

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

22. An 1827 road closure document

Portions of the road were under-utilized

[Appendix 0048](#) is a partial transcript of an 1827 Allegany County document⁵⁰⁶ that contemplates closing “...that part of a public road called Turkey Foot leading from Robert Parker’s old place to Jonathan Arnolds”. The road in question was evidently part of a previous alignment that was no longer having significant use. It seems probable that the petitioner wanted to reclaim the part of a field that the under-utilized road was taking up. The transcript suggests that the original court record might have been accompanied by a road survey.

The analysis of the transcript that follows is based on the assumption that the road in question is an older route coming down from Arnold’s Settlement to the Jennings Run valley, rather than the antecedent to Route 36 that ran past the site of Oswalt’s Mill (Chapter 21). Based on an 1804 road survey and early property records, the location of “Robert Parker’s old place” is, as described previously, in the vicinity of present-day Barrelville.

This chapter ends with a twist

This chapter took an immense amount of thought and effort, not just by the authors, but by other contributors as well. Until a few weeks before a self-imposed deadline to complete the first edition of this book, the chapter ended with a paragraph that was subtitled “*The correct answer is not possible to determine*”. That now unnecessary paragraph originally read as follows:

Which route the missing 1827 plat pertains to is not possible to determine with the limited information at hand. We can only describe possibilities, and hope that more definitive information turns up at a later date. If it can be found among the papers of Allegany County or among the papers of the late Alice Carney, the plat that accompanied the 1827 court document would likely provide that definitive answer.

The quoted paragraph is obsolete, because the correct answer was ultimately revealed by the rediscovery of the original 1827 document and survey. As a result, this chapter could now be much shorter than it was before the original document and survey were found. We elected to keep the various twists and turns of the research intact, and simply appended a new conclusion, based on the belated rediscovery of the original document, 26 years after the transcript of [Appendix 0048](#) was written⁵⁰⁷. In modern parlance, think of it as a surprise ending. We did the chapter this way because:

- The research that went into the topic uncovered area history that is worth preserving, but the material would not be particularly relevant to the subject of this book as a stand-alone chapter.

⁵⁰⁶ The 1984 partial transcript of the 1827 document was provided by Dennis Lashley, president of the Mount Savage Historical Society, who received it from a relative of Alice Carney. Dennis reported that he has never seen a copy of the plat that the transcript suggests exists.

⁵⁰⁷ Twenty-six years after mailing the transcript to Alice Carney, Mr. Dorsey was unable to locate the 1827 document.

- If we present the research that has gone into the chapter, even though some parts are now not strictly necessary to the final conclusion, then the reader may better appreciate the vast amount of work that it takes to prepare a book of this nature.
- The reader may become a more astute consumer of history, if this chapter instills a greater appreciation for reliance on original records.

Jonathan Arnold's 1827 place

Obviously, if one knew where Jonathan Arnold lived in 1827, then it might be possible to identify the portion of the Turkey Foot Road that the transcript references.

Was Jonathan Arnold's homestead the Brick House?

The second photo on page 13 of Amanda Paul's 2004 book "**Mount Savage**" shows a farm with a brick farmhouse that Paul refers to as the "*Jonathan Arnold Homestead*". The book states that an 1809 deed indicates that Archibald and Fanny Arnold⁵⁰⁸ once owned the property, and it was later owned by Archibald's son Jonathan. The Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties "*site inventory form*" AL-V-B-68 calls it the "*Arnold Brick House*".

The location⁵⁰⁹ of the "*Arnold Brick House*" is identified on the 1939 USDA aerial photo of [Figure 0066](#). The house is unique for the area, and is readily identifiable using the photos that are shown in Amanda Paul's⁵¹⁰ book and the Maryland Historical Trust's Inventory of Historic Properties document AL-V-B-068.

We have not been able to verify that the brick farmhouse was Jonathan Arnold's home in 1827, or at any time. We were unable to contact Amanda Paul directly on this subject.

Earl Lepley was raised at the Arnold Brick House, and later owned the place, and now (2010) lives in the first house west of the brick house, on Bear Camp Lane⁵¹¹. When individually asked in 2010, Earl Lepley and his former neighbor Wilbert Paul (Amanda Paul's grandfather) had no knowledge of Jonathan Arnold being a former owner of the Arnold Brick House. AL-V-B-068 indicates that the earliest deed Mr. Lepley then had pertaining to the property was dated 1858.

[Figure 0025](#) indicates that the Arnold Brick House was on lot 3362. AL-V-B-068 says that Archibald bought three properties; Lot 3361 and the tracts known as "*Bear Camp*" and "*Thicket*". AL-V-B-068 indicates that Archibald Arnold willed the farm with the brick house to his son Anthony. Archibald's 1833 will ([Appendix 0047](#)) conveys Lot 3365 and "*Thicket*" to Anthony. According to Patented Certificate 2703, "*Thicket*" was Andrew Bruce's resurvey of Lot 3362, for which he received a patent in 1807. This means that Anthony did indeed receive the farm that now has the brick house in 1833. These facts do not rule out Jonathan having lived there in 1827, but they certainly seem to make it less likely.

While page one of AL-V-B-68 states, "*The house was probably constructed circa 1820 by Archibald Arnold...*" and page eight states, "*The house was probably built ca. 1820 by Archibald Arnold*", page four states, "*The physical appearance of the structure, particularly the interior trim,*

⁵⁰⁸ Fanny Arnold's tombstone ([Figure 0460](#)) indicates that she died July 1, 1811 at age 65.

