

Cover Sheet

Overview

This is a chapter from the fourth edition of the e-book “**In Search of the Turkey Foot Road: Unraveling the mystery, charting new history, plotting the route**” (2014). To access other chapters, see the [online table of contents](#).

As described on pages 3 to 6 of [Addendum A](#), the fourth edition mistakenly claims that a dashed line route on the 1755 Fry and Jefferson map is an antecedent to the Turkey Foot Road. Shortly after publication, I realized that the dashed lines actually represent Christopher Gist’s second Ohio Company Tour. If that or another known mistake affects this or another chapter of the book, the relevant text will be highlighted in yellow, and the mistake will be briefly described in a comment that is accessible via a clickable comment icon.

In this and other chapters of the book, any supplemental information will be provided via clickable comment icons, inserted yellow sheets, or other readily identifiable means.

L. Dietle

August 23, 2026

17. The 1804 route above Mount Savage

The “Old Mount Savage Road” portion of the 1804 route

The now-proven portions of the 1804 route of the Turkey Foot Road are depicted on the 1898 topographical map that is included as [Figure 0038](#). The numeric references in this chapter refer to the numbers on that Figure.

According to Mike McKenzie’s father, the now-abandoned road “3” that came over Savage Mountain right past the Sam Blank stone house “11” was known as the “*Old Mount Savage Road*”⁴¹³. Mike’s father told him that the “*Old Mount Savage Road*” was a very old road⁴¹⁴.

After the coming of the automobile, truck, and tractor, many mountain roads became irrelevant and fell into disuse, and were ultimately abandoned. With the coming of cars and trucks, it was no longer necessary to take the shortest route to save time. With the advent of the tractor, and the rise of larger-scale farming in the midwest, many small mountain farms became uncompetitive, and were abandoned, along with the roads that serviced them.

A portion of the Old Mount Savage Road still survives by that name north of the state line ([Figure 0232](#)). It comes out on McKenzie Hollow Road at Latitude 39.743147°, Longitude -78.925598°. This surviving portion indicates that the Old Mount Savage Road shared the general path of the Turkey Foot Road for a distance, and then turned off at a location considerably east of the Greenville Road, and from there went generally northward. [Figure 0651](#) is a 1915 map of Somerset County that illustrates the Old Mount Savage Road.

Two Pennsylvania surveys show the route at the state line

For orientation purposes, the W.P.A. Warrantee Survey map of Southampton Township, Somerset County, is included as [Figure 0296](#). Of the surveys for what is now Southampton Township, the 1832 Archibald White (Book C-144, Page 299, [Figure 0597](#)) and 1832 James Lancaster (Book C-114, Page 298, [Figure 0598](#)) surveys show the Turkey Foot Road exiting Maryland’s Samuel Wilhelm property and entering the Archibald White property. (Samuel Wilhelm’s property is covered in more detail in Chapter 24.) The Samuel Porter (Book C-174, Page 244), William Combs (Book C-3, Page 114), and Thomas Johnson, Junior (Book A-3 Page 113) surveys do not show the route.

Both the White and Lancaster surveys identify nearby property as being called Peter Buzzard’s. This property appears to be related to the “*Buzzard’s Old Road*” that is shown on the 1939 W.P.A. map of Larimer Township ([Figure 0297](#)). [Figure 0810](#) is a portion of the W.P.A. warrant survey map of

⁴¹³ There may have been an east-west alternative to the Old Mount Savage Road “3” at some time in the past, in terms of a route ultimately connecting to the Greenville Road area near the state line. The 1939 USDA aerial photos seem to show the trace of a tortuous old road south of the Mason-Dixon line that departs the Old Mount Savage route close to the state line, and may rejoin over toward the Greenville Road, near where the route labeled “3” dips back down into Maryland.

⁴¹⁴ Michael McKenzie’s great-grandfather James McClellan McKenzie had an isolated farm on the Greenville side of the mountain along this road, and Michael’s father spent time there as a child. The farm was located west of the southern entrance to the Big Savage tunnel, and is visible on a 1939 USDA photo of the area ([Figure 0348](#)). It is now abandoned and the fields are grown over.

Southampton Township that has been marked up to identify the known portion of Buzzard's old road in that township. Buzzard's old road is not identified on Buzzard's survey (Book C-13, Page 69), but it is identified as "*Buzzards old path*" on the adjacent 1793 Alexander Adams survey (Book C-196, Page 234, [Figure 0811](#)). It continued on, into Arnold's settlement, joining the Turkey Foot Road.

