



Lordly event honors valley pioneers*

By Gail Nardi

Times-Dispatch state staff

STAUNTON — Two British barons lent rather a lordly note to a celebration Friday night in honor of those who are trying to preserve the heritage of the Scottish-Irish, German and English peasant farmers who settled the Shenandoah Valley 250 years ago.

The occasion was a formal dinner at the Ingleside Red Carpet Inn given by the board of directors of the American Frontier Culture Foundation. The aim of the foundation is "saving the first frontier" through a museum of American frontier culture east of Staunton in Augusta County.

The museum concept has been called "an essay on the American identity," Gen. Arch A. Sproul, general chairman of the museum campaign, told about 200 guests.

Visitors will be able to see how their ancestors lived before emigrating as well as the way of life they established as "they settled this valley and pushed westward from this area to settle America."

The museum will include reconstructed period farmsteads from England, Germany and Ulster in what is now Northern Ireland, the homelands of most Shenandoah Valley pioneers. The museum's centerpiece will be an authentic 18th century Appalachian frontier farm, the American synthesis of the diverse cultures of the early settlers.

Out of delicacy, perhaps, there was no mention of John Lewis, the first European settler of Augusta, during the speeches Friday night.

Lewis settled in Virginia in 1732, having left his native Ulster because he "slew the Irish lord," according to one of his descendants. An Irish lord was seated at the head table.

Lord O'Neill of the Maine, born Terence Marne O'Neill in County Antrim, was prime minister of Northern Ireland from 1963 to 1969. Also on

hand was Lord Donaldson of Kingsbridge, a retired farmer and former minister of the arts and parliamentary undersecretary for Northern Ireland, who described himself as an Englishman of Scottish descent.

The two life peers received credit for "prodding" American supporters of the project, proposed in 1975, to redouble efforts to make the museum a reality.

The master of ceremonies was Virginia Supreme Court Justice George M. Cochran of Staunton, a member of the foundation's board.

Asked earlier about his forebears, Cochran said he is a direct descendant of John Lewis.

"So's the governor," he said of Gov. Charles S. Robb, who announced two years ago that the state would donate 78 acres of the old Western State Hospital farm for the museum site.

Like most of the early settlers, Lewis came to America because he "wasn't doing mighty well at home," Cochran said. "He was the one who slew the Irish lord."

Lewis got into trouble when his landlord "got drunk and came down one night" to try to evict Lewis' family from their tenant house, Cochran said. The landlord "attacked some of Lewis' family. Lewis resisted and he killed [the landlord]. He was completely justified, of course, but he thought he'd better flee, and he did."

Years later, Lewis was given amnesty, Cochran said.

Evidently, with the passage of 2½ centuries, there are no hard feelings left on either side. Toasts were raised to the heads of state of the nations involved in the museum project.

There were cries of "hear, hear!" from some in the audience of about 200 when Sen. Paul S. Trible Jr., R-Va., a red bow tie enlivening his black formal attire, raised his glass to "her majesty, Queen Elizabeth II."

In his remarks, Lord Donaldson said, "We have a few people in England who are anti-American, but they aren't very many and they aren't very important and we can deal with them."

The museum "must not only be a Virginian venture," but a national and international one, Lord Donaldson said. "We are very proud that all our ancestors mixed together to provide the blood that produced your marvelous nation."

The foundation has raised \$1 million of the \$3 million it will take to build and endow the museum, which is expected to open in spring 1986, Sproul said. A campaign to raise \$500,000 in the Shenandoah Valley is under way.

Timbers from two 17th century threshing barns and a cattle shed that originally stood on a farm near the village of Northchapel in southern England arrived early last month and are stored at the museum site awaiting reassembly. A reproduction of the farmhouse that would have stood near the outbuildings will be built.

A 200-year-old thatched cottage and three farm buildings from County Tyrone in Northern Ireland are being dismantled and will be the next to arrive, Sproul said. Efforts are under way to identify a farmstead from the Rhineland-Palatinate region of West Germany.

A visitor center, exhibit halls and offices will be housed in remodeled dairy barns while the four farmsteads are being reassembled. The museum will be at Interstates 81 and 64 on the path of the Great Wagon Road traveled by the pioneers.

Lord Donaldson had high praise for Lewis A. McMurrin Jr. of Newport News, chairman of the Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation, who originated the American frontier culture museum concept. The Jamestown-Yorktown Foundation coordinated early stages of the project and remains involved.

* Richmond Times-Dispatch, B-1, 3 Dec. 1984. Republished here with the kind permission of Marvin Garrette, Managing Editor.

Spring Conference
Virginia Genealogical Society

Date: Friday and Saturday, April 26 and 27, 1985.

Place: Hilton Hotel, Route 29, 2350 Seminole Trail, Charlottesville, VA 22901, (804) 973-2121. Rooms are priced at \$55 single, \$65 double. Attendees should write direct to the Hotel for rooms, which must be reserved by April 5th. In view of the fact that April 20 to 25 is Historic Garden Week in Virginia, early reservations are recommended since many Garden Week visitors stay through the weekend before returning home. As is the case throughout Virginia, the Charlottesville/Albemarle area features a week-long schedule of special events. Besides a number of the great colonial mansions open to the public for the benefit of the Garden Club of Virginia, Charlottesville, during the weekend of April 26-27, will be the site of such diverse offerings as an Arts & Crafts Show, the St. Anne's Antiques Show, the Dogwood Parade, and the Foxfield Races (steeplechase). For further information about the above or brochures of homes open during Garden Week write to: Western Virginia Visitors Center, Route 20 South and I-64, Charlottesville, VA 22902, (804) 977-1783. In addition, commercial tours in and around Charlottesville are available through VIP Tours, 1504 Trailridge Rd., Charlottesville, VA 22903, (804) 296-5219. Please contact VIP directly, prior to 1 April. For attendees with more decided genealogical tastes, the Society has arranged two conducted tours the afternoon of April 26: (1) Tour of the Alderman Library, The University of Virginia, and (2) Tour of the Albemarle County Recordroom and of the Library of the Albemarle County Historical Society. Both tours depart the Hilton Hotel at 2:30 p.m.