⁵⁰⁹ The house is located at Longitude 39.713977°, Latitude -78.870280°.

⁵¹⁰ Amanda Paul grew up close to the "*Arnold Brick House*".

⁵¹¹ Mr. McKenzie first met Mr. Lepley while doing research for this book. Mr. McKenzie was traveling on Bear Camp Lane in his four-wheel-drive truck and got stuck (This was during the winter of 2009-2010, which was a year of deep snow). He walked back to Mr. Lepley's house for assistance, and Mr. Lepley pulled him out with a tractor.

supports a building date after 1840.” The interior trim comment carries weight, as it was made by Architectural Historian Merry Stinson, and because the comment would have almost certainly been based on having observed the signature characteristics of woodwork manufactured after the circa 1835 transition to powered woodworking machinery.

If Archibald Arnold indeed built the brick house circa 1820, then he possibly was living there himself in 1827, with or without one of his sons (such as Anthony). If true, then logically, in 1827, the homeplace could have been inhabited by one of the children, such as Jonathan. If the house was not built until after circa 1835 to 1840, then it very well could have been Anthony who built it.

Page 3 of AL-V-B-68 (filled out in 1982) states: *“The deeply cut roadbed of the 18th century Turkeyfoot Road runs through the western end of the farm.”* This is most likely something that was told to the author of AL-V-B-68 during the visit to the property⁵¹². Earl Lepley still lives on the western end of the farm, in a ranch house that is located on Gabriel McKinsey’s 1787 Lot 3365⁵¹³. The *“deeply cut roadbed”* is an important local archaeological feature, and is detailed elsewhere herein.

In 1842, today’s Robison farm was Jonathan Arnold’s dwelling place

In his 1833 will, Archibald gave Jonathan the properties known as Level Ridge, Bottom, Addition to Level Ridge, Durbin’s Neglect, You Have Lost It, and slightly over four acres of lot number 4071. Jonathan Arnold’s 1842 *“Union of Tracts”* deed indicates that in 1842, his house was on the Level Ridge property. Page 5 of the *“Union of Tracts”* deed ([Appendix 0042](#)) states:

And lastly Beginning for the Outlines of the whole at a Bounded white Oak Tree standing in the said Jonathan Arnolds Field and North fifty nine and one fourth degrees East ninety two perches from the Chimney standing at the south east end of his Dwelling House and on the North side of a Ridge near a small run, it being Beginning of Level Ridge One of the Originals and running thence with the lines of said Original by a variation of one degree and one half degree to the ...

Since a perch is equal to 5.5 yards, the starting point of Level Ridge was 506 yards (0.29 miles) *“North fifty nine and one fourth degrees East”* from *“the Chimney standing at the south east end”* of Jonathan Arnold’s 1842 dwelling place. It also indicates that the starting point was *“on the North side of a Ridge near a small run”*. The starting point of Level Ridge, and the Union of Tracts was the clearly marked location “A” on the *“Union of Tracts”* deed. This information puts Jonathan Arnold’s 1842 dwelling place at today’s Robison farm, across from the Saint Ignatius Cemetery, as confirmed by the dashed line on the 1957 Kuykendall tract map ([Figure 0111](#)). In other words, Jonathan took over the homeplace, and was living there in 1842, subsequent to his father Archibald’s death. Robison’s farm is where his father Archibald Arnold was living in 1804, as proven by the 1804 survey of an alteration to the Turkey Foot Road ([Figure 0042](#)). Unfortunately, this does not prove where Jonathan was living in 1827, before his father’s death.

⁵¹² Telephone call with Merry Stinson, August 2010.

⁵¹³ Gabriel McKinsey sold the property to Peter Majors in 1792. Majors patented it in 1803 (Patented Certificate 1478). Mr. McKenzie and editor Nancy Thoerig are both descendants of Gabriel’s grandson John McKenzie.

A small building with a large fireplace behind Robison's farmhouse

A small building with a large fireplace is located behind the Robison's farmhouse⁵¹⁴. The [Figure 0124](#) photos of the building were taken by local area resident Francis Bridges. The base of the fireplace is expertly cut stone, while the upper portion is brick. The chimney is located at Latitude 39.703893°, Longitude -78.871940°.

Mrs. Robison told Mr. Bridges that the building was the Arnold's house where Father Badin held services before the Saint Ignatius church was built. The chimney is located on the south end of the building, which is oriented so that the south end faces slightly east. We wondered if the building could have been the 1842 dwelling place that was referenced in the "*Union of Tracts*" deed, or possibly even the original small church. We realized up front that the building was awfully small to be the house of such a large landowner in 1842. We had no idea what the basic construction of the building was under the clapboards (i.e., log, braced timber frame, cut stone, etc.).

With these things in mind, an informal building survey was performed. What was found was modern "*balloon frame construction*"⁵¹⁵. The building used lightweight machine cut studs held together with roundheaded nails that were not available in the United States until circa 1883. No hand-hewn timber, or older style cut nails could be found. The building has a cement floor.

Wood stoves were available in the area long before balloon frame construction became popular, so the combination of balloon construction and a cut stone fireplace is highly unusual in what is clearly a farm utility building. We believe that this modern style building was a replacement that was constructed at the site of a much older building that had originally incorporated the old-fashioned fireplace. The modern replacement building was most likely constructed to be a typical "*summer kitchen*"; i.e., a building where heavy food preparation activities could be performed, such as butchering, canning, cream separation, etc.⁵¹⁶

The apparently repaired status of the old stone fireplace fits with this theory, as does the tradition that Mrs. Robison recited. It is most likely the site of a very early building that was the Arnold's house or the early church, but only the stone base of the fireplace survives. Figures [0149](#) and [0150](#) are 2010 close-up photos of the chimney and fireplace. The mantle bricks are held up with a metal strap or plate. Judging from the photo, the fireplace crane appears to be rolled steel (rather than hand-forged).

