes at Large, 5:54-57, 176-181, 355-357, 6:124-131, 7:283-288, 585-587.

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escaped convict servants and indentured servants posing as pedlars, or pedlars who had stolen goods from merchants and were moving through the backcountry. Such a guise provided an escapee or thief with a ready excuse for his or her itinerant nature. This was the case with John Harthe, a German, who was supposed to sell goods for a Charles Bergee of Philadelphia. Harthe allegedly stole the goods he was supposed to sell in Lancaster, Pennsylvania, and fled towards the Carolinas, passing through the Virginia backcountry and more than likely selling the stolen goods and keeping the money for himself. Some of these advertisements mention possible goods the pedlar, or servant passing as a pedlar, was selling. In June of 1758 the Pennsylvania Gazette reported the escape of two convict servants, John Jackson and his wife Mary. The paper reported that John was "much given to Swearing and Lying" and passes as a pedlar with "Pins, Needles and Ribbons to sell . . ." Such advertisements, along with laws passed by the House of burgesses, establish the definite possibility that pedlars were traveling through the Virginia backcountry.[11]

One final piece of evidence that pedlars were moving along the Virginia frontier exists in a report on the finances of the College of William and Mary. This report states that between 1761 through 1765, the college collected seventeen pounds, fifteen shillings for pedlar licenses.[12] While we cannot ascertain the exact locations where these pedlars sold their goods, we do know that such merchants existed and when taken with the evidence

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[11] Virginia Gazette, August 4, 1768, n. 117, p. 2, col. 4; October 31, 1777, n. 144, p. 1, col. 2; Pennsylvania Gazette, March 4, 1735; June 15, 1758; June 9, 1763; March 30, 1774.

[12] "Finances of the College in 1755-1765," William and Mary Quarterly v. 11, ser. 1 (1903).

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presented above it would appear the frontier was a prime source for business. Thus through local trade, ties with eastern merchants, and pedlars the frontier family found access to merchandise that was not produced in the home.

One final method for acquiring such merchandise appeared later on in the frontier's history as small towns began to develop. As towns began to develop along the frontier, individuals established stores in order to sell goods to local families. Montgomery County granted its first merchant license on March 6, 1787. By 1790, six merchants held licenses in the county. The first town to establish itself in the New River Valley was Fincastle, which was founded in 1772. By 1784, fifty-nine buildings were included in a listing of homeowners, which included twenty-six "log dwelling houses," twenty-one "cabins to dwell in," one "double cabin," and eleven "frame dwelling houses." In 1777 a sawmill was established in Fincastle, and between 1787 and 1789, twenty-two individuals obtained licenses to retail goods.[13] Thus towards the end of the New River Valley's frontier period, backcountry families could turn to local merchants, in addition to neighbors, eastern merchants, and pedlars, to receive goods and merchandise.

The frontier family desired to emulate eastern society and to create a more comfortable existence along the frontier. County government quickly established the necessary transportation routes to open the backcountry for trade with the east allowing families access to eastern markets. County administrators established ordinaries which allowed travelers a place to stay and provide possible trade connections between east and west. Alongside local trade grew an important import trade relationship with the east as

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[13] Frances J. Niederer, The Town of Fincastle Virginia, (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia, 1965) 2-6; General Index to Montgomery Court House Order Books; Montgomery County Order Book, v. 1, p. 283.

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eastern merchants, pedlars, and later stores penetrated the frontier allowing backcountry families a means through which to acquire a lifestyle similar to that which existed in the east. Yet goods did not flow in one direction. As goods and merchandise moved westward, an export economy took hold along the backcountry. The exportation of goods from the region allowed the New River Valley region to participate in both regional and world wide trade, thus tying the periphery to the semi-periphery and core even tighter and creating a truly interdependent relationship between these regions.

Upon reaching the frontier, a pioneer family immediately needed to build a dwelling in order to provide shelter and clear land for the production of enough food for the family's survival. With a lag time between the settler's arrival in their new location and their first harvest, the pioneer or frontier family had to rely on the abundance of game the region offered, or possibly the generosity of neighboring families in order to obtain sustenance. Generally, during the early years of settlement the typical family cleared 10 to 12 acres of land for the family's subsistence. Early exports from the region included furs and skins along with livestock. However by the 1760s Virginia's backcountry had found a cash crop in hemp and flax which could be sold to eastern and world markets. The American Revolution strengthened these ties as hemp and flax increased in demand and the need for lead from frontier mines grew in order to facilitate the production of ammunition.[14]

The abundance of game along the frontier provided access to a marketable product dating back to the seventeenth century. Trappers and explorers had penetrated the valleys

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[14] Turk McCleskey, "Across the First Divide: Frontiers of Settlement and Culture in Augusta County, Virginia 1745-1770" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1990), 154-155; Robert D. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 136, 167-172.

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of Virginia in the search of game as early as 1654 with Wood's expedition across the Blue Ridge Mountains in search of trading opportunities with western Indian tribes.[15] Although no substantial numbers of Indians inhabited the region, the valleys of Virginia served as a meeting ground between Native Americans and Europeans as trade connections were established along Indian road networks and European goods were exchanged for furs and skins. The Cherokee, Occaneechi, and Catawba tribes in particular played a vital role in the Virginia fur trade. However by the mid-eighteenth century, when European occupation of the western valleys began, the Cherokee were the only remaining major aborigine trade connection as the Occaneechi began to decline after Bacon's Rebellion and the Catawbas were devastated by war and disease.[16]

The fur and skin trade with Native Americans and white hunting expeditions, became an important part of Virginia's export economy, ranking third and fourth respectively in net value. Hunters and early settlers of the New River Valley took advantage of the ready supply of furs and skins to establish market connections with the east. In 1749 Adam Harman, one of the earliest settlers along the New River in present day Giles County, reported that Indians had stolen 96 deer skins and 3 elk skins. Such a large number of skins in the possession of one family show a definite surplus, indicating a possible desire on the part of Harman to establish ties with either local, regional or world markets. Others along the frontier shared Harmon's desire to establish external trade relations. In Augusta

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[15] Paul Chrisler Phillips, The Fur Trade (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1961), 168-169; David E. Johnston, A History of Middle New River Valley Settlements (Huntington: Standard PTG Pub. Co., 1906), 8.

[16] Shirley-Virginia Parrish, "The Fur and Skin Trade of Colonial Virginia," Masters Thesis, Old Dominion University, 1972, 10-11.

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County between 1744 and 1749, ten individuals were accountable for the collection of 1,286 deerskins, 93 fox furs, 67 raccoon skins, 14 otter pelts, 3 elk hides, 1 wildcat skin, and 202 pounds of beaver pelts. Such a collection amounted to between 120 and 150 pounds Virginia currency, with the deer skins alone accounting for 100 pounds.[17] An assessment of Abraham Dundeberry's (?) estate in 1761 showed that he possessed 43 pounds Virginia currency in a mere 12 skins at his death. Ten of these skins were described as "Merchantable Skins" and valued at 38 pounds with 2 "Winter Skins not merchantable according to Wm. Davies" valued at 5 pounds.[18]

Skins and furs acquired along the frontier that were not used by the settler for personal reasons eventually were transported via wagons or pack horses to Philadelphia or towns in eastern Virginia, such as Winchester, Fredricksburg, or Richmond. Merchants from these localities were also known to travel along the backcountry and purchase furs and skins, thus negating the cost of transportation for the hunter.[19] Once the furs and skins made it to Philadelphia or eastern Virginia, they were either sold locally or shipped to British or other Atlantic ports. Between October 25, 1763 and October 25, 1766, 185 hogheads and 1 box of skins were exported from the upper district of the James River alone. According to the surviving copies of the Virginia Gazette during the years 1766 through 1770, 219 ships cleared the upper district of the James destined for Philadelphia,

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[17] Johnston, A History of Middle, 10; Mary B. Kegley and F. B. Kegley, Early Adventurers on the Western Waters (Orange: Green Publishers, Inc., 1980), 81; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 134; Parrish, "Fur and Skin Trade," Forward.

