

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

41. History of the Turkeyfoot region

When writing this book, a starting assumption was that the purpose of the Turkey Foot Road was simply to serve as a connection to the Turkeyfoot settlement. After all, the Turkeyfoot settlement was among the earliest in Somerset County. As it turns out, this assumption was wrong. **The antecedent path connected with routes to Ohio and with what is now Point Pleasant, West Virginia.** The destination of Morgan's 1779 road was Fort Pitt. Turkeyfoot was merely a well-known landmark along the way.

Our initial assumption was based on personal perspective, which was naturally oriented from the area of our own roots. When contact was made with an individual who grew up in the Confluence area, his perspective was different. He only knew that the Turkey Foot Road ran north over the Hog Back, and knew nothing of the route toward Salisbury.

The fact that settlers were in the Confluence area so early may explain why the packer's path survived between the wars. For example, as described in Chapter 30, Christian C. Livengood stated that there was a packer's path in the Salisbury area before the road was built. A connection with the early Turkeyfoot settlement may also explain the maze of shortcut routes between Salisbury and Confluence that are not in agreement with the road identified on the earliest property surveys.

The early history of the Turkeyfoot region is covered by Volume II, Chapter 4 of the 1906 book "**The History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**". For the convenience of our readers, that chapter is reproduced below. The chapter's content is based partly on documentary evidence, and partly on oral tradition, and covers the earliest known settlers in the Turkeyfoot region. It describes the circumstances under which the area was first settled, and some of the hardships that the settlers endured in the harsh and dangerous frontier. The chapter reads as follows:

In dealing with the question of the early settlement of Somerset county we are largely dependent on the oral traditions that have been handed down from generation to generation in the families of the original and earlier settlers, whose descendants yet live in the county, for there is a great dearth of written or documentary evidence.

With the frailty of human memory, these traditions, as time passes and the generations of men come and go, become fainter and more uncertain, and at last they entirely fade away in to the mists of the dim past. It may be truthfully said that whenever an aged person dies, whose whole life has been spent in a community, at least some part of the local history of that community passes away with him.

When it is remembered that our inquiries must reach back into the distant past for a period but little less than a hundred and fifty years, it will readily be seen that the story of many things that would be of interest and worthy of preservation has been lost or has become so vague and uncertain that no use can be made of it. It is true there may not be so much scarcity of tolerably well authenticated accounts of occurrences relating to our early history, but dates are often unknown and uncertain. Usually it is a most difficult undertaking anywhere to obtain dates relating to local history. Our pioneer forefathers seldom kept diaries, or made a written note of

their neighborhood happenings. They had little time for such things, and, besides, they probably never thought that away on in the future, among their descendants, there would be any who would take a keen interest in every act of theirs, the knowledge of which may have filtered through the passing years down to their own time.

The records in the court house of the county are in many instances useful in confirming some dim tradition, some old woman's story, or they may help fix a date near which time some event or other must have taken place. Some information may be had from the assessment records as preserved in the commissioners' offices of Bedford and Somerset counties. Many of the early deeds on record in the recorders' offices of these two counties recite the dates of the warrants from the land office (then at Philadelphia) for the original surveys of the lands of the early settlers, or the date of the patents under which they were held, and, all taken together, they often enable one to form a reasonably accurate judgment as to many things that will fall within the scope of our present inquiry. The survey books of the county will also oftentimes afford much information as to when a settler came into the county, but still they are not always conclusive as to dates, because many of the first settlers held their lands under what were usually known as improvement rights.

In other words, the title often consisted in the settler being in actual possession of lands within certain metes and bounds that he himself had marked. These titles, as among themselves, were usually respected, although the actual title to the lands still remained in the Lords Proprietary (the Penns) or later in the commonwealth. It is, therefore, a fact that lands had been held and occupied for many years, and even had been bought and sold, before either the warrants for the surveys or the patents for the land had passed from the land office. Indeed, there are farms all over Somerset county for which the patents have only been granted during the last thirty or forty years.⁷⁹⁸ Such being the case, the date at which the settler received the warrant for the survey or the patent for his lands cannot always be accepted as being anything near the time at which he came here, which may have been much earlier than that indicated by these records.

Again, the finding of a name in the survey book is not always to be accepted as positive proof that the party had ever himself settled in the county. For, even in those early days, the land hunter (as he must be designated to distinguish him from the home seeker, for he was not seeking a home for himself, but keeping well up with the advancing tide of settlers) was ever on the lookout for choice tracts of land, on which he obtained patents in the hope of gaining a profit therefrom from the increased value given by them by the settlement of adjacent lands. Among these speculators who thus acquired lands in Somerset county were two citizens of Philadelphia – Benjamin Chew, and Alexander Wilcocks. These two men alone had, as shown in the record in the Survey book, not less than forty-nine tracts of land in Somerset county, aggregating some ten thousand acres, surveyed to them. There were many others of these land speculators, but none on quite so extensive a scale. It is, however, an easy matter to separate the names of most of these speculators from those of the actual settlers as at a very early period, the names of the non-resident land holders were entered on the assessment lists as being the owners of what were called "unseated lands," and in only a few instances did residents own any such unseated lands.