The site of the Maryland portion of the Old Mount Savage Road

[Figure 0040](#) is an annotated 2010 ground-level photo of the location of the Maryland portion of the "*Old Mount Savage Road*" near the "*Sam Blank Stone House*".⁴¹⁵ ([Figure 0041](#) is a non-annotated version.) The portion of the road that is shown schematically by dots across a snow-covered field represents the approximate route of the Turkey Foot Road on the 1804 survey. It is the Maryland portion of the road that Mr. McKenzie's father identified as the Old Mount Savage Road.

The abandoned portion of the route is indicated by the darker colored grass in [Figure 0201](#). Such color variations are due to variations in soil depth over underground features, such as abandoned roadbeds. The soil depth variations cause variations in soil moisture content during dry weather that impacts plant growth. The archaeological term for the visible result is "*cropmarks*".⁴¹⁶

The Old Mount Savage Road came out on Blank Road where present-day Bald Knob Road does. As proven by a road survey that is included below, what is now known as Bald Knob Road was originally established as an 1804 alteration to the Turkey Foot Road. The route of the road across the field (determined with the USGS EarthExplorer website) is provided in the following table:

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Intersects Blank Road	39.72139222292888°	-78.88644933700561°
	39.72153044717987°	-78.88755440711975°
	39.72158408636682°	-78.88827323913574°
	39.72177801231005°	-78.8892012834549°
Beginning of northward turn	39.72194305523638°	-78.88988256454468°
End of northward turn	39.72224425755876°	-78.89020442962646°
Crosses state line	39.72287966636201°	-78.89039754867554°

A Bald Knob tram road

As an aside, the mining tram road of the Georges Creek Bald Knob Coal Company once connected Bald Knob to Wellersburg via an inclined plane. The route of the tram road can be seen in [Figure 0066](#). The 1904 to 1905 "**Report of the Mine Inspector for Allegany and Garrett Counties Maryland**" states:

A tram road about two miles in length is used to convey the coal in the mine cars to the head of the plane, by means of a locomotive. Thence the cars are lowered down the plane, about half a mile to the dump, which is across the State line in Pennsylvania, and there shipment is made via the

⁴¹⁵ The house that is identified as the "*Sam Blank Stone House*" is property number AL-V-B-068 on the Maryland "*Inventory of Historic Properties*". A title search that was published by the Maryland State Archives in connection with the A1-V-A-068 property indicates that Samuel Blank purchased the property from Samuel Wilhelm's heirs in 1886, and Samuel Wilhelm bought the property from Fredrick Rigert in 1828. The property survey document also indicates that the date stone of the house bears the initials "*IF*" and "*FR*" and the date 1817.

⁴¹⁶ "*Dry weather reveals archaeological 'cropmarks' in fields*", BBC News UK, August 30, 2010, and the 1994 book "**Human Remains**" by Andrew Chamberlain.

“switchback” on the Wellersburg branch, to the Cumberland & Pennsylvania Railroad, back into the State.

It must have been quite an ordeal to transport a locomotive engine to Bald Knob. Surely the engine must have been moved in pieces, and assembled on the tram road. One possible scenario would be using the inclined plane to raise the components. The Somerset County portion of the tram road is shown on [Figure 0778](#).

The 1804 route from the state line to the present-day Robison’s farm

An 1804 road survey ([Figure 0042](#)) obtained from the Allegany County courthouse proves that the present-day Bald Knob Road was the 1804 Turkey Foot Road. Referring to the numbers on [Figure 0038](#), the 1804 route followed the abandoned Maryland section “5” of the Old Mount Savage Road “3” from the state line to the present-day Blank Road NW “4”. The road that is known today as the Blank Road has been traced back to an 1837 road survey plat ([Appendix 0049](#)) that is described in Chapter 24. The 1837 survey mentions the *“old Turkeyfoot road”*, proving that a road in the Bald Knob area was still referred to as the Turkey Foot Road in 1837.

The 1804 survey also proves that from the Blank Road NW “4” to Mile Lane (north of the present-day Robison’s farm “6”), the 1804 Turkey Foot Road followed the general route of what is now known as the Bald Knob Road “7”, with some very minor deviations. [Figure 0043](#) is a composite made from the 1804 Turkey Foot Road alteration plat and an 1898 topographic map. It shows how well the 1804 plat matches the Bald Knob Road and the now-abandoned Maryland portion of the Old Mount Savage Road. Clearly, the 1804 survey shows a route that replicates almost all of the twists and turns of the Bald Knob Road “7”, and the abandoned Maryland portion “5” of the Old Mount Savage Road “3”.