[18] Preston Family Papers, no. 366.

[19] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 81; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 152-160.

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New York, Boston, or a variety of British ports. Of these 219 ships, 43 (20%) listed skins in their cargo. In addition to the colonial ports, ships clearing the James ended up in Liverpool, Glasgow, London, Greenock, Whitehaven, and Bristol.[20]

Although it is almost impossible to determine exactly how many skins were exported in these listings, the majority of these skins came from the backcountry since game tended to move west as European settlement took shape and the depletion of available game occurred as a result of Native American and European hunting practices.[21] With the westward movement of game, Indian traders or European backcountry settlers made possible the majority of exports containing skins or furs. This produced a strong trading

[20] Virginia Gazette: February 12, 1767, number 821, page 2, column 3 (hereafter designated as 2/3); August 15, 1766, n. 795, 3/1; March 19, 1767, n. 826, 3/2; March 26, 1767, n. 827, 2/3; June 4, 1767, n. 837, 4/1; June 11, 1767, n. 838, 3/2; July 9, 1767, n. 842, 3/2; August 6, 1767, n. 846, 3/2; August 27, 1767, n. 849, 2/3; September, 24, 1767, n. 853, 1/3; October, 29, 1767, n. 858, 2/1; November 19, 1767, n. 861, 2/2; November 26, 1767, n. 862, 2/3; December 10, 1767, n. 864, 3/1; December 3, 1767, n. 863, 3/1; January 14, 1768, n. 869, 3/1; January 28, 1768, 871, 3/1; February 18, 1768, n. 874, 2/3; March 3, 1768, n. 876, 3/1; March 17, 1768, n. 878, 3/1; May 26, 1768, n. 888, 2/2; July 7, 1768, n. 894, 2/3; September 1, 1768, n. 902, 2/3; October 27, 1768, n. 910, 4/2; December 22, 1768, n. 918, 3/1; April 20, 1769, n. 935, 2/2; July 27, 1769, n. 949, 3/2; August 10, 1769, n. 951, 3/2; September 7, 1769, n. 955, 3/1; November 9, 1769, n. 964, 2/2; December 28, 1769, n. 971, 3/1; January 18, 1770, n. 974, 3/2; June 7, 1770, n. 994, 3/1; September 13, 1770, n. 1008, 2/3.

[21] Shirley-Virginia Parrish points out that hogsheads varied in size, thus varying the number of skins contained in such a unit. Parrish found one report from 1682 that mentioned a hogshead containing over 300 deerskins plus a large number of fur pelts. The majority of ships listed in the Virginia Gazette noted as carrying skins used the term "hogshead" to describe the quantity of their cargo. Rarely were exact numbers used, as in the case of the Mary Anne which listed a cargo of: "60 mink, 20 fox, and 30 rackoon skins." Furthermore, throughout the Eighteenth century as more Europeans settled along the Virginia backcountry, hunters fournd it necessary to move further west in order to find available game. Most noticable was that by 1793 the buffalo, which in one hunt yielded 21 buffalo skins to the hunters and in 1771 an entire herd was killed by French hunters from Illinois, was extinct in Kentucky. Parrish, "Fur and Skin Trade," 22-23,123-124; and Virginia Gazette, June 11, 1767, n. 838, 3/2; Kegley, Early Adventurers, 81-83.

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relationship between the periphery, semi-periphery and core regions, bringing both native groups along the periphery and core and semi-piriphery migrants into a larger trade network. However, the number of frontier settlers practicing this trade was not substantial, and was more supplemental to a family's income rather than the primary source. Generally the frontier family focused their efforts on a more permanent agricultural base in order to bring about commercial ties with distant markets.[22] In particular, livestock, hemp, and flax provided the pioneer family with a commercial product that solidified eastern and world market commercial connections.

Livestock played an important role in the New River Valley's settlers' lives, providing the frontier family with both a source for food and a marketable product traded both locally and regionally. As noted in Chapter One, the horse played an integral role in the frontier family's life, used both for transportation and as an instrument for labor. Yet settlers along the fronteir possessed other types of livestock as well. Cattle, sheep, and pigs were all found along the frontier, with cattle ranking right next to horses as the most numerous livestock. Out of 1,339 tithables on the 1782 Montgomery County tax list, 1,066 (79.6%) listed owning at least one head of cattle, with a total of 10,123 heads of cattle accounted for. The inventories for Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties during the years 1770 to 1790, show a similar degree of cattle ownership, with 135 estates out of 172 (78.4%) listing at least one head of cattle (see Table 2.4). Breaking these inventories down by class, as defined by the amount of slaves listed in a particular inventory (i.e., either no slaves [118], one slave [28], or two or more slaves [26]), estates listing more than two slaves were substantially more likely to own cattle than estates

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[22] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 133.

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TABLE 2.4

Botetourt County, Fincastle County, and Montgomery County inventories: Households listing livestock, 1770-1790

VARIOUS TYPES OF LIVESTOCK LISTED	0 SLAVES		1 SLAVE		2+ SLAVES	
	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS
Sheep	51	43.2	17	60.7	20	76.9
Cattle	89	75.4	21	75	25	96.2
Pigs	56	47.5	14	50	18	69.2
Horses	102	86.4	24	85.7	24	92.3
Geese	2	1.7	0	0	1	3.9
Ducks	1	.8	0	0	0	0
Total Number of Inventories	118		28		26	

Sources: Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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owning either one or no slaves. Out of 25 inventories of estates owning two or more slaves, 96.2% listed at least one head of cattle. Comparatively, 75.4% of the estates listing no slaves and 75% of the estates listing one slave listed at least one head of cattle.[23] Such a discrepancy between households with slaves and those without could indicate the ability of the more affluent frontier inhabitant to diversify their output and gain access to more markets.

A similar discrepancy exists with the other two major types of livestock found on the frontier, sheep and pigs. While sheep and pigs were not found in as great of numbers as horses and cattle, they were represented along the frontier and served their purposes as food and clothing agents. Again turning to Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery County inventories between 1770 to 1790, a total of 88 estates out of 172 (51.2%) listed having at least one pig or one sheep. As with cattle, estates containing two or more slaves were more likely to list sheep and pigs, with 76.9% of these estates listing sheep and 69.2% listing pigs. Only 43.2% of the estates listing no slaves and 60.7% of the estates containing one slave mentioned any sheep. These same estates, however, were more likely to contain pigs, as 56% of the none slave holding estates and 50% of the estates containing one slave listed that type of livestock.[24]

Livestock owned by frontier families were allowed to roam free and graze on land near the settler's house. Usually settlers left a large, wooded tract of land in which the

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[23] Mary B. Kegley, Tax List of Montgomery County, Virginia 1782 (Roanoke: by author, 1974) 1-37; Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

[24] Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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family's livestock could graze and pigs could find mast. As was the practice during the colonial period, only cultivated areas were fenced in, thus settlers had to register a mark for their livestock in the county court in order to guard against theft and substantiate claims when livestock strayed and proof of ownership was needed. Such markings generally included either branding the animal or scarring it in such a way as to set it apart from other roaming livestock. Such was the case on March 2, 1774, when Joseph Ramsey went before the Fincastle County justices and registered his mark for cattle and hogs as a crop on the left ear. That same day William Ingles registered his mark as a crop and a slit in each ear, while William Christian announced his livestock were to have both ears cropped and slit twice.[25]

The frontier family found that livestock provided an adequate amount of food in the form of beef, butter, cheese, and milk, a source for clothing in the wool from the sheep, and on occasion could be used as a beast of burden. In addition to local consumption, a ready market was available for beef in eastern urban areas and the West Indies. Philadelphia was the ultimate destination of cattle drives originating in the Virginia backcountry as settlers drove their cattle north, through the Shenandoah Valley, across the Potomac, and into Pennsylvania. Cattle drives originating along the Virginia frontier began in the Shenandoah Valley as early as 1742. By the 1750s cattle from the upper valley, on the fringes of the New River Valley, were making their way to the Pennsylvania market.[26] However the French and Indian War temporarily interrupted the cattle trade as frontier

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[25] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 136; Montgomery County Order Book Number 1, page 8.