The earliest permanent settlements were made: 1st. In the Turkeyfoot region, and under this name is to be included what is now Addison township. 2d. In Brothers Valley township, as we now know it. 3d. Along the Forbes, or Boquet road, in the northern part of the county, in Elk Lick township,

⁷⁹⁸ According to a southern Somerset County resident, there was still unpatented land in Somerset County in 2012.

and in the vicinity of Somerset. At this late day it is a somewhat difficult matter to award priority, or to give the precise time of the settlement of any of these localities, except as to that of Somerset, which probably was a little later than some of the others.

It is quite probable that hunters and trappers had established their camps at favorable points in different parts of the county, thus preceding the actual settlers by several years. This certainly was the case so far as the Somerset settlement was concerned, and it is quite probable that it was the same as to most or all of the other localities named. Situated as this region is, between the Allegheny mountain and the Laurel Hill, its surface alternating in hills and valleys with dense forest and green glades, covered in the summer with a luxurious growth of grass, dotted here and there with ponds or miniature lakes which the beaver, by obstructing the more sluggish of the glade streams, had caused to expand into ponds of greater or less extent. The natural meadows, or glades, affording abundant pasturage for the herds of deer and the smaller number of elk, made it a hunters' paradise. These hunters usually located their camps some miles apart, there not being so many of them that there was any need for crowding. The hunting season, which covered the time of the fall and winter months, was spent there. But at the end of the winter, and the coming of warm weather, gathering together the furs and pelts which had been secured during the season,⁷⁹⁹ these hunters returned. Some to the nearest frontier settlements, and others to their homes in the eastern settlements, for the double purpose of visiting their families and of procuring the supplies needed for the next season's hunt.

It can hardly be doubted that some, at least, of the first permanent settlers were induced to come into these parts by the accounts that these hunters and trappers gave of the country. It is also known to a certainty that some of these hunters themselves took up "improvement rights," as they were called, and became permanent settlers with the other first settlers.

TURKEYFOOT

Taking up the Turkeyfoot settlement to begin with, and having for authority the report of the commission of which the Rev. John Steele was the head, we have the names of nine settlers who were living in this region as early as March, 1768. As already stated, their names were Henry Abrahams, Ezekiel DeWitt, James Spencer, Benjamin Jennings, John Cooper, Ezekiel Hickman, John Enslow, Henry Enslow, and Benjamin Pursley. It is claimed that there were still others whose names do not appear on this list. In any event, its correctness must rest on the accuracy of the information which the commissioners said they had received from the man Speer. While Steele's report fixes the date at which these settlers were here, there is also some documentary evidence that some of them were here several years earlier than the date given in this report.

Of these settlers named by Steele, Henry Abrahams located on the point of land situated between the junction of the Youghioghenny and Castleman's rivers⁸⁰⁰. In all, he would seem to have had 225 acres, but apparently in four parcels, all contiguous to each other. Some time about the year 1798 one Archibald Irwin laid claim to a part of this land, this resulting in a law suit.

A certified copy of the survey was procured from Daniel Broadhead, surveyor general of the commonwealth, with an accompanying explanatory report made by Alexander McLean,⁸⁰¹ deputy

⁷⁹⁹ Pelts are more luxuriant in the winter.

⁸⁰⁰ For a copy of one of Abrahams' surveys, see [Figure 0365](#).

⁸⁰¹ A biography of McClean is provided on page 363 of Ellis' 1882 "History of Fayette County, Pennsylvania".

surveyor general, from which it would appear that McLean must have been on the ground two or three times, and that the first survey contained sixty-six acres. The draft shows the improvements, viz.: "1. Represents the first cabin built by Henry Abrams, in 1765.⁸⁰² 2. The second cabin built in 1769. 3. His latest dwelling house. 4. James Spencer's house near the first cabin he lived in. 5. The dwelling house of Henry Abrams, Jr. 6. Represents the orchard, consisting of 132 beautiful bearing apple trees, a few that have been injured excepted." To quote further:

"The dotted lines represent the bounds of his claim under the 66 and 100 acre warrants, the former of which is dated back to the time of Abram's settlement, viz.: to 1765, and includes all the improvements yet made in the bounds of the whole tract except a few trees that appear to have been cut down near the old cabin and a quantity of rail timber that has been cut and split this winter and are yet on the ground.

*The deception mentioned in the caveat is simply this: The sixty-six acre warrant he thought would include the improvements, and, considering himself under obligation to date his interest with the time of his settlement, he took the warrant for no more than would secure the best of the land, and, a few acres excepted, the residue will only be serviceable for range or timber, as the hill is so steep that it will be impracticable ever to till the sides of it, and the top on which a tolerable field or two may be made is totally inaccessible but by digging a road to it. And he thinking it hard to pay so much interest for land of so little value has followed the example of many others to get it as cheap as he could. * * * The rivers are so large that I have not thought proper to cross them, the middle fork being from 80 to 130 yards wide and the west branch from 100 to 150 yards wide."*

In his plat McLean names the middle fork, the Little Crossings, which is the Castleman's river. The west branch named in the plat as the Great Crossings is the Youghiogheny, both streams being known by these different names.

The plat also refers to other well seated lands over the river between the forks of the Castleman and the North fork (Laurel Hill creek). Archibald Irwin's location is mentioned as across the river. James Spencer's location was the point between the Middle fork and the North fork. The lands of John Pursley and Robert Plunket are mentioned as adjoining. There is no date on this draft other than the date of its certification by the surveyor-general, June 1, 1798, and it is assumed that McLean made his last survey only a short time before that date.

