

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

18. The route through Corriganville

From present-day Barrelville to Corriganville

The previously described August 4, 1804 plat ([Figure 0047](#)) of the antecedent to Route 47 proves that in the area of Barrelville, the Turkey Foot Road was the antecedent to Route 36 (Mount Savage Road NW), and followed the valley of Jennings Run. It is perfectly safe to assume that east of Barrelville it also followed the valley of Jennings Run. One reason is that terrain dictates it, as shown by [Figure 0015](#). Another reason is the description of Ninian Cochran's store, along the Turkey Foot Road, in the old Maryland session laws (see below) makes clear that the road came through the location of present-day Corriganville⁴²⁶.

Ninian Cochran's store on the Turkey Foot Road in 1797

According to Volume 652, page 8, of the 1797 "**Laws of Maryland**" ([Appendix 0059](#)), Ninian Cochran had a store at Jennings Run. The book references a law that was passed on January 20, 1797:

CHAP. VIII.

An act to establish the road leading from Ninian Cockran's store, at Genning's run on the Turkey Foot road, up Will's creek by John Tomlinson's mill, in Allegany county, to the Pennsylvania line.

WHEREAS sundry inhabitants of Allegany county, by their petition to this general assembly, have represented, that there has been a private road for twenty-seven years past, leading from Cockran's store, at Genning's run on the Turkey Foot road, up Will's creek by Tomlinson's mill to the Pennsylvania line, which intersects a public road leading from the town of Bedford, in Bedford county in Pennsylvania, and as the establishing the same as a public road would greatly administer to the convenience of the public, they have prayed that the same may be made a public road, and put upon the same footing, and kept up under the same regulations, as other public roads in said county; which appearing to this general assembly reasonable, therefore,

*II. Be it enacted, by the General Assembly of Maryland, That the road in Allegany county, leading as aforesaid from Ninian Cockran's store to the Pennsylvania line, be and the same is hereby declared, deemed and taken to be, a public road for ever, and hereafter to be kept up and repaired as other public roads are in said county, any law to the contrary notwithstanding.*⁴²⁷

Page 204 of the 1857 book "**Index to the journals of the Senate and House of Delegates of the State of Maryland**", Volume 2, summarizes information in the November 1797 journal of the House of Delegates, and records the votes, as follows:

⁴²⁶ The Cash Valley route is ruled out because one has to travel south, then abruptly swing north around Andy's Ridge. No such tortuous, indirect route appears on the old maps that we have seen.

⁴²⁷ Page 214 of Dulany's 1882 "**History of Maryland**" corrects the spelling of Jennings Run when referencing the 1797 act: "*In the same year the attention of the legislature was called to the fact that in Alleghany County there had been a private road for twenty-seven years, leading from Cochran's store, at Jenning's run, on the Turkey Foot road, up Will's Creek by Tomlinson's mill to the Pennsylvania line.*"

Petition from inhabitants of Alleghany county for act for laying out a road from Cochran's store, on the Turkey Foot road, up Wells' creek, &c, referred 24; bill brought in, read 36; passed and sent to senate 43; returned passed 47.

The 1799 “**Laws of Maryland**” ([Appendix 0060](#)) states:

VI. And, whereas the road leading from Ninian Cockran's store, at Genning's run, up Will's creek, by John Tomlinson's mill, in Allegany county, to the Pennsylvania line, established by an act passed at November session, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, runs through the land of John Tonlinson, much to his injury, as it is represented; therefore, Be it enacted, That the county court of Allegany county be and they are hereby authorized, upon the petition of John Tomlinson, to appoint three different persons, freeholders in the said county, commissioners, to view, survey and plot, the road so applied for, through the land of said Tomlinson, and make return thereof to the court at their next meeting, who, on receiving such plot, shall examine the same, and all the evidence that shall be offered for or against the said road, as returned, and may reject or confirm the same, or may direct the commissioners to alter and amend the ssme plot, and when so amended, may reject or confirm the same, and when confirmed and opened as the said county court shall direct, shall be deemed a public road.