[26] Kegley, Early Adventurers, 156; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 147-149.

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settlers used their cattle to supply beef for local militia units and for the Cherokees. The war did not leave a lasting effect on the trade, however, and by 1758 cattle were arriving in Philadelphia again, resulting in a steady growth until the mid-1760s when a sharp decline occurred in the beef market. After the 1760s livestock played a less than important role in the frontier family's commercial ventures and activities.[27]

While the fur and skin trade along with the exportation of livestock and related products allowed the frontier family access to regional and world markets, such economic activity only supplemented a family's income and was not the center of economic activity along the Virginia frontier. The economic base along the frontier revolved around agriculture and the exportation of cash crops.[28] Hemp, flax, and wheat were the main cash crops grown in the New River Valley, while several lesser crops contributed to local trade and facilitated the family's involvement in raising livestock.

Table 2.5 shows the different agricultural products and by-products listed in the inventories of Botetourt, Fincastle, and Montgomery Counties during the years 1770 to 1790. While this list underestimates the amount of agricultural activity along the frontier, as it only accounts for crops that happened to be in the house at the time of the inventory, it does give an overall picture of the types of crops grown in the New River Valley. It must be kept in mind, however, that seasonal variations skew the ways which different types of agricultural products are recorded. For example, wheat and rye were sown in the Fall and harvested in the Summer. A similar problem exists for oats, flax, and hemp, all of which were planted in the Spring and harvested in the Summer. Thus an inventory of an estate

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[27] Ibid., 148-149.

[28] Ibid., 133.

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TABLE 2.5

Botetourt County, Fincastle County, and Montgomery County inventories listing selected agricultural or related products, 1770-1790

AGRICULTURAL PRODUCT	0 SLAVES		1 SLAVE		2+ SLAVES	
	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS	TOT. #	% OF CLASS
Oates	6	5.1	2	7.1	2	7.7
Hemp	10	8.5	6	21.4	8	30.8
Flax	23	19.5	4	14.3	5	19.2
Cotton	5	4.2	3	10.7	0	0
Wheat	15	12.7	4	14.3	3	11.5
Rye	8	6.8	1	3.6	2	7.7
Corn	11	9.3	3	10.7	7	26.9
Wool	12	10.2	5	17.9	7	26.9
Still	4	3.4	1	3.6	2	7.7
Rum	0	0	2	7.1	1	3.8
Cyder	0	0	0	0	1	3.8
Whiskey	1	.8	1	3.6	1	3.8
Bacon	4	3.4	0	0	2	7.7
Total Number of Inventories	118		28		26	

Sources: Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

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done in the Fall, Winter, or Spring could easily not list these products as none were available for storage for the person taking the inventory to make note of. It must also be kept in mind that many of these crops were not listed since they were not used for home consumption, but rather shipped to market, thus not listed within the inventories. However, the New River Valley counties' inventories, when taken as a whole do account for the majority of crops grown on the frontier during the colonial period.[29]

The New River Valley inventories show a diverse listing of agricultural products. Hemp, flax, corn, and wheat were found listed in the inventories more often than oats, cotton, and rye. Hemp appears to have been tied more with families owning two or more slaves, with 30.8% of these estates listing hemp while only 8.5% of the estates with no slaves and 21.4% of the estates with one slave contained hemp. Flax and wheat had a more even distribution over class lines as 19.5% of the estates with no slaves, 14.3% of the estates containing one slave, and 19.2% of the estates with two or more slaves listed flax. Wheat was recorded in 12.7% of the estates with no slaves, 14.3% of the estates with one slave, and 11.5% of the estates containing two or more slaves. Minor crops, such as oats, cotton, rye, and corn, were typically used for home consumption, local trade, or, in the case of oats and corn, as fodder for livestock, thus becoming indirectly connected to larger, outside markets.[30] Hemp, flax, and to a lesser degree wheat, were the main cash crops

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[29] Ibid., 137-138; Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152.

[30] Although corn is mentioned in the New River Valley inventories as much as flax, hemp, and wheat, it is considered a minor crop in this study because it was not a heavily exported crop, but rather directly used in the home as a food source for livestock and at times family members. Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 137; Botetourt County Will Book A, 1-277; Montgomery County Will Book B, 1-152

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grown by frontier settlers in the New River Valley, which created a strong trade dynamic between the frontier, Eastern, and world markets.

Wheat, the principle bread grain for the frontier family, could provide settlers with a base for whiskey, and when combined with rye produced maslin, a type of flour. At harvest time, one worker using a sickle could cut six-tenths of an acre per day, while a worker using a scythe could cut one and a half acres per day. The scythe had other advantages too, as it left only two inches of wheat standing as compared to the six to eight inches left by someone using a sickle, thus the scythe produced more straw. While wheat found a market outside of the frontier, it did not attain the degree of importance that it reached in the Shenandoah Valley, where the soil was more suited for wheat production.[31]

While wheat took hold in the Shenandoah Valley as the main cash crop, it took a backseat in the New River Valley to the more profitable production of hemp and flax. Hemp and flax were not new to the Virginia economy when backcountry exports peaked in the 1760s. As early as 1673 the House of Burgesses passed legislation to encourage the production of hemp and flax in Virginia in response to low returns from tobacco. The 1673 law stated that the county courts were to distribute hemp and flax seed to every tithable. Tithables were then expected to produce one pound of flax and one pound of hemp, or two pounds of either, annually under the penalty of being fined by the county courts fifty pounds of tobacco per pound lacking.[32]

Throughout the colonial period various acts were passed by the House of Burgesses

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[31] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 138, 172-178; Jeremy Black, "Agricultural Improvement in 1763: The Role of Foreign Examples," Agricultural History 64 (1990): 90-92.

[32] Hening, Statutes at Large, 2:306-307.

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that either reinstated existing legislation encouraging hemp and flax production or enlarged the colony's responsibilities in collecting the plants. In 1682, the House passed legislation that made it necessary for an individual to take their hemp and/or flax to a justice of the peace in order to have an official weight registered, for which the individual received a certificate authenticating the amount of hemp or flax they had grown. The bounty still remained at two pounds of tobacco per pound of hemp or flax. By 1745, however, four shillings were paid by the county courts per hundredweight of hemp produced and a two shilling bounty was paid per hundredweight exported to England. In 1766 the House responded to legislation passed in Great Britain which encouraged the exportation of hemp and flax to any of her home ports. This in turn increased the amount of hemp production in Virginia by granting permission to the county courts to establish storehouses for hemp. This brought about more intervention from the colony in the production of hemp and flax, and allowed for a central location for the collection of the plant, thus allowing for easier access to markets on the part of the hemp and flax farmer.[33]

Although hemp and flax were produced in Virginia before the valleys of western Virginia were settled, the hemp industry did not rise until those valleys were settled. Hemp can generally grow in any type of soil, however in Virginia the crop tended to do best in the Piedmont and along the Virginia backcountry where the heavy soil with limestone formations provided the plant with the healthiest environment in which to take root. An anonymous author writing in 1775 made note of this when they stated that Virginia and Maryland had better soil for raising hemp than the Northern colonies and that the soil yielded the product "in large quantities." Western Virginia soil also allowed for a longer

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[33] Ibid., 3:503-506, 4:301-302, 5:357-359, 6:144-146, 8:53-255.