[Figure 0151](#) is a detail of a loft inside the small building. The joist was clearly machined with a circular saw, while the floorboards have straight saw marks. No photos of the wall studs are available. Even without performing a detailed study of the core structural elements of the building, the simple fact that no cut or hand-forged nails were found already proves that it is modern construction.

⁵¹⁴ Robison's farmhouse is property AL-V-B-220 on the Maryland Historical Trust's Inventory of Historic Properties, which calls it the "*Glen Savage Dairy Farm*".

⁵¹⁵ The term "*balloon frame construction*" pertains to the now conventional building fabrication technique of using dimensional lumber (such as the two-by-four and the two-by-six) held together with nails. Most new single-family homes in the United States are presently being built using this method, and have been for many years.

⁵¹⁶ For a general description and history of the summer kitchen and information on balloon construction, see Sally Ann McMurry's 2001 book "*From Sugar Camps to Star Barns: Rural Life and Landscape in a Western Pennsylvania Community*".

The stone portion of the chimney could possibly be verified as originally belonging to Jonathan's 1842 dwelling place, or disproven, by surveying to determine the distance and bearing between the chimney and the beginning stone of the "*Union of Tracts*" property⁵¹⁷.

In July of 2010, at our request, Nancy E. Thoerig spoke with Mrs. Robison (her aunt) about the building. Mrs. Robison responded in a way that indicated that the fireplace was a part of the old Arnold home. Nancy summarized the conversation as follows:

I just spoke with my Aunt Margaret. She says the fireplace is a hearth, and she understands that it is part of the old Arnold home. She believes it is in the room of the house where Father Badin said the first Mass at the Arnold settlement. The hotel was connected to the house. What she believes is the area where the hotel stood is visible from her kitchen window⁵¹⁸. She speculates that an old lilac bush there marks the entrance to the hotel, because, traditionally, she says, a lilac bush at the entrance to a home meant everyone was welcome.

The Bruce House Dairy deed mentions the old Jonathan Arnold House

The 1948 Bruce House⁵¹⁹ Dairy Deed ([Appendix 0006](#)) references the "*Old Jonathan Arnold House*", stating:

*All that tract or parcel of land situate and lying near Mt. Savage, in Allegany County, State of Maryland, beginning for the same at the end of the first line of the tract of land called "*Union of Tracts*" and running thence with the second, third and part of the fourth lines of said tract South 88 degrees and 9 minutes east 704 feet to a planted stone No. 2, thence north 79 degrees 521 minutes east 1671 feet to a planted stone No. 3, thence south 15 degrees 9 minutes east 697 feet to the fence on the north side of the road leading to Wellersburg thence leaving the lines of "*Union of Tracts*" and running with the aforementioned fence toward the Old Jonathan Arnold House...*⁵²⁰

When read in conjunction with the 1957 Kuykendall tract map ([Figure 0111](#)), the quoted passage states with exacting clarity that a fence along the present-day Mile Lane pointed southward toward "*the Old Jonathan Arnold House*". When read in conjunction with the 1842 "*Union of Tracts*" plat ([Appendix 0042](#)), the quoted passage must mean that at some point Jonathan was living on "*The Addition to Level Ridge*". His father Archibald owned both of those tracts in 1827.

The "*Union of Tracts*" deed indicates that:

- Archibald Arnold acquired "*The Addition to Level Ridge*" in 1806, and

⁵¹⁷ In lieu of a survey, perhaps the distance and bearing could be calculated from an accurate GPS reading of the beginning stone (if good satellite signal exists there), since the GPS reading for the chimney is already known.

⁵¹⁸ The kitchen window is on the west side of the house.

⁵¹⁹ Barry Thoerig, who was raised on the Bruce House farm (as opposed to the Bruce House Dairy), reports that the Bruce House was located southwest of Mount Savage, and was destroyed by fire. The 1842 Mount Savage Iron Works map ([Appendix 0043](#)) shows that area as "*Bruce Hill*". The farm is also identified on the Mount Savage Historical Society's copy of the Union Mining Company map. A circa 1956 article by J. William Hunt in the "*Cumberland Times*" details the history of the Bruce House. Nancy Thoerig reports: "*Regarding the Bruce House Dairy and Glen Savage Dairy connection, my mom knows, because her dad was a primary owner. Mom says her dad James H. Weimer, his cousin Stanley Weimer, and his son-in-law James I. Robison bought the Henckel Dairy (at the present-day Robison farm) and the Bruce House Dairy in the 1940s. They named their corporation Glen Savage Dairy. They constructed a dairy building on the right-hand side of the Mile Lane, just past the curve in the road beyond the cemetery (headed from Robison's toward the Bald Knob road). The lady who owned the Bruce Farm Dairy never milked, Mom says. Other farmers sold their milk to her, and she processed it and re-sold it. Sometime later, Mr. Weimer and Mr. Robison bought Stanley Weimer's share in the dairy.*" [Figure 0878](#) shows a bottle from the Glen Savage Dairy, courtesy of Mark Barry.

⁵²⁰ When asked in 2010, Wilbert Paul had no information on the location of Jonathan Arnold's old house.