Volume 98, Page 25 of the 1799 “**Proceedings of the House of Delegates**” states:

*On motion, Leave given to bring in a bill to alter and amend a public road leading from Ninian Caughran's store, on Jening's run, up Will's creek, to intersect a road leading from Bedford, in Bedford county, Pennsylvania, at the Pennsylvania line. ORDERED, That Mr. Beall, Mr. Perry and Mr. Rice, be a committee to prepare and bring in the same.*⁴²⁸

From these descriptions, one can deduce that Cochran's store and the Turkey Foot Road were located near the mouth of Jennings Run, which enters Wills Creek where present-day Corriganville is located. This is across from what in those days was the visually striking Devil's Backbone rock formation. The 1794 Dennis Griffith map ([Figure 0374](#)) cements this theory by identifying the location of Tomlinson's mill. [Figure 0080](#) is an 1898 topographical map. It shows why the valley of Wills Creek is a logical place to run a road northward. It also shows that the road from Jennings Run to the state line would have been closer to the stream than what is shown on the Dennis Griffith map.

Based on the 1787 Veatch map of lots west of Fort Cumberland, **Corriganville is situated on tracts that were originally named “Joseph's shirt” and (although difficult to read) “Horable Bottom”**. As shown by Mason and Dixon's map of their survey ([Figure 0978](#)), there was already a building at the mouth of Jennings Run in 1766.

Beachview Road at Corriganville

[Figure 0080](#) is a map that shows a road that is much closer to Wills Creek, compared to the main present-day route. This road followed Wills Creek as far as Ellerslie. There are remains of this old road today at Corriganville. It used to cross the railroad tracks and go past the old swimming hole known as DeHaven's Beach, but is now blocked by the railroad tracks ([Figure 0185](#)). This road,

⁴²⁸ This reference was provided by Cumberland Road historian Steve Colby.

which is presently known as Beachview Drive⁴²⁹ in Corriganville, may possibly be the present alignment of the one that ran north from Ninian Cochran's store toward the Pennsylvania line.

The road northward from the site of Corriganville is made public

Chapter LXXVIII of the laws of Maryland states:

...wheras the road leading from Ninian Cockran's store, at Genning's run, up Will's creek, by John Tomlinson's mill, in Allegany county, to the Pennsylvania line, established by an act passed at November session, one thousand seven hundred and ninety-seven, runs through the land of John Tomlinson, much to his injury, as it is represented; therefore, BE IT ENACTED, That the county court of Allegany county be and they are hereby authorised, upon the petition of John Tomlinson, to appoint three discreet persons, freeholders in the said county, commissioners, to view, survey and plot, the road so applied for, through the land of said Tomlinson, and make return thereof to the court at their next meeting, who, on receiving such plot, shall examine the same, and all the evidence that shall be offered for or against the said road, as returned, and may reject or confirm the same, or may direct the commissioners to alter and amend the said plot, and when so amended, may reject or confirm the same, and when confirmed and opened as the said county court shall direct, shall be deemed a public road.

Early maps show a road running north from the site of Corriganville

Early maps show a road running up the west side of Wills Creek from the present-day location of Corriganville toward the Pennsylvania line. For example, see the 1818 Melish-Whiteside map of Bedford County ([Figure 0081](#)) and Herman Boye's 1827 "*A map of the state of Virginia*".⁴³⁰ [Figure 0082](#) is a 1939 USDA aerial photo that shows what Corriganville, and the old road, looked like then.

An 1868 Maryland act authorizing road repair or replacement north of Corriganville

The "**Proceedings and Acts of the General Assembly, March 30, 1868**" records that on March 18, 1868, the executive department approved:

An Act for the repair and preservation of the present county road along the valley of Wills Creek, from the Pennsylvania line to the residence of John P. Krigbaum, on the Cumberland and Somerset Turnpike Road, or for the laying out of a new road in the valley of said Wills Creek, and for other purposes.

The abandonment of Creek Road

According to some paragraphs related to Ellerslie in the bicentennial issue of the "**Heritage News**", the Creek Road that ran between Cumberland, Maryland and Schellsburg, Pennsylvania via Ellerslie was prone to flooding. This is evidently a reference to what now survives in fragment form as Beachview Drive in Corriganville. The article states that:

...due to problems during the seasons of high waters, the original Will's Creek Road was abandoned and the existing road was built.