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plant to mature that produced less woody bark which allowed for an easier separation of the fibers.[34]

Hemp and flax provided the frontier family with both a source for cloth, linen, and oil, and a product that was of value to the British Navy. In its "neat" form, hemp provided the planter with a source for course cloth that was used for the production of clothes, sacks, tents, or rope. The British Navy had an interest in the plant not only for all of the above reasons, but also because manufacturers could use it to produce sails.[35] The same anonymous writer who in 1775 noted the quality of Virginia's and Maryland's soil for hemp production also recognized the importance of the plant to the British Empire when they stated:

> This (hemp) is the commodity of all others which we must want from our colonies, for it is so necessary for our navy that we ought certainly to have it more within our command than it is at present . . .to raise it therefore in America . . . is an object of the greatest importance.[36]

Flax also found a place on regional and world markets as it produced a softer linen which was more suitable for the manufacture of clothes. Flaxseed provided for linseed oil which could then be used along the frontier or by buyers in the East or in Britain for illumination

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[34] One traveler along the Virginia Backcountry noted that he encountered a field of hemp which had grown to fourteen feet in height. Generally hemp grew anywhere between eight to fourteen feet high. G. Melvin Herndon, "Hemp in Colonial Virginia," Agricultural History 37 (1963): 86-87; Alfred J. Morrison, ed., "Schedule of Virginia and Maryland Exports, 1775," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 18 (1910): 106-107, exert from American Husbandry, Containing an Account of the Soil, Climate, Production, and Agriculture of the British Colonies. By an American.

[35] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 138, 164; Kenneth W. Keller, "From the Rhineland to the Virginia Frontier: Flax Production as a Commercial Enterprise," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (1990): 492.

[36] Morrison, "Schedule of Virginia and Maryland Exports," 106-107.

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and occasionally as a food source for the poor.[37]

Although the valleys of Virginia had begun to support white occupation as early as the 1730s, and the Germans began growing hemp and flax soon after their arrival, hemp and flax production did not peak until the 1760s. The first record of anyone growing hemp west of the Blue Ridge Mountains was in 1762 when Thomas Lewis was given a certificate for 3,343 pounds of winter-rotted hemp. The latter stages of the French and Indian War gave a boost to hemp and flax production as tents, rope, and sacks were needed to support the war effort. Following the war a rise in hemp and flax output along the frontier occurred and was again boosted by the outbreak of war in 1775, as the colonies revolted against British rule.[38]

By far it was the American Revolution that allowed for a growth in the importance of hemp and flax production along the frontier, as imports all but stopped and the demand for military needs rose. Both of these factors contributed to a sharp rise in hemp prices between 1776 through 1782. Between 1774 and 1775, the price for gross hemp was anywhere from 27 to 35 shillings per hundredweight. By the end of 1775, the price had risen to 180 shillings per hundredweight and by 1779, a planter could earn as much as 220 shillings per hundredweight. Prices stabilized at this point and then began a sharp decline, bottoming out around 30 to 35 shillings per hundredweight in June of 1783. The war allowed the state to emerge as the greatest hemp market which resulted in subsidized

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[37] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 138; Keller, "From the Rhineland," 492.

[38] Katherine G. Bushman, "An Eighteenth Century Tax Aid," Augusta Historical Bulletin 8 (1972): 48-52; Robert D. Mitchell, "Agricultural Change and the American Revolution: A Virginia Case Study," Agricultural History 47 (1973): 120; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 138.

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transportation costs, easing some of the financial burden on the planter.[39]

While the war stimulated hemp and flax production, it also had an effect on another industrial endeavor along the frontier. Located near Fort Chiswell, a series of lead producing mines allowed for a form of industry to develop along the frontier that supplied large quantities of lead to both state militia and the Continental Army during the American Revolution. By the end of the war, the Virginia state government levied a claim against the United States for $81,500.00 for lead produced at the lead mines and used by the Continental Army alone. In 1776 it was reported in the Virginia Gazette that as of August 16, "15,000 wt. of pure lead have been got from our mines in the back country." The writer went on to state that after this lead had been cast into bullets he hoped they would "be unerringly directed against our enemies."[40]

The need for lead in order to make bullets created a unique relationship between the state and backcountry proprietors as government placed control on lead mines to insure continuous production and that laborers at the lead mines continued to mine an adequate amount of lead. Early on in the Revolution the House of Burgesses recognized the importance of Virginia's backcountry lead mines and passed an act in July of 1775 ordering the Committee of Public Safety for Fincastle County, which at that time encompassed the Fort Chiswell lead mines, to contract with the proprietors of the mines for lead that Virginia's troops could possibly need in the upcoming struggle with Great Britain. If the proprietors refused to produce lead, the Fincastle committee was given the authority

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[39] Mitchell, "Agricultural Change," 125-126.

[40] William P. Palmer, M.D., and Sherwin McRae, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, From July 2, 1790 to August 10, 1792, (Richmond: James E. Goode, Printer, 1885): 5:393; Virginia Gazette, n. 81, 3/1.

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to "employ proper persons, and furnish necessary materials, for the making of lead, at the charge of this colony." In October of 1776 the House found it necessary to retain total control of the lead mines on the grounds that the mines had "been for some time past worked on the publick account" and that the mines would function better under direct governmental control. At this time the House passed "An act to empower the Governour and Council to employ persons for working the Lead Mines to greater advantage," which in essence granted full control over the mines to the Governor and the Virginia Council. In 1776, the lead mines belonged to William Byrd and the estates of John Robinson and John Chiswell, who were reimbursed through the payment of an annual rent by the Virginia Government for the use of the mines.[41]

What the October act effectively did was place the lead mines under the control of Virginia's state government agents, which in turn strengthened the ties between eastern and western Virginia as the Virginia government became directly involved in the manufacture of a backcountry product. The act allowed the Governor, or in case of "his death, sickness or necessary absence" the president of the Council, to administer the production of lead by raising an adequate labor force to work the mines. Furthermore, the Governor, or Council President, had the power to direct the sale of lead to either the central government, other "sister states," or to any individual willing to make a purchase. Through this act the state government was involved in every process of the mining of lead, from acquiring workers, to transportation from the backcountry to Eastern markets, and to final distribution.[42]

By 1782, as the Revolution was coming to a close, the state relinquished its control

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[41] Hening, Statutes at Large, 9:71-73, 287-288.

[42] Hening, Statutes at Large, 9:287-288.

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over the lead mines, returning production back to the private sphere. At this point Jacob Rubsaman and Charles Lynch had gained ownership of the mines. The Virginia government contracted the proprietors to furnish 50,000 pounds of lead for an amount of tobacco that they would later determine.[43] This marked the final transition from state run to private control over the lead mines. As the state's role declined in the micro-management of the lead industry, its interest did not wane in regard to backcountry lead. However throughout the rest of the eighteenth century the state's role in the daily operations of the lead mines significantly dropped. Yet the role played by the state during the Revolution did produce East-West ties as lead from the backcountry found its way to eastern markets.

Furs, skins, cattle, hemp and flax, along with, to a lesser degree, lead all played a role in allowing the backcountry of Virginia to remain a part of larger economic trends and markets. The exportation of such products placed the frontier in a position of importance in the economic activites involving eastern Virginia and world markets since commodities that were scarce in other regions were in adequate supply within the backcountry. Western Virginia soil proved to be above average for the planter to grow hemp and flax. The large supply of game kept a steady movement of skins and fur heading east for market. Rich bluegrass kept cattle fed as the frontier settlers prepared their cattle drives towards Philadelphia or eastern Virginia. All the while rich deposits of lead awaited miners for extraction within certain mountain chains running through the backcountry.

Although several avenues of economic gain awaited the frontier settler, it must be remembered that none of the items produced along the frontier led any planter to the riches

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[43] Palmer and McRae, Calendar of Virginia State Papers, 3:390.