Conference Program

Friday, April 26:

Afternoon: Free time to participate in tours and events described above.

Early evening: A reception sponsored by the Society at the Hotel. A social hour with Cash Bar will provide ample time for making or renewing acquaintances with others. An ancestor name exchange, part of the registration packet, will get you together with others at this social hour researching names of common interest.

Dinner: On-your-own, either at the Hotel or one of Charlottesville's fine restaurants.

Saturday, April 27:

The following morning and afternoon lectures have been scheduled.

Sharon B. Hamner "An Introduction to Genealogical Research in Albemarle and Buckingham Counties"

Barbara V. Little "Genealogical Research in Orange, Spotsylvania, and Culpeper Counties"

Jessie S. Barbour "Genealogical Research: How to Begin"

Pollyanna Creekmore "South-West Virginia and Its Importance in the Westward Migration"

Mary M. Bell "Little-known Collections of County and Military Records for Virginia and North Carolina"

Richard Slatten "Eighteenth Century Migrations from Hanover/Henrico Counties to Albemarle County"

Peggy S. Joyner "The German Settlement in the Valley of Virginia"

"Northern Neck Land Office Surveys as an Overlooked Source"

Note: At a later date, all members will receive by mail a registration flyer with additional details concerning the above notes. Besides other necessary instructions, this flyer will provide space for inscribing the ancestral names in which attendees are interested. Non-members wishing to receive a registration form should write Mrs. Janice Abercrombie Box 373, Mineral, VA 23117. The Program Committee is presently negotiating to have a representative from Quinsept Software Co. in attendance. This firm publishes the computer program "Family Roots," and we hope to have their representative demonstrate the program. This could be the opportunity to discuss your computer interests with the experts! Attending members who are the authors of books they wish to offer for sale may plan to do so on a space-available basis. Spaces for vending must be arranged before 1 April by writing to Mr. Steven Meeks, P. O. Box 39, Crozet, VA 22932.

THE SOCIETY ACKNOWLEDGES THE FOLLOWING GIFTS WITH APPRECIATION:

Jo White Linn, C.G. Drake-Arrington, White-Turner, Linn-Brown (1984), 467 pp., illus., index. This impressive book--it won the 1984 Robert Bruce Cooke Award for the best study of a N. C. family--marks the emergence of the old-fashioned family appreciation as a solidly respectable historical document. Democratically inclusive, wholly free of genealogical cant and unmarred by fanciful allusions to princely houses, this is a lively human-interest document of families of various backgrounds which meet in the present. Mrs. Linn sets the stage for a no-nonsense presentation by exposing as myth a long-standing family tradition in her Drake line that is first-rate detective work, and she follows this up with equally careful studies of the Arrington, White, Turner, Linn, and Brown lines, plus some two dozen other related Southern families. Anyone with Treadwell, Slade, Lacey, Harrison, Cathey, Redwine, Krider, Wood, McNair, Peden, Sandefer, Tompkins, Bennett, Hodges, Goodrich, Bechinoe, Williams, Bustin, Outlaw, Fox, Smith, George, Doll, and Stahle connections will find a considerable amount of well-arranged, thoroughly indexed material here certain to further his or her own research efforts, all of it soundly researched, intelligently interpreted, and carefully documented. Order from the author, Box 1948, Salisbury, N.C. 28144, @ \$35 postpaid, N.C. residents add \$1.58.

Eve B. Weeks and Mary B. Warren. Materials Towards a History of the Baptists, Vol. 2 (1984), 208 pp., index. This appearance in print of previously unpublished manuscript material prepared by Morgan Edwards (1722-1795) is a valuable contribution to our knowledge of the early Baptist Church and its members in MD, VA, NC, and SC. Gathered during Edward's travels, these notes represent first-hand impressions and interviews during a period when contemporary Baptist records are scarce. Order from Heritage Papers, Danielsville, GA 30633 @ \$15 plus \$2 shipping (plus 4% sales tax for GA residents).

The Genealogical and Historical Magazine of the South, Carroll Ainsworth McElligott, ed., Vol. I, no. 1, Feb. 1984. Subscriptions at \$20/year (plus 5% tax for S.C. residents) are available from the Editor, Rt. 1, Box 103, Harleyville, SC 29448. This periodical represents an ambitious undertaking, calling, one supposes, for a balanced review of the history and record resources of a very large region, the eleven states which comprised the Confederacy. Whereas the issue used for this notice (Vol. I, no. 3) was devoted largely to Texas material, the records were presented effectively, employing, save for an individually indexed number, a conventional and attractive format.

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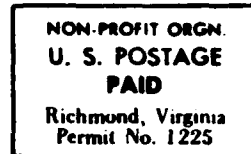
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NOTICE: Amendments to the By-Laws will be voted on at the meeting to be held on 8
 March 1985 at the Garden Center, Richmond, Virginia.

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