⁴²⁹ Determined from a road sign in 2010.

⁴³⁰ Library of Congress call number G3880 1827 .B6.

Kreighbaum Road

The “*Corrigan Brick Tavern*”⁴³¹ (Figures [0153](#) and [0186](#), Latitude 39.693675°, Longitude -78.788317°) is located on the old alignment of Route 36 that is presently known as Kreighbaum Road⁴³², on the northeast side of the Beachview Drive intersection. A building⁴³³ (Figures [0152](#) and [0187](#), Latitude 39.693335°, Longitude -78.7889416°) that is described as the “*Old Log Inn*” in the bicentennial issue of the “**Heritage News**” is located diagonally across the intersection, on the south side of the Kreighbaum Road. According to the “**Heritage News**”, the Old Log Inn was built along the Plank Road. The Old Log Inn is property AL-V-B-088 on the Maryland Historical Trust’s Inventory of Historic Properties, which refers to it as the “*Stage Coach Stop*”. AL-V-B-088 indicates that it is a log building with six fireplaces that was built in 1850.

The locations of the “*Corrigan Brick Tavern*” and the “*Old Log Inn*” prove that the Kreighbaum Road is an alignment that dates to at least the mid-nineteenth century. [Figure 0188](#) is a photo taken from the intersection, looking west along Kreighbaum Road, with the Jennings Run gap in the background. [Figure 0189](#) was taken near the western end of the Kreighbaum Road, looking west. [Figure 0191](#) was taken at the western end of the old alignment that is now known as the Portertown Road, looking east. [Figure 0192](#) shows a part of the old alignment that is used by the highway department for storage. [Figure 0190](#) was taken along Route 36 between Barrelville and Corriganville to show a visible sliver of the old road alignment.

Although the taverns prove where the road was in the mid-nineteenth century, the location of the route in earlier days is unknown. For example, some variation of the route along Wills Creek could have turned west into the Jennings Run gap as quickly as terrain allows, perhaps running along the south side of Jennings Run for a distance.

The Warrior’s Path through the Corriganville location

Chapter 125 of Wallace’s book covers several paths known as “*Warriors Path*”. Section B of that chapter, titled “*Warrior’s Path: Through Manns Choice*”, identifies the Corriganville-to-Cumberland portion of the route as belonging to the “*Warriors Path*” that ran from Frankstown, Pennsylvania to Cresaptown, Maryland. In that chapter, the Corriganville-to-Braddock Run portion of the route is illustrated on the correct, western side of Wills Creek and appears to correlate to what we know as the Turkey Foot Road. Wallace describes it as following the west side of Wills Creek from above the location of present-day Ellerslie, Maryland to Braddock Run. A map on page 183 of Wallace’s book shows the Turkey Foot Path joining this Warriors Path, and Wallace describes that junction as being at the present-day location of Corriganville. Wallace’s Chapter 125 provides an important insight: A portion of the general route known as the Turkey Foot Road was once known as the Warriors Path⁴³⁴. This is “*the old Indian war road that leads up on the West side of Wills Creek*” that is mentioned in Dr. David Ross’s 1762 “*Herts Field*” property survey.

⁴³¹ The “*Corrigan Brick Tavern*” is property AL-V-B-089 on the Maryland Historical Trust’s Inventory of Historic Properties.

⁴³² Kreighbaum Road may get its name from Kreighbaum Station on the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad; see [Figure 0128](#).

⁴³³ Figures 0152 and 0153 are from the “*Bicentennial Issue*” of the “**Heritage News**”.

⁴³⁴ As described in Wallace’s book, there were two local Indian paths that had the name “*Warriors Path*”. The one from Frankstown is illustrated as splitting near Cessna, with branches following the eastern and western sides of Wills Mountain.

Scenic Devil's Backbone at Corriganville

One of the sights along the old Turkey Foot Road that Dr. Wellford may have found breathtaking, as he records in his journal the Will's Creek and Narrows valleys were, was the striking Devil's Backbone rock formation, which has long been eradicated and forgotten. A photo on page 93 of Cleophas C. O'Harra's 1900 Johns Hopkins University Ph.D. dissertation ([Appendix 0064](#)) shows the "*Devil's Backbone*" rock formation and an old farmhouse⁴³⁵ near Corriganville.