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tobacco did in the East. The gentry leaders along the frontier never attained the same economic status as the tidewater elite did, with their large Georgian plantations housing hundreds of slaves. At best the average settler could possibly find was a middling sort of position on the economic ladder. At worst, which was more often the case, the frontier pioneer found themself in a tenant relationship with a larger landowner, or squatting on someone else's land barely producing enough food to get by. Not everyone who moved to the Virginia frontier was free, as planters brought slaves and indentured servants to the frontier and incorporated them into the backcountry's work force.[44] Yet within these labor relationships elements of modernization are evident. In a sense, it was in labor that traditional values and modernization met, creating a working relationship that foreshadowed later labor relations. Frontier settlers turned to wage labor as slavery and indentured servitude never caught on to the degree it did in the Tidewater. Slave, servant, tenant farmer and wage laborer all worked together in order to provide eastern and world markets the various exports unique to the Virginia backcountry, and through such relationships traditional ideals involving labor began to give way to the more modern ideal of wage labor.

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[44] Turk McCleskey, "Rich Land, Poor Prospects: Real Estate and the Formation of a Social Elite in Augusta County, Virginia, 1738-1770," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (July 1990): 452, 462, 463.

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CHAPTER III

SLAVES, SERVANTS, AND WAGES IN THE LABOR FORCE: TRADITION AND MODERNITY'S COEXISTENCE

Markets alone did not indicate the existence of a modern capitalistic, or pre-capitalistic, society. The market relationship which existed between western Virginia and the eastern regions and Europe signify that the frontier both aspired to emulate eastern society and that the west and east were intertwined economically, allowing for interdependency between the regions. Labor and its uses plays a key role in determining whether or not a society can be considered a modern economic setting.[1] Along the Virginia frontier during the colonial and revolutionary periods, there were a variety of labor forms. Traditional institutions, such as slavery, indentured servitude, reliance on a family workforce, and convict labor, existed alongside modern work forces which included wage laborers and a form of tenant farming. The existence of modern labor institutions foreshadowed the eventual demise of traditional labor systems and allowed the New River Valley to adapt to the post Civil War labor climate, which did not allow for slavory.

Agriculture and lead production were the most important economic industries along the Virginia frontier. Labor was used to plant and harvest crops, in particular hemp and

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[1] See Karl Marx, Wage-Labour and Capital: Value, Price and Profit, (New York: International Publishers, 1933) for a discussion on the importance of wage labor in a modern society. The traditional labor relationships revolving around family, servants, and slaves is replaced by wage labor in a modern, capitalistic society. It is the relationship between labor and management which Marx asserts is the key component and motivating factor within a capitalistic economic system.

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flax; to mine lead from the mines; to transport products, including cattle, to the east; and to improve land for future agricultural production. The frontier region turned to many forms of labor, both traditional and modern. Slavery and white indentured servitude, both voluntary and forced, existed alongside wage labor and a form of tenant farming in which the laborer received land to live on and crops for sustenance in exchange for work. Such labor relationships produced a unique environment along the frontier in which the settler turned to a multitude of labor forms in order to allow eastern and world economic relationships to develop. The types of crops the settler raised and how the settler grew those crops shaped the labor environment. The geography of the region did not allow the settler the opportunity to grow tobacco, and therefore did not allow for a society highly dependent on slave labor to form. The production of flax and hemp created a work environment in which family labor was the norm, and slavery, indentured servitude and wage labor were turned to in order to supplement the existing work force found within the family.

While hemp and flax did not damage the soil like tobacco, they were both labor intensive crops, with some 22 steps involved in the process between curing the plants and making it into cloth alone. In order to insure a healthy yield, a planter generally plowed the land three times before actually sowing the hemp or flax seeds. The planter plowed once in the Fall, a second time in the Spring, and a third and final time right before planting. Before the seeds were sown, and after the third plowing of the land, the field was raked in order to provide a smoother surface which in turn brought about a more even distribution of the seeds. After the planting process was over, their was little left for the planter to do but wait until harvesting. Hemp and flax usually pushed out grass and weeds, so planters

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did not need to continually clear any overgrowth that might have impeded the plant's ability to receive sunlight. Insects were not a problem either as the plants secrete a protective resin that kept bugs at bay. Thus after a good deal of preparation and the actual sowing of the seeds, the planter simply waited 13-15 weeks until the plant was ready for harvest.[2]

Usually an acre of hemp or flax yielded up to 500 pounds, and could be cleared by a single person in either 2 or 4 days, depending on whether the hemp or flax was cut or pulled, respectively. If the plants were pulled, the laborer had to extract the hemp from the ground by the root in order to insure a maximum yield. After the hemp and flax were harvested, they were then bundled in sheaves and set up along fences in order to dry. The plants then went through a "rotting" process in which the fiber was separated from the stalk. Two options were available to the planter as a means of rotting. Winter-rotting involved the planter spreading the plants out in an open field as to allow the Fall and Winter rains, along with the winter frosts, to "leach" out the gummy substance that bound the fiber to the stalk. This process could take up to three months. The other option available to the planter was water-rotting. Through this process the planter laid his bundled sheaves in a pond to allow the plants to soak up the water and, as in winter-rotting, separate fiber from stalk. Usually a planter needed a pond forty feet by six feet per acre of hemp or flax in order to get the job done, and the process took only two months rather than three. Planters preferred winter-rotting, however, as it required less labor and did not produce any foul odors, as water-rotting did. After the rotting period, the planter removed

[2] Ibid., 86-87; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 164; Kenneth W. Keller, "From the Rhineland to the Virginia Frontier: Flax Production as a Commercial Enterprise," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 98 (1990): 499.

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the outer bark and other woody parts from the plant leaving them with "gross hemp."[3]

The final stage in hemp and flax production was known as "scrutching." Through this process, the laborer removed the remaining wooden fibers from the stalk, leaving them with "neat hemp." Because of the intensity of the labor involved, women played a key role in the final stages of hemp and flax production. In rural Pennsylvania, it was common for women to perform this process together in large groups. This activity, similar to a sewing bee, allowed women to both work in a more rewarding environment, as women helped one another with a tedious chore, and strengthened communal bonds. At this stage the hemp or flax was ready for manufacture. The laborer could take the process one step further, however, and soak the prepared flax in calf's dung for 5 to 6 hours and then wash it off. By doing so it was claimed that the flax took on a smoother texture, resembling silk.[4]

Within the production and distribution of hemp and flax, the settler relied on a variety of forms of labor. Central to the labor model along the frontier was the family. In the Shenandoah Valley, the majority of labor came from the individual family unit. Every family member had to participate in the production of agricultural goods and in clearing the land. Since so few slaves were found along the frontier, and by the fact that women played an extensive role in the production of hemp and flax in rural Pennsylvania, one can safely assume that a similar work dynamic existed in western Virginia. Family members

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[3] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 163-164; Herndon, "Hemp in Colonial America," 86-90.

[4] Keller, "From the Rhineland," 501; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 164; Virginia Gazette: March 10, 1768, n. 877, 2/1.

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helped in crop production, clearing the land, and tending to daily household needs.[5]

Some settlers, if adequate resources were available, supplemented their labor needs by turning to slaves and indentured servants. As mentioned in chapter one, the average slave holder typically owned between 2.5 and 3 slaves and evidence suggests that these slaves were not just used for hemp and flax production. Slave importation did not coincide with the peak of hemp production, suggesting that slave holders generally used their slaves to perform a variety of household tasks.[6] Slaves both augmented family labor and provided a means through which the settler could increase production.

Possible ways in which the frontier family utilized slave labor becomes more evident in light of how white indentured servants were used in the frontier work force. White indentured servitude began to firmly take root along the frontier beginning in 1755. William Preston, justice, surveyor, and Burgess, was the most prominent importer of indentured servants between 1755 and 1774. With his eastern business partner Edward Johnson, Preston was responsible for providing frontier families with an alternative to slave and wage labor and a means through which to augment labor gained from family members. The importation of both slaves and indentured servants also served to unite ties between east and west, since the slave and indentured servitude trade was an extension of the

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[5] Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 124; Keller "From the Rhineland," 501.