One possible minor deviation from the 1804 route is depicted in [Figure 0203](#), which shows an old roadbed in the narrow strip of woods that is slightly east of the S-curve near the western end of Bald Knob Road (Latitude 39.719528°, Longitude -78.882773°). On recent satellite imagery, the abandoned roadbed appears to be an older alignment of Bald Knob Road. It could also be some other abandoned road, or a non-public farm road. If it were a farm road, then it would seem an odd one, because it runs in the middle of a fencerow, and parallels a good blacktop road that is located only a few yards away. The aforementioned S-curve allowed the road to follow the edges of lots 3366 and 3367, as shown by the overlay of [Figure 0025](#).

The only significant 1898 deviation from the 1804 route is the angled section of road that is labeled “1” near the “A” on the 1804 road survey plat. The “A” is where the present-day (2010) Robison’s farm is located along Mile Lane⁴¹⁷, and where Arnold’s Hotel is said to have been located⁴¹⁸. Beyond a shadow of a doubt, the plat shows where Archibald Arnold’s residence and a portion of the old Turkey Foot Road were located in 1804.

⁴¹⁷ While Bald Knob Road terminates on Mile Line, the 1804 alteration to the Turkey Foot Road ran to Archibald Arnold’s place; the present-day Robison farm.

⁴¹⁸ One of the clues regarding the Turkey Foot Road is the Archibald Arnold family. Page 9 of Amanda Paul’s 2004 book *“Mount Savage”* indicates that the Archibald Arnold family and the Logsdons were early settlers living in the area, *“on”* the Turkey Foot Trail. Page 15 has an aerial photo of the buildings on what is the present-day (2010) Robison farm (“6” on [Figure 0038](#)). That farm is located northeast of the physical town of Mount Savage (but within the unincorporated town limits), near the old Saint Ignatius Cemetery “8”. The caption to the photo indicates that farm is on part of what was originally Archibald Arnold’s land, and indicates that the foundation to Arnold’s Hotel is located next to the farmhouse.

Figures [0133](#), [0145](#), [0146](#), and [0255](#) show the ruins that are, by local tradition, the foundation to Arnold's hotel. The ruins have a 90-degree bend in the corner, and do indeed appear to be a foundation for a banked building.

[Figure 0044](#) is a 1939 aerial photo of what is presently known as Robison's Farm. It shows an angled trace that appears to be a cropmark from the angled section of road that is labeled "1" near the "A" on the 1804 plat. For the sake of completeness, [Figure 0135](#) is a view from the road that shows the current farmhouse⁴¹⁹ that is located on the Robison Farm. The Robison farm experienced heavy use by Indians at some point in time. [Figure 0147](#) shows some of the artifacts⁴²⁰ that have been found there. The family found a half a bushel of grinding stones and other implements. We are not well versed in local Indian lore, and do not know when Indians actually lived in the area. A Mr. Porter found a location on the farm where arrowheads were made. Francis Bridges reports that some of the arrowheads found on the Robison farm may be from the historic time period, based on their shape, while others are from the archaic period, about 5,000 to 7,000 years ago.⁴²¹ Margaret Robison, owner of the farm, reports that when the foundation for Robison's silos was dug, the remains of a circular pattern of charred poles were encountered by the Robison family.⁴²² Some of the charcoal was saved in a jar, in the hope that carbon dating could be performed. A nearby stream and two springs would have made the area attractive for Indian occupation. One spring and the stream are located between the silos and Mark Barry's house, and the other spring is located between the silos and the Robison farmhouse.⁴²³

One fairly recent publication⁴²⁴ indicates that the flat ground at the location of present-day Barrelville was used by Indians at one time, and that Indians passed through the Mount Savage area as recently as the early 1800s. If Indians lived in the area, there would have been at least one path associated with the settlements.

When did the Archibald Arnold family arrive?

Allegany County, Maryland was formed from Washington County in 1789. The earliest Allegany County land record that has been found for Archibald Arnold pertains to a 1794 proclamation to resurvey lot 3380 ([Figure 0664](#)).

⁴¹⁹ The items along the edge of the roof are known as "snow birds". They are safety devices, to help prevent ice and snow from sliding off the roof and causing injuries. [Figure 0136](#) is a close-up photo of a Snow Bird with an 1802 patent date from the now-demolished farmhouse on the "Blubaugh Place" near Wellersburg, Pennsylvania. The house on the "Blubaugh Place" was located at Latitude 39.742168°, Longitude -78.822527°).

⁴²⁰ Margaret Robison told Francis Bridges and Mike McKenzie that she found a Spanish silver coin near the remains of the Dean residence. This is north of the cemetery, west of her daughter's house, and south of the Bear Camp area. Spanish coins were commonly used in colonial days.