We have dwelt on this survey at some length because it furnishes the earliest known date for any improvement in Somerset county to have been made, as it gives the time (1765) at which Abrahams built his first cabin. We must assume that then was when he first settled in this region, because about the first thing a new settler must needs do is to build himself a house or shelter of some sort.

The land covered by this survey has in later years been known as the Jacob Starner farm, and is in what we now know as Addison Township, except that a part of it is in the present borough of Confluence, which would thus seem to enjoy the distinction of being a part of two different townships.

Henry Abrahams must already have had a family of well-grown boys at the time of his coming into the Turkeyfoot region, for in the first assessment made for Brothers Valley township (1771), which then took in all the territory west of the mountain, we find the name of Gabriel Abrahams among

⁸⁰² The Penns did not purchase the land west of the summit of the Allegheny Mountain from the Indians until the "purchase of 1768", which took place at Fort Stanwix on November 5, 1768.

the single freemen, and within a few years later, that of Henry Abrahams, Jr., and others of the same surname. In 1779 we find that Henry Abrahams was a first lieutenant in the First Battalion of the organized militia of Bedford county, probably in Captain Oliver Drake's company. In 1779 he was also one of the township assessors, joining with some of the other assessors in a petition to the Assembly setting forth the deplorable condition of many of the people on account of Indian depredations, and asking that they be given some relief in the matter of payment of taxes. Whether any of the remaining eight persons mentioned in Rev. Captain Steele's report were here earlier than Henry Abrahams, is a question that cannot now be answered, but it may safely be assumed that they were here as early.

James Spencer, whose first cabin is marked on the Abrahams draft, located on the land between the junction of the Castleman's river and the Laurel Hill creek. While he must have been here as early as Abrahams was, as in 1772 he had twenty-one acres of cleared land, which was above the average, he did not have his land surveyed or patented until 1786. It contained about two hundred and fifty acres, and is called "Good Fane" in the patent. In 1798 he sold the land to Captain William Tissue⁸⁰³, who up to that time had been living in Elk Lick township. Some time before his death Captain Tissue sold the land, one part to his son, Isaac Tissue, and the remaining part to William Tissue, Jr. It is this part of the land that afterward became the site of that part of the town of Confluence that lies between the Castleman's river and the Laurel Hill creek. Probably all the original tract is now within the town limits.

According to the most reliable traditions of the Jennings family there were two Benjamin Jennings, who were father and son. In some accounts they are confounded with each other, as though there had been but one of the name. It is the elder Benjamin Jennings that is referred to in Rev. John Steele's report as having been one of the trespassing settlers in the Turkeyfoot, whose name had been given him by the man Speer. He is supposed to have settled on land lying between the towns of Confluence and Ursina. The younger Benjamin Jennings certainly lived on this land, and probably acquired it from his father. At the time of Steele's visit the younger Jennings could not have been more than a ten-year-old boy. He lived until 1845.

Benjamin Pursley most probably settled on land that is now in Addison township. Pursley's run, a small mountain stream, takes its name after him.

As to John Enslow and Henry Enslow, their places of settlement cannot now be located. So far as Somerset county is concerned the name is extinct. It is probable that the modern spelling of the name is Enlow. Several families of that name are living in the nearby part of Garret county, Maryland, who most likely are the descendants of one or other of these two men.

Of DeWitt, Hickman and Cooper, named in Steele's report, nothing is known. As to the man Speer, from whom Captain Steele derived his information concerning these Turkeyfoot settlers, he most probably is the same as Jacob Spear, and probably was one of those permitted to locate along the military road by authority, and at that time had been here several years. Jacob Spear received a warrant for a survey that bore the date of April 19, 1769, just sixteen days after the opening of the

⁸⁰³ An article about the Tissue family by descendant Preston Hinebaugh, titled "William Tissue Is Buried in Jersey Churchyard, Somerset Co." is included in the November 1963 issue of the "Laurel Messenger". The article indicates that Tissue was named a Justice in Bedford County in 1778, and was commissioned as a Captain in 1779.

land office. It was surveyed in 1770. Spear afterwards sold this land to Philip D. Smyth, who platted the town now known as Somerfield on a part of it.⁸⁰⁴

Other very early settlers in the Turkeyfoot region, as we glean from the earliest assessment lists made after Bedford county was first formed, were William Greathouse, George Drake, Nicholas Friend, Thomas Green, John Friggs, Richard Hoagland, John Pursley, Danes Pursley, James Pursley, Robert Plunket, Martin Keever, Michael Keever, John Reed, Thomas Stanton, Jacob Ropel (or Rupel), Henry Brown, John Mitchell, Andrew Friend, Augustine Friend, Charles Friend, Henry Smith. Some of these names are found on the first assessment, that made in the fall of 1771, and all of them within a couple of years after, and there must have been others, but up to 1783 Turkeyfoot township extended to about a dozen miles north of Somerset, and until Milford township was formed, reducing old Turkeyfoot to what is now Upper Turkeyfoot, Lower Turkeyfoot and Addison townships, it is no easy task, so far as these lists are concerned, to identify any particular names with the Turkeyfoot region proper. But after Milford was cut off, comparing the names still left on the Turkeyfoot list of 1783 with the older lists, a goodly number of names are to be found as have been in these parts as early as 1771, 1773 and 1774. But it is not to be understood that the list that is here given comprises all of them.⁸⁰⁵

John Friggs is mentioned by Rev. Captain Steele in his report as having been a guide for Harris and Wallace, whom the trespassing settlers of that period had charged with being engaged in spying out the land for speculative purposes.