When we were trying to locate the site of the photograph, Mr. McKenzie noted that the outer rail on the second track in the foreground was shiny, which indicates a curve on a track that was frequently used. The track closer to the photographer was not shiny, suggesting it was less frequently used. These clues helped to identify the vantage point of the photo.

O'Harra's dissertation is titled "**The Geology Of Allegany County**", and states that the formation was near Corriganville. It has since been quarried, and no longer looks the same. We believe that this is the same location that is described as "*Devil's Ladder*" in Lowdermilk's 1878 book "**History of Cumberland**".

[Figure 0094](#) is a 1939 USDA photo that has been marked up to identify where the sadly long-gone Devil's Backbone formation was located. The arrow shows where the photographer was located for the [Figure 0090](#) photo, and the camera angle. It was taken at a roadside pull-off that was provided for sightseers. This vantage point was still there in 1939, even though all the attractive natural features of the formation had already been removed.

[Figure 0091](#) is a striking photo that shows the same formation, from a different angle and distance. It is from Mathews and Grasty's 1910 book "**The Limestones of Maryland**". [Appendix 0065](#) includes a section of that book which discusses Devil's Backbone, and positively identifies its location using a map.

[Figure 0092](#) is a postcard that uses the same photo, but shows Wills Creek in the foreground. The misleading caption on the postcard has caused people to conclude wrongly that Devil's Backbone was a formation located in the Narrows. A formation at the Narrows has the same strata ([Figure 0093](#)) and does appear somewhat similar, but the strata lean in the opposite direction from Devil's Backbone. The error has crept into at least one Cumberland area history book.

Figures [0166](#) and [0167](#) are photos of Devil's Backbone from the 1897 book "**Artwork of Allegany County Maryland**". [Appendix 0066](#) provides additional proof that Devil's Backbone was at Corriganville. [Figure 0267](#) shows what the former site of Devil's Backbone looks like today.

Indian Will's cove near Corriganville

The path of the Turkey Foot Road is dictated in part by Wills Mountain. Lowdermilk's 1878 book "**History of Cumberland**" states that Wills Creek and Wills Mountain are named after an Indian named Will who remained in the area after the coming of the white man (see complete story below). Lowdermilk describes the location of Will's home as follows:

⁴³⁵ Nancy E. Thoeig's mother Mary (Weimer) Thoeig reports that her father almost bought the farm shown in [Appendix 0064](#) when he moved to Mount Savage circa 1927. He ended up preferring the farm on Bear Track Farm Road (the Waterford property), and bought it instead. Mary, her sister Margaret Robison, and their five siblings grew up on that property.

His wigwam was built in a little cove lying between the west side of Will's Mountain and Will's Knob, about three miles from the mouth of the creek, and in the vicinity of the rocky formation known as the "Devil's Ladder."

Mr. McKenzie has long wanted to know where Will's cove is located. Through diligent effort, we can now state with high confidence that we have found the site that fits Lowdermilk's description perfectly. The site, which is a short distance northeast of Corriganville, is identified on [Figure 0095](#). The reasons for believing we are correct are described below.

How we found Will's cove

Lowdermilk provides these clues regarding the location of Will's cove:

- *Will's Mountain,*
- *Will's Knob,*
- *about three miles from the mouth of the creek, and*
- *in the vicinity of the rocky formation known as the "Devil's Ladder."*

In Lowdermilk's day, the word "cove" could be used to describe many things, among them, an inlet of a body of water. Although not in the 1895 "**Webster's Academic Dictionary**", another meaning was this: A more level area bracketed by hilly or mountainous terrain⁴³⁶. This is the definition that Lowdermilk intended.

Will's Knob is not identified on any map that has come to our attention, but Wills Mountain has a distinctive knob that is three miles from the mouth of Wills Creek as the crow flies; see [Figure 0095](#).

The key to locating Will's cove was identifying the location of Devil's Ladder. As presented above, we have determined that there once was a striking rock formation called "*Devil's Backbone*" that was located just south of the aforementioned knob.