- Jonathan Arnold bought the small adjacent tract “*The Tomahawk*” in 1825⁵²¹, after having it surveyed in 1823.

The “*Addition to Level Ridge*” was a resurvey of the 50-acre lot that originally had been awarded to settler Samuel Durbin, who failed to pay the “*composition money*”⁵²². When Archibald Arnold patented the property in 1806, the only improvement was “*200 old rails*”. He acquired the property “*By virtue of a Special warrant of Proclamation granted out of the Land Office for the Western Shores...*”.

The Mule Field route from Mile Lane to Robertson’s Stone House

Mr. Francis Bridges indicated that an old abandoned road ran from present-day Mile Lane at Bobby Fuller’s place down the hill to the vicinity of Barrelville. He used to ride a motorcycle along the old roadbed. This old road ([Figure 0125](#))⁵²³ fits the location described in the 1827 county document; i.e., a “*road called Turkey Foot leading from Robert Parker’s old place to Jonathan Arnolds*”. A close look on the 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0261](#) shows a multiplicity of roadbeds, all headed in the same direction. [Figure 0406](#) shows a more northerly variation of the Mule Field route that joins the routes shown in Figures 0125 and 0261.

The Mule Field tradition

Mr. Bridges indicated that there was an old cut stone foundation and spring, back along the old roadbed, in the area that has since been strip mined. Figures [0262](#), [0263](#), and [0264](#) show one of the old sunken roadbeds. A number of the old roadbeds can still be seen on present-day wintertime satellite photos.

The most level ground in the surrounding area is located where the sunken roadbeds come out on Mile Lane. Mr. Bridges reported that this flat area used to be known as the “*Mule Field*.” The “*Mule Field*” is part of the “*Addition to Level Ridge*” tract.

When asked his opinion of where the Turkey Foot Road ran before hearing any details of our research, local resident Wilbert Paul⁵²⁴ independently described the “*Mule Field*” route from his own knowledge of the area. Although he did not know of the multiple roadbeds, he was not surprised when told about them. He said that back in the old days, “*you went where you could go.*” This is a succinct and rather memorable way of describing the reason for the maze of primitive roadbeds. In order to conveniently distinguish this previously unnamed route from other abandoned roads that run from Mile Lane down to Route 36, we are calling it the “*Mule Field*” route.

Earl Lepley independently called that area the “*Mule Field*”, and was familiar with the “*Mule Field*” route. He mentioned the same foundation as Mr. Bridges. He likewise indicated that it was

⁵²¹ Page 15 of Amanda Paul’s 2004 book “**Mount Savage**” states that the Tomahawk tract was so named because of all the Indian relics that were found there. A more likely reason is the fact that the tract had a very unusual boundary shape that closely resembled a tomahawk ([Figure 0396](#)).

⁵²² Patent Record IC S, page. 427.

⁵²³ Figure 0125 also shows the route of the now-abandoned Stony Hollow Road. Earl Lepley said that his father used it, particularly in the winter. He then provided the detail that his father used the Stony Hollow Road with a sled during the snowy winter of 1936. Earl reported that he used it in 1944 to drag logs out, and he recalled that at that time there was not even a bridge across the brook.

⁵²⁴ According to his obituary in the May 28, 2014 “**Cumberland Times**”, Wilbert Paul was born on September 25, 1916 and died on May 26, 2014. He led a productive life, and was still active and able to drive his own car in 2010, when Mr. Dietle talked to his son-in-law Sam White. At the time, Wilbert was writing a book with his granddaughter Amanda Paul about the Mount Savage Methodist Church. He has been affiliated with the church since he was three years old.

located in the area that was stripped. He reported that there was a stable at or near the foundation where stagecoach horses were exchanged. He said that the reason the flat area was called the “*Mule Field*” was because of the stable. The obvious implication is that the flat area was used to pasture the animals that pulled the stagecoaches. The spring would have provided the necessary water for the animals. Mr. Bridges reported that the same spring supplies water to the Robertson Stone House.

The Robertson Stone House

As shown by the 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0125](#), the old road comes out past the “*Robertson Stone House*” ([Figure 0122](#)). That house is property Number AL-V-B-071 on the Maryland “*Inventory of Historic Properties*”. It is located at Latitude 39.701832°, Longitude -78.848259°. The AL-V-B-071 document states that in an interview with Raymond Fiorita:

- The interviewers were told about an old road⁵²⁵ that was supposed to have been located “*parallel and to the rear of the stone façade.*” The remains of two such roadbeds can still be seen just behind (north) the house on present-day satellite imagery.
- The interviewers were told of a belief that the building was originally constructed to serve as a tavern/inn.

Earl Lepley brought up the subject of the Robertson Stone House while discussing the “*Mule Field*” route, and independently indicated that the Robertson Stone House was once an inn. The conversation with Mr. Lepley was not in the context of the AL-V-B-071 document, which was never discussed.

According to AL-V-B-071, the estimated date of construction is 1845. AL-V-B-071 also states:

The taverns of this time period offered food, drink, and accommodations for travelers, and also served as an important social center for the community.

The tradition of feeding soldiers at the inn

In a 2010 telephone call, Francis Bridges described an old foundation near Robertson’s Stone House, and stated that Myrtle (Mrs. Walter) Robertson and her grandson Vaughn Trexler had said that the foundation was actually the site of the inn. She told of a tradition that the inn baked bread for soldiers who were passing through. Myrtle ran the Melody Manor dance hall and bar⁵²⁶, and lived in the Foreman house⁵²⁷. It was at the Melody Manor where Francis heard the tradition. Myrtle did not know to what time period the soldier tradition related. The most likely scenario probably would be the Civil War⁵²⁸. The foundation was located approximately at Latitude 39.702036°, Longitude -78.845100°, which is generally northwest of the Foreman house and close to the abandoned

⁵²⁵ According to Mr. Fiorita, that old road was the Plank Road. Our research shows that the road came down from Arnold’s Settlement, and was definitely not the Wellersburg and West Newton Plank Road.