Robert Plunket's land joined the Henry Abrahams lands, and was therefore in Addison township.

The name Pursley is also in some of these old lists, spelled Pusley and Busley. John, James and Danes Pursley may have been sons of Benjamin Pursley, who was one of the trespassing settlers, and they may also have lived in what is now Addison township.

Richard Hoagland must have been a very early settler, his land being on the east side of the Youghiogheny river. He also had a large tract that lay on both sides of the Braddock road. The assessment of 1772 returns him as having seventy-one acres of cleared or improved land. This is nearly four times as much cleared land as any one else had who was then living in what is now Somerset county, and it certainly indicates a number of years of previous settlement. It is not unlikely that he was one of those who were permitted to locate along the Braddock road under sanction of the military authorities, who did this sometimes because it was of some advantage to have at least some persons settled along the road. And he may have found it to his profit to clear and cultivate so much more land than others did by reason of having a ready sale for its product to those who were at all times passing over the road. He must also have been a man of some reputation, for we find that in 1773 he was commissioned a justice of the peace, the second to be

⁸⁰⁴ Uria Brown's 1816 journal, which is reproduced in Volume X of the 1915 "**Maryland Historical Magazine**", describes lodging at "*Phillip Smyth's Sine of General Jackson*" as follows: "My Land Lord Phillip Smyth is a proud Empty Ignorant Rich Dutchman, Lives in a big wooden House with a Stone Chimney in each end, the house kept prodigiously Dirty; the Living for man & horse is as good & looks as well as any of their Taverns, Inns or Hotels, he is situated Just on the East Side of the big Crossings of Youghagany River in Somerset County, owns about 250 Acres of Land which he says that would sell for \$50 p' Acre Just like a Top; he has Laid out a Town Just on the Bank of the River & directly on the Turnpike road which he calls Smyth-field and is now disposing of Lots some of them he says sells at \$250 which is for ¼ of an Acre & fronting on the road (Baltimoreans Looke, Land Selling in the Middle of the Allegany Mountains @\$1000 p' Acre) at this intended Town..."

⁸⁰⁵ For the Bedford County tax lists from 1773 to 1784, see the 1898 book "**Returns of taxables for the counties of Bedford (1773 to 1784...**". For the tax assessment lists, see Cassaday's 1932 book "**The Somerset County Outline**".

commissioned in what is now Somerset county. He would, however, seem not to have been a very good manager, for he must have been insolvent at the time of his death, his lands in 1786 having been sold to Henry Smyth by the then sheriff of Bedford county, at the suit of Michael Cresap's heirs.

John Mitchell, the ancestor of a family that is still well known in our own day, was in this region as early as 1773, but we are not able to give the precise location. When his name first appears on the assessment list it has the word "Doctor" written after it. If he really was entitled to this appellation, then he was the first physician in Somerset county. The name James Mitchell we do not find until 1778. Whether these two were father and son or brothers we are not able to say.

The Green family were a noted family in the early days of the Turkeyfoot settlement, and at least three generations of them are buried in the Six Poplar graveyard, near Harnedsville, among them three Richard Greens – father, son and grandson. John Green, one of the family, was killed by Indians near the Cheat river, in West Virginia, in 1788. A little daughter, left by the Indians for dead, recovered, and when grown up married one of the Friend family, and some of her descendants are said to still live in this part of Somerset county, others in Garrett county, Maryland.

CAPTAIN ANDREW FRIEND, PIONEER AND INDIAN FIGHTER

Captain Andrew Friend, one of the early pioneers who settled in the Turkeyfoot region, was a noted hunter and Indian fighter. According to the best accounts that we have of him, his ancestors had settled in the valley of Virginia (Shenandoah), where they owned large estates. They were of English origin. Over the water the family had been of some note, and among them were some who had been prominent both in state and church. In the civil wars they had adhered to the fortunes of the house of Stuart, and finding themselves of the losing side, some of the family emigrated to Virginia, settling in the Shenandoah valley, where Andrew Friend is supposed to have been born. The family, at one time wealthy, became somewhat reduced in circumstances, left Virginia, going into eastern Pennsylvania. But John and Joseph Friend, two brothers, went westward and settled in Colerain township, Cumberland (now Bedford) county, in a beautiful and fertile valley that is encompassed by mountains on three sides, and is to this day known as Friend's Cove.

Andrew Friend and his brother Augustine are supposed to have been sons of one or other of these two brothers. While yet young men, Andrew and his brother, being of an adventurous turn, and at the same time enthusiastic hunters, hearing of these mountain fastnesses full of all kinds of game, went to the mouth of Will's creek, or Fort Cumberland, as it was better known, and which was then considered one of the most advanced of the frontier settlements. From there frequent excursions were made into the mountainous regions to the westward. This, of course, was in a region forbidden to white men, and those who entered it did so at their own peril, and it may be expected that the Indians did not look upon trespassers with too friendly an eye. It may even have been during the period of the French occupation, when they were decidedly hostile.