[6] Mary B. Kegley, Tax List of Montgomery County, Virginia, 1782 (Roanoke: by author, 1974) 1-37; Netti Schreiner-Yantis, Montgomery County, Virginia Tax Lists - - - A, B, & C For the Year 1788 (Roanoke: by author, 1972) 1-16; Netti Schreiner-Yantis, Montgomery County Tax Table, Virginia - - - Circa 1790 (Springfield: by author, 1972) 1-42; Turk McCleskey, "Across the First Divide: Frontiers of Settlement and Culture in Augusta County, Virginia 1745-1770" (Ph.D. diss., College of William and Mary in Virginia, 1990), 24.

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import-export relationship existing between the two regions. However, by the American Revolution, indentured servitude began to decline as a viable option for labor as the demand along the frontier for indentured servants declined. This decline in the reliance on white servitude and the apparent lack of use of slave labor, could indicate a greater reliance on family and wage labor, and tenant farming during the early federalist period among western Virginians.

Indentured servitude tended to occur in two forms along the Virginia frontier. One group of indentured servants was made up of individuals who willingly entered a contract for a period of time in which they provided labor in exchange for passage to the colonies. It was from this group that William Preston and Edward Johnson found temporary laborers for settlers along the frontier. The other group of white servants consisted of convicts who had been ordered by the courts to provide labor for various individuals living along the frontier.[7]

As with slaves, it is difficult to determine exactly how frontier settlers used such laborers, however some hints do exist. An advertisement appeared in the November 21, 1771 issue of the Virginia Gazette, which mentioned the arrival of 45 convict servants to the colony. The advertisement listed the servants' occupations, among them a weaver, gardener, tanner, several carpenters and cabinet makers, bricklayer, "many farmers," "an exceeding good shoemaker," and a surgeon and apothecary. From this list one gains a sense of the variety of crafts and services that servants could provide the frontier family.

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[7] Between 1760 and 1780, 16 ads appear in the Virginia Gazette which make mention of runaway convict servants from Botetourt and Augusta counties. These ads establish the existence of indentured servitude involving convict laborers along the Virginia frontier; and Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 125.

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More skilled workers were arriving in the colonies and were therefore not simply confined to work in the fields.[8]

Indentured servants were not always satisfied with their role as servants, as evinced in the number of advertisements informing subscribers of the Virginia Gazette to look out for runaway servants. Between 1760 and 1780, 16 advertisements appear in the surviving issues of the Virginia Gazette announcing the escape of 23 convict servants, 20 men and 3 women, from Augusta and Botetourt Counties. Taken as a whole, advertisements concerning runaway convicts from Virginia and Maryland provide insight both as to the standard of living these servants enjoyed and any skills they had which would indicate how settlers used their labor. In regard to the clothing these servants had on at the time of their escape, the adjective "old" is used 15 times in describing at least one peace of clothing, while "new" is used 7 times. However, several of the new items described are listed as items the servant stole right before they ran away. This was the case with John Jones of Botetourt County when his master Patrick Lockhart stated "I also miss a new pair of buckskin breeches . . . which I suspect - - - has taken." A similar situation existed with John Keatting who ran away from Augusta County in August of 1768. His master, Robert Stevenson, wrote in the advertisement that Keatting was wearing "new shoes and buckles, the latter not fellows." Hemp related clothing articles were mentioned for three of the runaways, and it is impossible to discern the quality of the other clothing mentioned as detailed descriptions fail to appear in the advertisements. In general, it appears that the majority of servants, and possibly slaves, were forced to wear older articles of clothing

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[8] Virginia Gazette: November 21, 1771, n. 289, 3/3.

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made out of readily available materials, such as hemp.[9]

Masters described the multitude of skills their servants had, providing more insight as to their possible uses. Included among the list of occupations were a flax-dresser from Culpeper County, Virginia, a chimney sweeper and laborer, cooper, weaver, two plasterers, and one servant who "understands farming, and can do rough brick or stone work," all from Augusta County, Virginia, and one servant who was both a sailor and a miller from Frederick County, Maryland. With many of these convicts running away from the Virginia frontier, or regions close to it, a wide variety of skills become evident indicating many possible jobs in addition to farming that servants performed.[10]

David Galenson's research concerning white indentured servitude in colonial America shows that servants, by the eighteenth century, were used more in the capacity as artisans and overseers than simply field hands. Galenson points out that during the eighteenth century, unlike in the seventeenth century, colonists specifically requested indentured servants who possessed specific skills. Galenson further maintains that in eastern Virginia

[9] Virginia Gazette, October 17, 1766, n. 804, 3/3; February 26, 1767, n. 823, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 101, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 882, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 101, 4/3; June 9, 1768, n. 109, 3/4; June 16, 1768, n. 110, 3/3; June 23, 1768, n. 111, 3/1; June 23, 1768, n. 892, 3/1; July 14, 1768, n. 114, 3/3; August 11, 1768, n. 118, 3/1; May 11, 1769, n. 157, 4/3; September 7, 1769, n. 174, 4/1; February 8, 1770, n. 196, 4/3; October 18, 1770, n. 232, 3/1; March 5, 1772, n. 305, 3/2; October 29, 1772, n. 338, 3/1; December 2, 1773, n. 1166, 3/1; June 2, 1774, n. 421, 2/3; November 4, 1775, n. 1265, 3/3; May 8, 1778, n. 162, 2/1.

[10] Virginia Gazette, October 17, 1766, n. 804, 3/3; February 26, 1767, n. 823, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 101, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 882, 3/2; April 14, 1768, n. 101, 4/3; June 9, 1768, n. 109, 3/4; June 16, 1768, n. 110, 3/3; June 23, 1768, n. 111, 3/1; June 23, 1768, n. 892, 3/1; July 14, 1768, n. 114, 3/3; August 11, 1768, n. 118, 3/1; May 11, 1769, n. 157, 4/3; September 7, 1769, n. 174, 4/1; February 8, 1770, n. 196, 4/3; October 18, 1770, n. 232, 3/1; March 5, 1772, n. 305, 3/2; October 29, 1772, n. 338, 3/1; December 2, 1773, n. 1166, 3/1; June 2, 1774, n. 421, 2/3; November 4, 1775, n. 1265, 3/3; May 8, 1778, n. 162, 2/1.

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as a staple crop took hold, black slaves were increasingly relied upon as field hands while white indentured servants were utilized as a skilled labor workforce and many times as overseers in the fields. Later in the eighteenth century, as the availability and use of white servitude declined, skilled white indentured laborers were recruited to train black slaves in their respective trades, creating a slave based skilled work force capable of taking the place of whites after their term of service expired.[11]

Galenson's research presents a possible model for the use of indentured and slave labor which existed along the Virginia frontier during the eighteenth century. As discussed in chapter one, Virginia frontier society appeared to emulate the society of eastern Virginia in both governmental structure and social conventions. It is not a far leap of faith to assume that similar labor practices also were copied. While the frontier did not have a slave based economy, as the east did, the way the frontier settlers used the slaves and indentured servants probably developed along similar lines. The advertisements for runaway convicts more often than not listed skills the servant possessed. Since skilled servant labor was the norm in eastern Virginia by the mid-eighteenth century, and research indicates that these servants were both performing these skilled tasks and trained slaves to perform these tasks, the servants along the frontier were more than likely performing a similar role. Indentured servants and slaves surely filled any labor gaps which existed in the fields, but also were relied on for any unique skills the servant may have possessed. These servants then taught their skills to the slaves, especially after the mid 1770's as indentured servitude drastically declined along the frontier. Thus it is quite possible that

[11] David Galenson, White Servitude in Colonial America: An Economic Analysis, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1981), 117-140.

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while indentured servants and slaves were used as field hands, a skilled labor force was also available to the frontier families. This skilled labor force was originally made up of primarily white servants, who in time passed on their knowledge to black slaves.