⁵²⁶ According to Mr. Bridges, Melody Manor was also used for bingo and wedding receptions. It was located on Route 36, about one-half mile west of the intersection with Route 47.

⁵²⁷ The Foreman house is located at Latitude 39.701443°, Longitude -78.845507°.

⁵²⁸ “*Which war*” is sometimes lost in otherwise accurate oral traditions even after only 100 years, possibly because most wars are “*the war*” for the people who are actually involved. For example, in the 1960s Mr. Dietle was told a “*he was in the war*” tradition by his Grandmother Kornes. The tradition pertained to his great-great-great-grandfather Christian Petenbrink, but which specific war was no longer known. It was ultimately determined to be the Civil War. Christian Petenbrink served in the Second Regiment, Potomac Home Brigade.

roadbed of the Wellersburg and Jennings Run Railroad⁵²⁹. A month or two later, Francis followed up with a letter that states:

As a youth in Barrelville, I heard many stories of the coal mine and Railroads of the area. I heard that in order to build the Wellersburg branch of the railroad, several buildings had to be razed in the Barrelville area. The 1842 map⁵³⁰ shows a structure in the proximity of the Foreman House. Did that building predate the Foreman House? Could it have been razed, or is it the inn that baked bread for soldiers passing through? The area was once the site of an Indian village⁵³¹, according to local folklore, and the Turkey Foot Road passed through the land.

The 1939 aerial photo shows a field behind the Foreman house and the ball field that were all property of Walter and Myrtle Robertson. This level land once extended over to Jennings Run branch, before the railroad and Parker Coal mine built up the terrain. Perhaps an archaeology dig could determine the date of the inn site behind the Foreman house? By nature and by man's endeavors, the terrain is in constant change. We must be mindful of this.

The route south from the stone house

The Robertson Stone House sits quite a distance back from Route 36, at the end of a long lane ([Figure 0137](#)). The 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0125](#) shows where the lane is located. By looking at recent satellite photos, one can tell that the location of the present-day lane is a good match to where the lane came out in 1939. By comparing [Figure 0125](#) to an 1898 topographical map ([Figure 0138](#)), one can tell that the location of the lane changed between 1898 and 1939. In 1898, the southern end of the lane turned toward Barrelville. That alignment probably had better fidelity to the old Turkey Foot Road, which, after all, was serving east-west traffic between Turkeyfoot and Fort Cumberland. The reason that the old stone house sits back so far from Route 36 is because it was built along the Turkey Foot Road.

South of the stone house, along present-day Route 36, is a large old house which, according to Vaughn Trexler, was once a hotel along the later route of the Turkey Foot Road. The house ([Figure 0898](#)) is located at Latitude 39.700484°, Longitude -78.846463°. Vaughn lives across the road from the old house.⁵³²

An on-the-ground survey of the southern part of the Mule Field route

In August and early September 2010, Mr. Bridges did an on-the-ground survey of the route between the stone house and the “Mule Field” area. He reported that in the area northwest of the stone house, the road was like a deep ditch, and very easy to follow. The route is a double road in that area, and in the area beyond the dry pond. One roadbed is sunken deeper than the other. His GPS coordinates are provided in the following table.

⁵²⁹ While on the topic of local roads, Francis Bridges identified the former location of the Barrelville railroad station as approximately Latitude 39.700344°, Longitude -78.844221°. The building was moved to Wellersburg, where it was used for a different purpose.

⁵³⁰ The 1942 Mount Savage Iron Works map is included as [Appendix 0043](#).

⁵³¹ The presence of an Indian village would mean that there was at least one trail associated with it.

⁵³² The information in this paragraph was provided by Francis Bridges.

Description	Latitude	Longitude
About where it encountered the Stone House Driveway	39.701583°	-78.847850°
About 100 yards into the woods	39.702267°	-78.847283°
About 50 yards below the new house	39.703883°	-78.846033°
First crossing of the driveway to the new house	39.704150°	-78.845883°
	39.704600°	-78.845933°
Below the shed	39.704667°	-78.846150°
Second crossing of the driveway	39.704767°	-78.846533°
Northwest of the dry pond	39.704817°	-78.847033°
2/10 of the way between the yard and strip mined area	39.704783°	-78.847667°
4/10 of the way between the yard and strip mined area	39.704683°	-78.848617°
	39.704650°	-78.849433°
	39.704600°	-78.851000°
	39.704700°	-78.851717°
At the edge of the strip mined area	39.704633°	-78.852217°

The switchback in the Mule Field route

Mr. Bridges reported that north of Robertson’s Stone House was a big turn in the “*Mule Field*” route where it used to go up over the hillside, and said it was an alteration to the original route. If it was indeed an alteration, then perhaps it was done circa 1804 to produce a more direct route past Arnold’s Hotel. If so, it certainly would not be the first or the last time that a public road was established or modified to produce a commercial benefit to property owners. One project that quickly comes to mind is the recently developed Grand Parkway west of Houston, Texas. A significant portion of its route is on property that was donated by local property owners who believed they would benefit from the eventual development that would occur along the highway.