The Devil's Backbone formation has long since been quarried away, and its location was seemingly forgotten. Once we located the site of Devil's Backbone, it seemed obvious that this was the location Lowdermilk described as "*Devil's Ladder*". After all, it is not at all unusual for traditional local names to mutate over time, or to be called something slightly different by different people and different communities⁴³⁷.

With the sites of Will's Knob and Devil's Ladder thus identified, the location of the "...little cove lying between the west side of Will's Mountain and Will's Knob..." is quite obvious.

[Figure 0172](#) is a photo from the 1897 book "**Artwork of Allegany County Maryland**" that shows the valley that leads up to Wills Cove. The photo was taken south of Corriganville on the old alignment of what is now Route 36, near the old Mount Savage junction, looking over toward an area that is now a stone quarry. The photo shows the tracks of the Cumberland and Pennsylvania and Baltimore and Ohio railroads in the foreground, and the Pennsylvania Railroad in the background, in front of the farmhouse. [Figure 0175](#) is a 1939 aerial photo that shows the Wills Cove area, and the

⁴³⁶ This meaning is obvious when one considers the topography of Historic Cade's Cove, Tennessee. Durwood Dunn's 1988 book "**Cades Cove—The Life and Death of a Southern Appalachian Community 1818-1937**" provides excellent insights regarding how early wilderness communities functioned.

⁴³⁷ A good example of this is that Mr. Dietle's people refer to the vicinity of Dom's Curve on Route 160 (Latitude 39.760165°, Longitude -78.855894°) as the "*Board Yard*" while an electrician that Mr. McKenzie knows who lives just above Dom's Curve refers to it as the "*Board Pile*".

vantage point for the 1897 photo of Figure 0172. The old farm in the 1897 photo is long gone, and that area is now a quarry and a blacktop plant.

Lowdermilk's story about Indian Will

Lowdermilk ([Appendix 0067](#)) provides the following story about Indian Will:

The daring trappers who first came to make friends of the Red Man evidently had more regard for the peltries, which were exchangeable for coin, than for the beauty of difficult Indian names, by which mountains and streams were designated; and with the merciless hardihood of their natures they ruthlessly extinguished the aboriginal titles, and cut out for after generations meaningless names, which had nothing to commend them beyond their ease of pronunciation. Thus, we have to-day no "Caiuctucuc," but simply "Will's Creek." Caiuctucuc Creek, and the great mountain which forms the northern boundary of the city of Cumberland, were baptized by the earliest settlers here, as "Will's Creek," and "Will's Mountain." "Will" was a full blooded Indian, who with his family and a few followers, remained in the land of their fathers, and despite the approach of the white men did not remove their wigwams, but received their strange visitors with a kindly greeting, and lived upon terms of intimate friendship with them. His wigwam was built in a little cove lying between the west side of Will's Mountain and Will's Knob, about three miles from the mouth of the creek, and in the vicinity of the rocky formation known as the "Devil's Ladder." He had for a neighbor another Indian, known as Eve. Indian Will exercised a sort of proprietary right over all the land in the vicinity of his lodge, and one of the earliest tracts surveyed, by Colonel Thomas Cresap, at the instance of Governor Bladen, was designated "Will's Town," and was located along the creek from the mouth of Jennings Run, containing 915 acres. The claims of Will to the ownership of property were respected to a certain extent; that is to say, when grants were obtained the settlers did not fail to give him some trifle as a pretended compensation. In referring to this place it became customary with the settlers and trappers to use Will's name as the easiest method of designating it, and in a little while, very naturally, they came to speak of "Will's Creek." Thus the original Indian name for the stream was lost; and the mountain finally obtained its name from the creek.

The date of Will's death is not definitely known, but that event is supposed to have occurred about the close of the revolutionary war, or shortly thereafter. His remains were buried on the very top of Will's Knob, and the place of his sepulture is still pointed out to those who are curious enough to visit it. He left several children, who intermarried with white settlers, and their descendants lived near the Pennsylvania State line, on Will's creek, as late as 1810, but the last of them has now disappeared.