On one of these excursions, which it is said was largely made for the purpose of exploring and viewing the country, occurred an incident which has given the Negro mountain the name by which it is now known.⁸⁰⁶ At the head of quite a party of hunters, Andrew Friend started on this trip into

⁸⁰⁶ An alternate version of the tradition is found on page 559 of the 1884 book "**History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties...**". It states: "John Hyatt, one of the early settlers, was a native of Maryland. He came with several others, accompanied by a number of slaves, to Turkey-Foot soon after the settlement began. While crossing the Negro

the western wilderness, its purpose carrying them much farther into the wilderness than usual. Coming to the confluence of the three rivers, as the tradition has it, they followed the river as far as Ohio Pyle. They found the woods full of game, such as deer, elk, wild turkeys, to say nothing of panthers, bears and other animals of that kind. So far they had encountered no Indians, and were not molested by them until sometime after they had set out on their return, when they were attacked by a considerable party of savages. Just where the attack commenced tradition is silent, but Friend and his party continued their retreat toward Fort Cumberland, holding their enemies at bay as well as they could, making a stand at intervals and the falling back again.

With the party was a Negro, who most likely was a servant of Captain Friend, as he certainly had come from a slave-holding community. This negro, by all accounts, must have been a powerful man and of gigantic stature. Like all of the party, he was armed, and displayed great bravery in aiding to repel the attacks of the Indians. Exposing himself somewhat recklessly late in the evening, he received what was found to be a mortal wound. This was some distance up the mountain. His comrades could not carry him off with them, and this he himself saw, and, believing that he would die at any rate, he urged them to leave him where he was and continue their retreat. This Friend was unwilling to do, as he did not wish to abandon him in this manner. So he determined to remain with him. One other man, whose life Friend had on a former occasion saved, volunteered to remain also. During the last halt that had been made Friend and this man got the dying negro off the trail, and concealed themselves in the dense underbrush, while the remainder of the party, still pursued by the Indians continued their retreat.

The negro was in great pain, and just before daylight death came to him. In the bottom of a hole left by the roots of a fallen tree a grave was hastily dug by the help of sticks, knives and hatchets, and he had a reverent burial, uncoffined save by the hull of a rotten chestnut log that had been used to shelter him from the rain that had fallen during the night. Then leaving him in his lonely

mountain, a party of Indians fired upon them and mortally wounded one of the negroes, the strongest man in the company. A piece of hollow log was found and placed over the negro to shelter him. Throwing it off, he said, 'Save yourselves and never mind me; I shall die soon.' It is said that the Negro mountain took its name from this circumstance." The May 1960 issue of the "Laurel Messenger" indicates that John Hyatt was on the 1779 tax list, and had a "Warrant for 394 acres on Drake Mill Run". Yet another variation of the tradition is given in an article by David Husband in the January 12, 1894 issue of the "Somerset Standard". The article states: "We now come to the origin of the local name of that spur of the mountain called Negro mountain, which runs in from Maryland and terminates at Casselman river. Jacob Casselman, whose hunting camp was a short distance below the mouth of the Flaugherty, had a negro servant who assisted him in his labors and attended him frequently on his excursions until he had become as good a woodsman and as expert a hunter as his master. Having an errand to the settlement at Turkeyfoot, (in all probability to obtain a supply of salt) sent the servant in company with a neighbor hunter to make the journey and attend to the business. After some time the hunter returned and reported that on their return trip they came in contact with a small roving band of Indians who gave them chase; that they had separated to baffle their pursuers. The black man took up the mountain, while the other struck for the river and crossing, he was not further pursued. The negro was never after heard of; whether he was captured, killed, perished or ran away from his master was never known." An early written description of the naming of Negro Mountain is provided in John Jacob's 1836 book "A biographical sketch of the life of the late Captain Michael Cresap". That book connects the naming of the mountain to an incident in Thomas Cresap's life, stating: "Colonel Cresap, however, soon got together another company of volunteers, and with his two surviving sons—Daniel and Michael—and a negro of gigantic stature, marched again, taking the same route on Braddock's road. They advanced this time as far as Negro mountain, where they met a party of Indians. A running fight took place; Cresap's party killed an Indian and the Indians killed the negro; and it was this circumstance – the death of the negro on the mountain — that has immortalized his name by fixing it on this ridge forever. This was, I believe, Colonel Cresap's last battle with the Indians, for after peace was made, he returned to his farm at Old Town..." A resolution was proposed during the 2009 session of the General Assembly of Pennsylvania that described the party as being led by Thomas Cresap who "wrote an account of the expedition for Ben Franklin's 'Pennsylvania Gazette' of June 17, 1756, and said 'An old Negro presented his gun at [the Indians]' ". The same resolution states that "The 'Maryland Gazette' reported on June 10, 1756, that a 'free Negro' was killed with the English..."

mountain grave, they continued their flight. The Indians were still on the mountain. In the early morning they could hear them imitating the call of the wild turkey—a lure often used to draw any one toward them who might be in the woods—but Friend was too wary a hunter to be deceived in this way. With difficulty and after several narrow escapes Friend and his comrade succeeded in eluding the Indians and reached Fort Cumberland in safety. The names of the comrade and the colored man have not come down to our time, but it is greatly to the credit of these two white men, one of them of a slave-holding family, that they promptly recognized the manhood and bravery of their humble follower, and did not leave him to die alone, but rather than seek safety in immediate flight, chose to remain, at great risk to themselves, with this dying man of another, then as now, looked on by most of people, as an inferior race. But Friend and his companion had learned that the blood of all brave men is of one color. From the earliest period of the settlement of those parts of Somerset county this mountain has always been known and spoken of as the “N_____” or Negro mountain, and it has well been written that it is a great and grand monument to those three brave and heroic men of our earlier days, that their story shall live while it endures.