The switchback turn on the “*Mule Field*” route would have been desirable to reduce the grade by routing the road along the ridge and down toward Jennings Run. The resulting grade was much less than it would have been if the road continued straight down the hillside. The switchback can be seen clearly on [Figure 0406](#). This 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0430](#) shows the two parallel roadbeds between Robertson’s Stone House and the switchback. [Figure 0463](#) is a December 2010 photo that shows the roadbed below the switchback, and [Figure 0464](#) is a December 2010 photo that shows the roadbed above the switchback. Notice the rocks that have been removed from the roadbed and set to the side. A bulldozed road would not have this characteristic.

Mr. Bridges reported that the big turn is on a flat area at the site of a modern-day home. The turn is still visible in the yard of the house on present-day aerial satellite images. The satellite images suggest that there may be traces of more than one turn present; however, one trace is very clear and unmistakably that of a road. The GPS coordinates of the turn are included in the following table, as determined with the USGS EarthExplorer software.

Latitude	Longitude
39.704190°	-78.845744°
39.704409°	-78.845666°
39.704541°	-78.845713°

Stagecoaches were used in Somerset County in the early 1800s

The stage road evidently came through from Somerset County, Pennsylvania. Stage roads existed in at least some parts of Somerset County at a surprisingly early date. The “**Journal of the House of Representatives of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania**” for December 7, 1810 states:

Mr. Hanna presented two petitions of like tenor, from sundry inhabitants of the county of Somerset, stating that the late heavy rains had so much injured the stage roads in said county, that they are almost unpassable and dangerous to travel, and that most of the townships through which the said roads pass, are thinly inhabited, and the inhabitants altogether unable to keep the said roads in repair, therefore praying an appropriation for the repairing of the same; said petitions were read, and referred to the committee on roads and inland navigation.

Shank’s 1988 book “**Indian Trails to Superhighways**” indicates that stagecoach service across the Appalachian Mountains was inaugurated during the summer of 1804, using the Glade Road from Bedford through Somerset, to Greensburg. By December of that year, the stage ran twice a week.

The Mule Field factor and the active 1827 route

The problem the “*Mule Field*” route presents is that the local stagecoach route appears to have been in service after 1827. We believe this could be true because:

- The survival of a strong stagecoach route tradition among the eldest members of the present-day community suggests that the stagecoach operations were still in existence relatively late in the nineteenth century.
- The estimated 1845 construction date of the Robertson Stone House, and the associated inn tradition and soldier tradition (which likely relates to the Civil War) point to a later date for the “*Mule Field*” route to have remained open.

Lack of rail service in Somerset County

One factor that would have helped to keep the stages running was the lack of railroad service in Somerset County. AL-V-B-088 indicates that, due to westward expansion, stage line activity to and from Cumberland was brisk prior to the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. It also indicates that the advent of rail service to Cumberland increased stagecoach activity westward “*dramatically.*”⁵³³ The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was opened to Cumberland on November 1, 1842. Page 351 of Lowdermilk’s 1878 book “**History of Cumberland**” states:

November 1.—The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was on this date opened to Cumberland, and the wonderful locomotive made its first appearance here. No other event has ever transpired in the history of the place which created so much pleasurable excitement. Business was entirely suspended, and men, women and children gathered about the terminus of the road to witness the arrival of the

⁵³³ AL-V-B-088 (in a discussion of the Corriganville “*Stage Coach Stop*” built in 1850) cites Stegmair’s 1976 book “**Allegany County-A History**” for this information.

trains. From the mountain tops, and valleys, throughout the adjoining country, the people came in crowds, and the town was in a fever of excitement for many days.

Rail service to Confluence did not begin until 1871

The 1879 Frank Gray map of Maryland ([Figure 0375](#)) shows the first rail service to Confluence and Salisbury, which occurred in 1871 and circa 1876 to 1878, respectively⁵³⁴. The rail service to Confluence was a consequence of the completion of the Pittsburgh and Connellsville Railroad on April 10, 1871. It also passed through what were (or would become) the Somerset County towns of Fairhope, Glencoe, Philson, Sand Patch, Meyersdale, Garret, Rockwood, and Casselman. As a result of a lease that began in 1875, the railroad became known as the Pittsburgh Division of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad. The branch to Salisbury⁵³⁵ was completed circa 1876 to 1878, and appears on the 1876 Beers map of Elk Lick Township ([Figure 0351](#)).

As with the well-known story of the National Road⁵³⁶, competition from the railroad probably sounded the death knell for much of the stagecoach business along the “*Mule Field*” route.

The Mule Field route was likely open after 1827

With the knowledge described above, one can theorize that the Turkey Foot Road still may have followed Bald Knob Road toward Arnold’s Hotel, then Mile Lane, then the “*Mule Field*” route sometime after 1827. If true, then one of these may be true:

- We are wrong about the location of Jonathan Arnold’s house in 1827, and the 1827 court document was about a different route.
- The 1827 recommendation to the court was ignored, and the “*Mule Field*” route remained open and served as a stagecoach route.
- The “*Mule Field*” route was indeed closed in 1827, but was then reopened, and became a stagecoach route.

The 1939 aerial photos of [Figures 0261](#) and [0406](#) clearly show that the “*Mule Field*” route was accessed from several different directions. Many of the old roadbeds come from the direction of Arnold’s Hotel, but one well-authenticated roadbed comes from the vicinity of the present-day Bear Camp Lane along the previously described fencerow. As described in the next chapter, a relatively short section of sunken road along the western end of Bear Camp Lane is by tradition the stagecoach route, and one of the route variations of the Turkey Foot Road.