Coexisting along with servant and slave based labor was wage labor. Wage labor allowed the frontier family to tap into a labor force that was temporary rather than life long, as was the case with slavery, or for a duration of years in the form of indentured servitude. Also, such labor did not involve the overall upkeep of the individual or the payment of a large fee up-front as was the case with indentured servitude and slavery. Wage labor allowed poorer families access to a temporary and overall less expensive labor source, while it allowed upper class families a means to augment their slave and indentured servant work force during especially busy times, such as during harvest.

Settlers often turned to wage labor in order to have a variety of jobs completed. Jobs generally fell into one of three categories. Wage labor was utilized for the construction and repair of buildings along the frontier as occurred on July 2, 1762, when James Clark received 30 shillings from William Preston for repairing the prison in Augusta County. Field hands, the second category wage laborers fell in, were in constant demand and generally received 2 shillings a day or 40 shillings a month, except during harvest time when workers earned an average of 2 shillings and 6 pence a day.[12]

Possibly one of the more important, and final category made up of wage laborers, was in the use of wagon drivers. These individuals allowed the economic connection between east and west, and indirectly the world, to exist. Products originating along the frontier reached their intended markets through the use of these paid individuals. Likewise, the

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[12] Preston Papers, reel 3, 367; Mitchell, Commercialism and Frontier, 126-127.

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wagon driver was the one who brought goods into the frontier which reinforced a similar societal makeup throughout the region. On November 20, 1760, William Preston paid 5 pounds, 10 shillings "for driving his Wagon one month and Eleven Days to Simon (?) Dehart." Sometime in 1761, Preston paid 1 pound, 10 shillings, and 3 pence for "10 Days driving - Wagon over the Ridge." The driver traveled one month and eleven days, while another driver went "over the Ridge" indicating that these wagons were heading either north towards Winchester or to eastern markets. It is unlikely that drivers were heading west with goods, as few settlers inhabited that region and no evidence was in the receipts indicating these goods were intended for western Indian tribes. A letter written on November 2, 1789 from Major E. Langham to Governor Beverly Randolph is more specific as to exactly where a wagon train was destined for. In this letter Langham relates to Randolph that several wagons were to carry lead and powder from western Virginia to Winchester or Redstone fro the Chickasaw Nation. The estimated cost for this delivery was around 160 pounds. Again, drivers were paid in wages and products originating along the frontier were delivered to eastern markets. On average, Wagoners were paid 4 shillings and 6 pence per day before and during the French and Indian War. By the American Revolution, the pay had risen as high as 18 shillings per day.[13]

Wage laborers were not always paid directly in cash for services rendered. Along the Virginia frontier, economic relationships resembling wage labor took shape in the form of tenant farming. In this arrangement, usually between a gentry family and a landless settler, one party provided labor in exchange for a temporary place to live and make a living.

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[13] Ibid., 126; Preston Papers, reel 3, 336, 350; William P. Palmer, M.D., and Sherwin McRae, ed., Calendar of Virginia State Papers and Other Manuscripts, From July 2, 1790 to August 10, 1792 (Richmond: James E. Goode, Printer, 1885), 51-52.

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Such was the case when, on January 23, 1761, William Preston and George Patterson entered an agreement in which Patterson would work Preston's land in exchange for certain benefits. Patterson agreed to raise, both plant and harvest, a Spring crop on two plantations belonging to Preston, and to plant a Fall crop of wheat. On these plantations, Patterson was to plant corn and oats on thirty acres in both places, "if in his Power," and repair a fence. Patterson furnished his own tools, a plow horses, and provisions for his family. For his work, Patterson was allowed to live on either of the estates and Preston paid him for one-third of the rails used for the repair of the fence. Both parties also shared the crops that Patterson planted, with Preston receiving two-thirds of the hay and half of the corn and oats. Preston also furnished Patterson with two slaves named Swift and Jack "to assist in raising Said Crop," and provided the slaves "with Clothing, Provissions, and Tools, as also one Ploughe Horse or Mare and half the Seed," however Patterson was responsible for cooking for the slaves and had to "wash their Shirts."[14]

Such agreements created an environment which brought together peoples with vastly different pasts and social positions. In December of 1781, Henry Vigall entered into a tenant farmer agreement with James Craig. Vigall was a German Hessian who had been taken prisoner during the battle of Saratoga and then ended up along the Virginia frontier. Beginning on January 15, 1782, for a period of one year, Vigall ran a grist mill and still for Craig. Craig furnished Vigall with a woman slave "or such other labor as the said James Craig shall find necessary." For his work, Craig provided Vigall with one acre of land to live on and grow corn, and paid him the sum of fifteen pounds and twelve shillings in gold

[14] Breckinridge Family Papers. (Roanoke, Virginia. Roanoke Valley Historical Society), 4.

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or silver. Such an agreement seems more than fair considering Vigall had been fighting against the colonists and was formerly, or still currently, a prisoner of war. It is noteworthy to mention that Vigall was not given the status of convict servant but was a paid worker, possibly indicating the mind set that one should earn something for their work.[15] Through this method of obtaining labor, larger landowners and, in many cases, struggling, landless settlers intermixed on grounds more favorable to the tenant than indentured servitude or slavery. While their existence more than likely resembled that of servants and slaves, they were compensated for their work through the use of land for their own purposes and sustenance and at times through monetary reward.

Possibly no other source represents the labor conditions existing along the Virginia frontier than the lead mines located in and around Fort Chiswell. While the vast majority of economic activity along the Virginia frontier consisted of agricultural production in a small farm environment, a form of industry is evident in the mining of lead from a series of mines located in present day Wythe County. Managers of the mines used white indentured servitude, both convict and voluntary, along with wage and slave labor in order to extract lead from the mines. As with the production of hemp, the lead mines experienced an increase in production and demand during the American Revolution. Up until the latter part of 1776, the mines had been under the direction of the private sector. With the increase in hostilities relating to the Revolution, the Virginia Assembly determined that state management of the mines was more beneficial for the production of lead. In an act passed by the Assembly in October of 1776, the governor, or the president of the council in case

[15] Charles E. Kemper, "Valley of Virginia Notes," The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 31 (1923).

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of his death or sickness, was given the power to "engage so many slaves, servants, or others, and employ them at the said mines for making lead for the use of the publick . . ." Thus the state took on a managerial role over the lead mines and resolved to utilize any form of labor in order to extract the lead for the war effort.[16]

It appears that the state made good with their act, as indentured servants worked alongside slaves and wage laborers in order to increase lead production. During the Revolution, several advertisements were run in the Virginia Gazette announcing the escape of both slaves and servants from the lead mines. In July of 1779, an advertisement ran that announced the capture of a black man named Luke who stated that he had ran away from the lead mines "where he was employed in the country service . . ." Also illustrative of the range of labor used at the lead mines was a petition submitted by Mary Sanders, of Louisa County, in December of 1781. Sanders was petitioning the state for the "release and discharge of her husband" who had been condemned to work in the lead mines. Whether or not her petition was recognized and granted is not known, however it does indicate that convict labor was used at the lead mines by the state. Evidence of wage labor exists in surviving government records from the period. In January of 1781, Thomas Jefferson wrote a letter to the manager of the mines directing him to disperse all lead immediately due to the British invasion of the state. Jefferson noted that at the current time there was no money available to pay the wagon drivers transporting the lead to the east, but money would be available before the service was completed. As with agricultural products grown

[16] "An act to empower the Governour, and Council to employ persons for working the Lead Mines to greater advantage." in William Waller Hening, comp., The Statutes at Large: Being a Collection of All the Laws of Virginia. . . (13 vols.; Richmond, 1819-23), 9: 287-288.