Andrew Friend and his brother Augustine both became settlers in the Turkeyfoot region at an early day, and the names of both appear as land owners on the first assessment lists that we have. Augustine Friend, after remaining here some years, went further up the Youghiogheny river and settled in what is now Garrett county, Maryland, where many of his descendants, looked upon as the best of citizens, may yet be found. As to Andrew Friend, some of the traditions about him that are still extant have it that he was with Washington on his westward journey, and that he was also with the Braddock expedition, and served in the French war, although we have no means of verifying this. But if it be true, it may in a measure account for his having been, both before and after his settlement here, so frequently placed in command of local companies organized for defense against the Indians, and also of the fact of his well-known antipathy to the Indians, particularly to those of the Delaware and Shawnee tribes. Tradition has it that with his unerring rifle he sent more than one of them to the “happy hunting grounds,” although it is said he never killed an Indian woman or child, or even a man, in mere wantonness, but only in a fight in self-defense or for the protection of his own or his neighbor’s property.

On one occasion, in the owner’s absence, a settler’s cabin had been plundered and burnt. While it be known that the perpetrators were Indians, still they could not be located. The next day Friend happened to see an Indian on the hillside on the opposite side of the river. He was carrying a looking-glass on his back, and it was the reflection of the sun on the glass that had first attracted Friend’s attention. Raising his rifle he fired at the glass, putting a hole both through it and the Indian. The glass had belonged to the settler whose cabin had been burned, and the Indian was without a doubt one of its destroyers, but on several occasions afterward Friend was heard to express regret that he had shot him on purely circumstantial evidence.

On another occasion some Indians had come into this or some neighboring settlement, burned a number of cabins, and carried off several persons as prisoners. Word was sent to Friend, and hastily organizing a party he started in pursuit of the savage marauders. It was in the winter season, with snow on the ground. The weather being cold, after three or four days had passed in a fruitless attempt to overtake them, some of the men in his party became discouraged and desired to give up the chase and return home, but Friend prevailed on them to continue the pursuit until evening, promising that if they did not overtake them by night, or at least be very near them, they would return home in the morning. Before night they came upon the body of a man who had been

scalped, apparently skinned alive and his body tied to a tree. This sight so incensed the men that they needed no further urging, but declared their purpose to follow them until overtaken. They continued the pursuit through the night, and near daybreak came on them, and surprised and killed the entire party, save one, who escaped.

The Indians had learned to know and fear Friend, and made several attempts to capture him. On one occasion, while hunting in the woods, he had just shot a wild turkey. Two Indians suddenly sprang at him from a cover. They had guns and could perhaps have shot him, but his gun was then empty, they thought that they might capture him alive, and had they succeeded it is easy to see what his fate would have been. Friend was a swift runner, and started off at his best speed, with the Indians close behind him. For a while he held his lead, but one of his moccasins becoming untied, he began to lose ground, and the Indians gained on him. They also knew that they were driving him toward a precipice, and parted, so as to keep him from avoiding it. Friend also knew this, but kept on at his best speed, intending to jump or get down in the best way he could, but as he neared it he saw that a large tree had been blown down in a recent storm. The Indians were quite near and sure of their man, and one of them called to him, "Anny, got um, got um, now stop," but by a mighty jump he cleared the trunk of the tree and found himself at the bottom of the precipice, with only a few bruises. He went back to the place a few days later with some of his neighbors, but did not care to repeat the jump. The loose moccasin was lost in the jump, and picked up by the Indians as a trophy. It is said that a good many years afterwards one of them, then a very old man, showed it to a hunter, and told him how he came to have it, his story being substantially correct except he was so near him that he thought he could catch him by the foot, and tried to do so, but only caught it by the toe as "Anny" cleared the log, the moccasin remaining in his hand.

Some time in the month of September, 1773, when he was away from home with a party of scouts in pursuit of some Indians who had committed some depredations in the neighborhood, word came to the little settlement in the evening that it would probably be attacked before morning by a much larger band of savages, and who would burn and destroy it. Captain Friend's wife was alone with two small children. Not knowing what else to do, she concealed herself and children in a field of high corn. Here she remained all through the long night, momentarily expecting to hear the savage warwhoop. In the very early morning she heard a noise, evidently made by a body of men, and for a time she thought that the Indians had at last come, but presently they proved to be her husband and his party of scouts. He also had learned of this anticipated Indian attack, and had hastened his return to put the women and children into a place of safety. All were at once taken to the stockade fort that had been erected for such emergencies, but fortunately the Indians did not make their appearance. In this fort that night was born Captain Friend's daughter Diana, who when she grew up to womanhood became the wife (and a good one) of that John Mitchell who afterwards was known all over that part of the country as "The Squire."