⁵³⁴ The railroad history in this paragraph is primarily drawn from Volume 2, pages 219 to 226 of the 1906 book “**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**”, and John Cassaday’s 1932 book “**The Somerset County Outline**”.

⁵³⁵ According to the 1874 book “**Legislative Documents**”, “*The Salisbury and Baltimore railroad and coal company was incorporated by act of Assembly, approved 13th April, 1868, as the Salisbury coal, lumber, and iron company, with an authorized capital not exceeding one million of dollars. By a supplementary act approved 17th February, 1871, the name was changed to the Salisbury and Baltimore railroad and coal company, and were authorized to increase their capital five hundred thousand dollars.*” Michael Hay and Hiram Findlay of Salisbury were listed as two of the seven directors. According to pages 561 to 562 of the 1884 book “**History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties...**”, the Salisbury branch was built by the partnership of Noah Scott of Lower Turkeyfoot Township, and Col. E. D. Yutzy, who became a resident of Ursina in 1869. According to the 1906 county history, they bought the railroad company at a sheriff’s sale.

⁵³⁶ For example, see page 376 of Lowdermilk’s 1878 book “**History of Cumberland**” which states, in regard to January 10, 1871: “*The Baltimore and Ohio Railroad was opened for travel between Cumberland and Wheeling, and two great excursion trains passed over the road, from Baltimore to the Western terminus. The effect was soon felt in Cumberland, as most of the stage lines were taken off, and the great business of transferring merchandise at this point was largely diminished.*”

A map that the late Alice Carney had

In July of 2010, before reading or being told of our work on the “*Mule Field*” route, Nancy E. Thorig of Mount Savage wrote the following to Mr. Dietle:

I had understood (from Mrs. Alice Carney⁵³⁷, who had shown me maps at one time) that the Turkey Foot Trail had branched to the right off what is now Route 36, perhaps in the vicinity of the old stone house road (?), and then traveled over the ridge up to Arnold’s Hotel, and then beyond, along the ridge top...following old Indian trails that traveled the ridge tops. On my Aunt Margaret Robison’s property, which borders St. Patrick Cemetery and is the site of Arnold’s Hotel...

From a telephone call with Nancy Thorig, it sounded as if Mrs. Carney’s map may have accompanied the transcript ([Appendix 0048](#)) of the 1827 document. Before reading or hearing of our view on the subject, Nancy expressed the opinion that the route might not have actually been shut down back when it was being considered. Nancy initiated communications with the Carney family that eventually resulted in a thorough search of Alice Carney’s papers by Alice’s son Chris in August of 2010. The road survey map was no longer there. These activities ultimately led to Nancy Thorig ([Figure 0457](#)) becoming the editor of this book.

The surprise ending

After a number of people had searched for the 1827 road survey over the course of a year or so, and failed, nearly all hope of finding it had vanished. After the draft of the first edition of this book was considered complete and was in the final stages of being proofread, Mr. McKenzie went to the courthouse one last time to search again. This time, he found the long sought after document. It is included as [Appendix 0080](#).

A transcription error

The most surprising thing about the 1827 document was that it actually states: “...a public road called Turkey Foot leading from Robert Parker’s old place to **Archibald Arnolds**...”. The typed transcript ([Appendix 0048](#)), which states: “...a public road called Turkey Foot leading from Robert Parker’s old place to **Jonathan Arnolds**...”, was a misquote. It was a simple transcription error that was made as part of a good faith effort to promote regional history. Because of the difficulty of accurately transcribing old handwritten documents, we had been chasing the wrong house all along. It had been a proverbial “wild goose chase”, which nevertheless turned up many worthwhile bits of local history that have been included in this chapter. Any document can inadvertently contain significant errors. A student of history should always maintain a skeptical point of view, and seek original documents when possible.

Regardless of the transcription error, if the preparer had never made the transcript in 1984, we would not have been looking for the 1827 document in the first place. We are not sure who originally found

⁵³⁷ The late Alice J. Carney (1917 – 2001) entered the University of Maryland at age 16, and after graduating, taught science at the Bruce High School in Westernport for approximately seven years. She was an Army wife during World War II and Korea, and followed her husband to his assignment at General MacArthur’s headquarters in Tokyo. As historian of the Mount Savage Historical Society, she helped to preserve local area history. She also served as a 4-H and Girl Scout leader, grandparent volunteer at Mount Savage High School, president of the Homemaker’s Club of Mount Savage, and founded the Mount Savage Beautification Society. She was a member of the Mount Savage Hall of Honor, the Ancient Order of Hibernians, and Saint Patrick’s Catholic Church. She was legally blind, having developed macular degeneration at age 35. Alice and her husband raised eight children. (Information obtained from Barry Thorig and the Mount Savage Historical Society.)

the 1827 document, or who made the transcript, but we are grateful. If it had not been made, if Benjamin Sansom had never encouraged David Dorsey to mail it to Alice Carney, if a fragment had never survived in the files of the Mount Savage Historical Society to be sent to us by Dennis Lashley in 2009, the Mount Savage route from one important time period would still be unproven. Without going into details, after we had despaired of ever finding the 1827 document, it took the subsequent interest and effort shown by David Dorsey, Nancy Thoerig, Barry Thoerig, Kitty (Carney) Thoerig, and Chris Carney to inspire one more trip to the court house. Thanks, everyone.