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along the frontier, lead was transported through the use of wage laborers.[17]

On December 6, 1782, with the end of the war in sight, the state returned the management of the lead mines to the owners. Again, indications of the use of slave labor and the use of hired slaves occurs. The state also took an inventory of property and debts shortly after this act was passed which mentioned both slave and wage labor. In addition to livestock, the inventory included several slaves and paid workers. The wage laborers were listed as earning 12 pounds a year for working at the mines.[18] This inventory substantiates the possibility that more jobs related to the mines were performed by wage laborers and that wage labor was not simply used for wagon drivers. It would appear that in the mines, wage laborers worked along side both slaves and servants, while generally only wage laborers transported lead to the east via wagons.

Virginia's frontier labor system represented a labor force in transition. While a small industry existed, at the lead mines, the majority of the frontier's economy revolved around a traditional agrarian society. Within that system, however, both traditional and modern forms of labor were used. Slavery and white indentured servitude, while never reaching the level of eastern Virginia's Tidewater society, was used in frontier households and in the extraction of lead. Simultaneously, a system of wage labor took hold that foreshadowed the eventual demise of the traditional institutions of slavery and indentured servitude. Individuals were paid for driving wagons, working as field hands, performing general maintenance, and working the lead mines. While frontier tenant farming that was not

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[17] Virginia Gazette: July 24, 1779, n. 31, 3/1; and Preston Papers, reel 5, 1101.

[18] Virginia Calendar of State Papers, 3:390, 426.

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exactly a system based on wages, it was, in principle, a system in which an individual performed a service and was paid by receiving land to use and a share of the crops. Sometimes the tenant received a monetary bonus, which one could interpret as a form of wages. While the workforce was not entirely modern, it did have modern characteristics. Thus an almost pre-capitalistic work force was in the making along the frontier as modern economic institutions took root among more traditional ones. In time, wage labor took on a greater importance and the class divisions associated with wage labor appeared.

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CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION: THE FRONTIER MOVES ON

By 1789 the states had ratified the United States Constitution and its ideals. While this document solved many of the problems which existed under the Articles of Confederation, it also provided a governmental structure which allowed for a primarily mercantilistic economy to mature and develop into an economy based on capitalistic ideologies.[1] Madison's Federalist 10 best illustrates these capitalistic principles. Madison envisioned a large, commercial, republic as the only means through which economic factions could be contained and their effects controlled.[2] The Constitution provided an environment for the country, as a whole, to move into a modern economic system.

While 1789 was a significant year for the United States, collectively, it was also a significant time for the New River Valley. By 1789 the New River Valley was no longer the edge of white western expansion. The risk of Indian attack had subsided and a substantial number of people inhabited the lands of Kentucky and Tennessee, west of the

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[1] See Mary McKinney Schweitzer, "A New Look at Economic Causes of the Constitution: Monetary and Trade Policy in Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Virginia" The Social Science Journal 26 (1989): 15-26; William A. Williams, "The Age of Mercantilism: An Interpretation of the American Political Economy, 1763-1828" William and Mary Quarterly (1958): 245-267. These works provide insight as to the various economic interpretations existing among historians concerning the Constitution. The scope of this thesis does not cover this larger debate, however I am taking the position that the Constitution was a modern document in the sense that it did provide for an economic environment fashioned along capitalistic lines.

[2] See Clinton Rossiter ed. "Federalist 10," The Federalist Papers (New York: Penguin Books, USA Inc., 1961); Martin Diamond The Founding of the Democratic Republic (Itasca: F.E. Peacock Publishers, Inc., 1981) for a discussion on the dangers of factions and solutions for controlling the effects of factions as put forth by Madison and interpreted by Diamond.

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New River Valley. By 1789, the periphery of white settlement no longer encompassed the New River Valley, but was further west. Instead, the New River Valley had become a base for expansion as eastern migrants passed through the region, some staying and adding to an ever increasing population base.

Economically, the New River Valley had gained importance in the world market. In 1791, business leaders from Richmond and Manchester petitioned the United States government to set up a branch of the Bank of the United States in Richmond. One of the reasons for a branch bank in the state capital was to service "an extensive fertile and improving Back Country" which was "expected rapidly to encrease," since the back country's "exports are already great particularly in the Articles of Tobacco, Wheat, Flour, Indian Corn, Hemp and Coal, great part of which are purchased and paid for in Cash in consequence of orders from Europe as well as from the Middle and Eastern States."[3] Virginia's back country had established itself firmly within the world market and was no longer viewed as a backwards region, with little to offer the state.

The New River Valley had undergone a substantial transformation between 1745 through 1789. The semi-periphery of eastern Virginia had spawned a periphery of settlement within the New River Valley. This area was not the independent frontier described by Frederick Jackson Turner. Through trade and consumption, the frontier remained tied to the east and world, or semi-periphery and core, which in turn fueled an evolution from a traditional to a modern, capitalistic, economic system. Thus the economic interdependency created as the periphery attempted to become a semi-periphery ushered in

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[3] "The Bank of the United States: Petitions of Virginia Cities and Towns for the Establishment of Branches, 1791" The Virginia Magazine of History and Biography 8(1901): 291-293.

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a capitalistic economic environment. East and west remained connected through extensive markets that took on a world wide dimension. This market economy allowed the frontier to emulate the lifestyle which existed in the east as goods were shipped to the frontier. All the while products unique to western Virginia found their way to eastern and world markets, which reinforced the interdependent relationship between east and west. In such a setting, individualism and independent thinking did not develop, but rather a world view, connected by trade took root. Labor relations also served as a means through which community was strengthened, rather than broken, as land owner and worker came together in ways that augmented local interdependence as well as regional interdependence.

Labor relations strengthened communal ties as land owners either directly owned individuals, in the case of slavery or indentured servitude, or owned the individual's labor, in the case of wage labor and tenant farming. Within this environment traditional views of labor collided with and coexisted with modern notions of labor. Although traditional labor forms existed, the New River Valley was not necessarily operating under an entirely traditional economic model. Such institutions were not wide spread and the use of wage labor in linking eastern, western, and world markets is particularly illuminating. The frontier settler was not operating solely within a local market, as in a traditional society, but rather was a player in larger world markets, which shaped the settlers economic endeavors. Wage labor allowed for the frontier family to gain access to those larger markets and acquire the material goods which helped define the semi-periphery and core societies.

The Virginia frontier was not an entirely capitalistic society. However, because the frontier's economy was dependent on the east (within the World Systems Model) it is evident that modern economic philosophies resembling a capitalistic structure were taking

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shape. Also within this setting certain assumptions about the American frontier come under scrutiny. Interdependency, both locally and regionally, appears to have been the norm rather than individual, egalitarian thought. Society mirrored the east in that a definite social hierarchy was set up from the outset of settlement as governmental agencies which existed in the east were copied and established. Yet even as western society emulated the east, it was never completely successful. A gentry class as powerful as the tidewater planters never materialized. Slave labor never achieved a significant standing along the frontier, and indentured servitude began to decline by the 1770s. This left a vacuum which was filled by wage labor and tenant farmers. Along the Virginia frontier, as the region transformed from a periphery to a semi-periphery, an economic environment with definite capitalistic tendencies and characteristics was formed. These capitalistic characteristics created an environment in which the market interaction, including local markets, regional and world markets, fostered an interdependency between settlers along the periphery and individuals living in both the semi-periphery and core.

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VITA

B. Scott Crawford was born in August of 1968 and raised in Blacksburg, Virginia, by two wonderful parents. Early on he realized a love for history as he was always drawn to books which covered a variety of historical topics. Upon completing high school, and a three year stint in the work world, Scott pursued a Bachelors degree in history from Radford University. While at Radford, he minored in political science and became certified to teach social studies at the high school level. Graduating *Summa Cum Laude* from Radford, Scott continued his academic endeavors at Old Dominion University, where he received a Master of Arts degree in history in December of 1996. While attending Old Dominion, he became a member of *Phi Alpha Theta* honor society and presented papers at two *Phi Alpha Theta* conferences. Currently he is teaching World History and World Geography at Patrick Henry High School in Roanoke, Virginia.

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