Captain Friend is also said to have commanded a company of rangers during the war of the Revolution. It has already been stated that he was as noted a hunter as he was an Indian fighter. Some time after he had settled here, one morning, when out hunting with James Spencer, a neighbor, they discovered a herd of eight or ten buffalo on the opposite side of the river, on what is now known as the Reid farm, and near where the present dwelling house now stands. One of these, a fine, fat young bull, they shot, the rest escaping. It is also said this was the last buffalo killed, and the herd the last one seen in these parts.

Captain Friend was popular among those who knew him, a genial, kind-hearted and generous man, never quarrelsome or contentious, without any frills or fringes except on his buckskin hunting shirt. He was of a modest and retiring disposition and not given to talking to himself. He was also a man of fair education for those days. He was rather tall and slim of figure, very strong, active and wiry and of unusual agility. He had a very quick eye and was a good marksman. He was also well versed in woodcraft. Even in his old age he was straight as an arrow and always carried himself erect. When eighty years old he would occasionally relax his habitual dignity, and would amuse himself and his grandsons by running whipsaws with them. He was a manly man, a true gentleman, one of Nature's noblemen, and among the many things told of him around the firesides in the community in which he lived so long, no one has ever made a single accusation of a single mean or dishonorable act. His integrity, patriotism and bravery were unquestioned.

The wife of Captain Friend was a sister of Captain Oliver Drake, one of the Jersey pioneers. They had seven daughters-Sarah (Abrahams), Jemina (Abrahams), Rebecca Ogg), Rachel (Ogg), Susannah (Hyatt), Diana (Mitchell); also three sons-Charles, Andrew, Jr., and Elijah. They have left numerous descendants, who are all proud of their descent from this grand old pioneer, as well they may be.

Of these daughters, Diana was the one who was born in the fort or stockade. Her husband, John Mitchell, Esq., was a son of James Mitchell, who also was a soldier in the Revolutionary war, and a comrade of Andrew Friend. Their children were Levi, James, Andrew, Joseph, John, Jesse and Hiram Mitchell, Elizabeth (Darrell), Diana (Ross), Mary (Thayer), and Cynthia (Ross). The late Thomas Kyler, who himself attained the age of eighty-four years, lived in the family of Diana Friend Mitchell, and said he was always treated as one of the family, and never tired of relating his reminiscences of good Mother Mitchell.

The writer does not know the precise time of Captain Friend's death. It is known that he sold his farm or land to David Ankeny in 1793. On this land it would seem that he had never taken out the patent, the deed reciting that Ankeny must pay the charges of the land office. As his name does not appear on the first assessment made after Somerset county was formed, in 1795, he may then have been no longer living. While his grave is no longer known, it is known that he sleeps in the old burial ground on the west side of the Castleman's river, near and south of the approach or abutment of the county bridge.

Very many of the old Turkeyfoot families, such as the Mountains, Tannehills, Hyatts, Oggs, Abrahams, Jennings, Rosses, Rushes, McNeals, Spencers, Skinners, Mitchells, Brookes, Reams, Tissues, Heimbaughs, Colborns, Moon, etc., can rightly claim relationship to him.

THE JERSEY SETTLEMENT

The neighborhood about the Jersey and Draketown has been known as the "Jersey Settlement" from the earliest times, being so known because most of those who settled in the parts adjacent thereto had come from Essex and Morris counties, New Jersey, which in those days was looked on as rather a poor country. What is known of their emigration into this Turkeyfoot region rests mostly on the traditions that have been preserved among the descendants of these people, many of whom still dwell in these parts. While some errors may have crept into these traditions, as must be inevitable in so long a lapse of time, they cannot be passed by in any history that is to be written of this Turkeyfoot region.

Accounts have spread far to the eastward of the fine country beyond the Allegheny mountains—a country that was well watered, and which, while covered by forests of many kinds of timber, also possessed a fertile soil, on which, when cleared, everything might be raised; a region wherein fish, game and wild animals abounded almost without number; and with all these advantages, it had a climate healthful and delightful. A pleasing picture indeed to these people, who had become tired of the sandy wastes and the thin soil of the country in which they then lived. Taking council together, a number of these people determined to emigrate to what to them appeared as a new Arcadia.

In the spring of 1770, placing their slender belongings, with their women and children, on ox-teams, bidding farewells to such of their kindred who remained behind, with brave hearts they left the sand hills of New Jersey and turned their faces toward the setting sun. After a long and toilsome journey, exposed to all kinds of weather and all manner of danger, some time in the latter part of April or early part of May their train of ox-teams might have been seen slowly winding its way down the narrow valley of White's creek. Presumably they must have come in over the Braddock road from Fort Cumberland, Maryland, leaving it somewhere between the top of the Negro mountain and the Winding ridge, and cutting a road for themselves toward the Turkeyfoot. They appear to have crossed the Castleman's river near the site of the present village of Harnedsville, and passing over the Hog Back, pitched their tents for the night in the valley of the Laurel Hill creek. Resting here, like the Children of Israel coming out of Egypt in to the promised land, they went out to possess it. Leaving their families here, these settlers went forth, each selecting for himself a portion of the land whereon to build a home for himself and his family. By a mutual understanding among themselves, each one was to be limited to such quantity of land as he would walk around in a single day, at the same time marking its boundaries by blazing the trees.