An attempt at a transcript

Here is an attempt at a transcript of the 1827 document:

To the Honorable the Judges of Allegany County Court the petition of the subscriber respectfully represents that he labors under great inconvenience and disadvantage from the Keeping open that part of a public road called the Turkey foot road leading from Robert Parkers old place to where the same intersects near to Archibald Arnold Now Your petitioner therefore prays your honors that a commission may issue to three free holders to ascertain whether said road should not be shut up agreeably to our act of the General Assembly entitled an act to regulate the manner of obtaining and Altering public roads _ound wile pray etc.

Jona Arnold

Apr 19th 1827

Ordered by the Court that a Commission to be issued William Ridgely William Workman⁵³⁸ and [seal] George Winters of said County Greeting. Whereas Jonathan Arnold by his petition to the Court of said County begun and held at the Court House in the Town of Cumberland in and for the said County on the third Monday of April Eighteen hundred and twenty seven To shut up that part of a publick road called Turkey Foot road leading from Robert Parkers old place to where the same intersect near Archibald Arnold These are therefore to authorize and require you or any two or any two of you having first given reasonable notice to the parties concerned and severally take an oath to execute the trust reposed in you by the Commission faithfully and without partiality to meet thon the premises and examine and determine wether the public convenience requires the said road to be shut up and if in your judgment the public conveyance does require the said road to be shut you shall copy a plat of the same and shall return the same together with a full report of your proceedings under your hands and seals to this court and the reasons on which your opinion is founded and if you shall be of opinion that the said road ought not to be shut up you shall report your opinion to this court with the reasons on which the same is founded. Witness the honorable John Buchanan Esquire, Chief Judge of our said Court the 16th day of April, 1827. Copied the 6th day of April 1827.

A__ Beall Clk.

To the Honorable the Judges of Allegany County Court all the subscribers having been appointed by the authorities of said Court commissioners at the request of Jonathan Arnold, Esqr of said

⁵³⁸ A William Workman had Deakins survey lots 3651 and 3652 in 1787. A William Workman was somehow connected with lot 3665 in 1806, and a William Workman owned lot 3658 in 1831. According to traditions in the Workman family, a William Workman in the Mount Savage area was married to a Tereca or Teresa, who was the granddaughter of Nemaconin and the daughter of George/Lonacona, and later moved to what is now West Virginia. Although there may be a generation or two missing from the tradition, a photo of William Workman's wife that was taken in the 1850s reveals a face that certainly looks like that of a full blooded Indian. The Pennsylvania valley on the eastern side of Savage Mountain is identified as "Workman's Valley" on one of Harmond Husband's eighteenth century maps.

County to examine and determine whether the shutting up of that part of a public road called Turkey Foot leading from Robert Parker's old place to Archibald Arnolds would injure the public convenience after reasonable notice being given to all persons interested and after having severally taken an oath as required by said commission we proceed to survey and examine the said road a plot of which is hereto annexed and after examining and duly considering the same it was not only the opinion of the subscribers but also the opinion of all the persons attending that the shutting up of said road would not injure or retard the public convenience in the smallest degree. We therefore recommend the shutting up of that part of the turkey foot road as is prayed for the petitioners. Given under our hands and seals this 26th day of September, 1827.

Wm Ridgley [seal]
George Winters [seal]

The part of the Turkey foot road shut up beginning at the end of 6 perches __ on the _____ line of a tract of land Called Margarets fancy and running thence...perches to where the same Intersects near to Archibald Arnolds...

Interpreting the 1827 survey

By comparing the 1827 survey ([Appendix 0080](#)) to the overlay of [Figure 0025](#), we see clearly that the road closure concerned a portion of the “Mule Field” route, and a portion of the present-day road known as Mile Lane ([Figure 0942](#)).⁵³⁹ To facilitate comparison, the two images are combined in side-by-side fashion in [Figure 0439](#). As shown by [Figure 0440](#), the 1804 Turkey Foot Road alteration survey and the 1827 road closure survey concerned different sections of the same overall route.

Because the 1827 survey is about closing a section of road, it tells us something about where the 1827 substitute route was, even though the substitute is not specifically shown. The western end of the road closure was just south of Archibald Arnold's residence. Since dead-ending the road past Archibald Arnold's would be illogical, a substitute route must have headed down to the Jennings Run valley from that location. The substitute route most likely was the road, described in Chapter 21, that relates to the 1853 indenture of Nicholas Berkhard to John Kelley. That road went down to Jonathan Arnold's mill, as shown in [Figure 0409](#). The route down over the hill had apparently changed once again by 1865, as shown by Simon J. Martenet's 1866 Map of Allegany County ([Figure 0126](#)). A variation of the same angled road is shown by the 1898 map of [Figure 0441](#). The route also appears on the 1939 aerial photo of [Figure 0442](#). On figure 0442, if you look above the word “Route” (in red text), you can see a trace of the northern end of the 1865 road as a light line. Around the 1898 time period, the route that was actually referred to as the Turkey Foot Road ran northwest out of the town of Mount Savage, according to Wallace's local contact Jack Pyle.

The 1827 document clearly states that the section of road that it shows was indeed shut down. Part of the route was resurrected and still survives today as a section of Mile Lane. As discussed elsewhere herein, we suspect that the “Mule Field” route was open and in use after 1827. This suspicion is based on the stagecoach traditions, and the general lack of railroad service within Somerset County.

⁵³⁹ The long field on the Level Ridge tract that lies on the north side of Mile Lane, and west of the fencerow stagecoach route, is known today as “Round Barn Field”, according to Margaret Robison and Earl Lepley. **The location of the round barn has been lost to time.** (Information provided by Francis Bridges in October 2013.)