⁴²¹ In an e-mail, Mr. Bridges states: "I don't know when the last Indians lived in the Mount Savage area. I read somewhere that Indians were traveling the TFR in the early 1800's. Some of the points found in the Robinson Farm could be from the 1600-1700 era. Some of them are from the archaic period... about 5000 to 7000 years ago. We have a chart that shows the shapes and dates of points from A.D.1500 back to 10,000 B.C. for the Appalachian Mts. -Atlantic coast, North America. The latest we find in this area are Madison and Levana, we find them at the Barton site, along with English trade beads and an occasional musket ball. The Shawnee were probably the last Indians to live on the Barton Site, early to mid 1700's, before them were the Susquehannocks probably in the 1600's..."

⁴²² Charring the lower end of a pole protects the pole from rotting when it is in the ground. The archaeological term for the remains of such poles is "post mounds". The silos are located at Latitude 39.703965°, Longitude -78.872861°.

⁴²³ Some of the Indian occupation-related information in this paragraph is reported from a 2013 conversation Nancy Thorig had with her aunt Margaret Robison.

⁴²⁴ Page three of the June 1972 issue of the "Heritage Press".

A tract named “*Arnold’s Remnant*” was resurveyed for an Archibald Arnold in Frederick County, Maryland in 1791 ([Figure 0663](#)). The resurvey comprises part of a tract that was granted to Anthony Arnold in April 1764. Jeffrey L. Thomas’ 2003 white paper “**The Tawny Family of Westminster, Carroll County, MD 1777-1950**” cites a tax assessment list for the Westminster District of Frederick County, Maryland which identifies Frederick Tawney as the owner of the “*Arnold’s Remnant*” property in 1798.

Considering the 1791 “*Arnold’s Remnant*” resurvey in Frederick County, Frederick Tawney’s ownership of that property in 1798, and the 1794 proclamation allowing Archibald Arnold to resurvey lot 3380 west of Fort Cumberland, it may be reasonable to believe that Archibald Arnold moved to Allegany County, Maryland in the 1791 to 1798 time period, and probably by 1794. This assumes that both resurveys refer to the same individual⁴²⁵.

The route just north of the state line

[Figure 0046](#) is a 1939 aerial photo of the local portion of the Old Mount Savage Road in Maryland. It also shows traces of variations in the Pennsylvania route. Because this portion of the old Mount Savage Road lines up with a verifiable portion of the 1804 route of the Turkey Foot Road, it seems reasonable to assume that the Pennsylvania portion of the Old Mount Savage Road followed the same general route of the Turkey Foot Road in the area depicted in the photo. The alternate parallel routes that can be seen suggest that the road was rerouted on several occasions as the primitive roadbeds deteriorated or became blocked. The Greenville Township map from the 1876 “**County Atlas of Somerset Pennsylvania**” shows this route connecting with the Greenville Road. By comparing Simon J. Martenet’s 1866 Map ([Figure 0126](#)) to the 1898 map of [Figure 0037](#), it appears that the route swung farther north in 1898 than it did in 1865. The Beers map of [Figure 0422](#) shows that northern route already existed in 1876. The following chart provides GPS coordinates from the state line, westward over the railroad tracks.

Description	Latitude	Longitude
Crosses state line	39.72287966636201°	-78.89039754867554°
Small turn	39.72359346277478°	-78.89083206653595°
Major turn to the northwest	-78.89083206653595°	-78.89101445674896°
Beginning of the arc	39.72450323304135°	-78.89219731092453°
Mid-arc	39.724643514009784°	-78.89265328645706°
End of the arc	39.72463319924238°	-78.89333724975586°
End of straight section	39.7249199492005°	-78.8944074511528°
Mid-arc	39.72530984471242°	-78.89555811882019°
End of large arc	39.72615564221227°	-78.89602482318878°
Beginning of small turn	39.7264031907373°	-78.89597117900848°
End of small turn	39.72667136730314°	-78.89617502689361°
Crosses railroad	39.727096321879095°	-78.89741957187652°
Beginning of small turn	39.727269603575785°	-78.89817595481872°
End of small turn	39.72725516345103°	-78.89871776103973°

⁴²⁵ Other evidence supports the idea that various people in Arnold’s settlement may have came from near Westminster, Maryland. A file on Ancestry.com indicates that (1) Gabriel McKenzie was married to a Durbin whose mother was a Logsdon, and (2) he had tracts of land near Westminster called “*Gabriel’s Choice*” and “*Mount Pleasant*” before showing up in the 1787 Deakins’ survey in Allegany County. Beall and Mattingly surnames also appear in Frederick and Carroll county land records. There are five McKinsy, four Durbin, four Logsdon, two Beall, and one Mattingly individuals who appear on Deakins’ survey.

The italicized text in the last seven lines of the table represents coordinates that are associated only with the more northern route. The coordinates were established with USGS EarthExplorer software using traces that are still visible on satellite photos.

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