Such may be said to be the sum of the traditions relating to the coming of these particular settlers. It is further said that in all there were some eighteen or twenty families of them, the heads of which were Robert Colborn, David King, Oliver Drake, William Rush, Andrew Ream, Reuben Skinner, John Mitchell, John Hyatt, William Tannehill, James Moon, Edward Harned, David Woodmancy, John Copp, John McNair, Joseph Lanning, William Brooke⁸⁰⁷, Jacob Strahn, Obadiah Reed, and William Lanning. Some accounts include the Mountains, Morrisons and William Tissue, as well as the names of Benjamin Jennings and Hickson, but as these last two are mentioned in Captain Steele's report, they could not have come with the main party, although they also may have originally come from New Jersey. The Mountains and Morrisons certainly were here at a very early day. As for Captain William Tissue, his relations with these Jersey people must have been quite close, as his second wife was Huldah Rush, a daughter of William Rush, and he may have come on with them. But if he did he did not settle in the Turkeyfoot region. He settled in Elk Lick, where he continued to reside until 1798, then removing to the Turkeyfoot region.

Andrew Ream (the name is also spelled Rhim) settled on and improved the farm which afterwards became the site of the present town of Ursina. The place remained in the Ream family until about 1868, when it was sold to William J. Baer. There is a tradition more or less certain, as nearly all

⁸⁰⁷ The May 1960 issue of the "**Laurel Messenger**" indicates that William Brook had a 1785 warrant for 360 acres on the Turkeyfoot Road. The 1884 book "**History of Bedford, Somerset and Fulton Counties...**" states: "William Brook, an early pioneer, came from the east and settled on Laurel Hill creek. He was a blacksmith, but devoted most of his time to fishing and hunting." Brooke's survey (Book C-6, Page 213, [Figure 0638](#)) does not pertain to the route that is the principal subject of this book. [Figure 0652](#) shows the location of William Brooke's property.

traditions are, that his grandfather came over in the time of William Penn, and that he built a number of houses in Philadelphia.

David King went up the Laurel Hill creek, where he selected his land, and where in later years he built a grist mill that is still known as King's Mill. Descendants of David King bearing the family name are still to be found in the county, and one of them served a term as state senator.

Robert Colborn⁸⁰⁸ selected his land beyond where Draketown now is. The place is still known as the Robert Colborn farm, and the family name is one that is still well known in these parts. Oliver Drake settled on the land where Draketown now is. He undoubtedly was a leading man in this pioneer settlement. Soon after coming into the country he built a grist mill, which so far as we have able to learn was the first built in these parts. John Mitchell, said to have been one of these early Jersey settlers, is referred to elsewhere in these pages. The Mitchell family, all of whom are supposed to be descendants of this man, has always been a well known one in this part of Somerset county. James Moon's place was near where James and Elisha Moon now live; they probably own a part of the original tract.

Joseph Lanning located on what is now known as the Lichty farm, and it is on this farm that the famous Jersey church is. William Lanning, whether a brother or son of Joseph Lanning is not now known, was bitten by a rattlesnake, which caused his death. This is as recorded on his tombstone.

Jon McNair's place was between Harnedsville and the "Hog Back." Fruit trees said to have been planted by him are still growing wild in the woods.

William Tannehill located his land above where Draketown now is. It has always remained in the Tannehill family, and some of them are now living on it. Tradition has it that Tannehill found a settler or squatter on this land; in consideration of a gallon or two of whiskey and a grubbing hoe he consented to vacate it.

William Rush lived on the farm that we in our day know as the Minder farm; it is above the town of Ursina. The Rush family is also one of those that has not become extinct in these parts.

John Hyatt's farm was on the hill above Confluence, in the direction of Draketown. This name also is one of those names of the early settlers that still has it representatives here.

Jacob Strahn (or Strahan) settled on the Kuhlman farm of the present day, and which lies not far from Ursina. The modern spelling of this name appears to be Strawn. William Brooks' place was above Ursina. Obadiah Reed, John Copp and Reuben Skinner all settled on farms to the north of Draketown. Reuben Skinner was commissioned a justice of the peace in 1783.

David Woodmancy, named as among the Jersey settlers, seems to have settled on land on the Fayette county side of the river, but within a few years we find people of this name on the Turkeyfoot assessments; so that it is still to be looked on as an early Somerset county name.

⁸⁰⁸ Robert Coleman is also mentioned in a family sketch in Volume III of the 1906 book "**History of Bedford and Somerset Counties...**" Part of the sketch is quoted here because it provides insight on the Jersey Settlement: "Robert Colborn...was born January 16, 1753 in Hunterdon county, New Jersey. At the age of eighteen years he was bound in apprentice to Reuben Skinner, a forgerman. After serving his time out and arriving at man's estate, he married Effie Wortman... In the year 1770 he and his family...together with seventeen families of the same neighborhood in New Jersey, removed to Turkeyfoot township, Bedford, now Somerset County, Pennsylvania, where he followed the occupation of farming... That part of Turkey foot township where these early settlers was named and is known from that time to the present as the Jersey settlement."

These settlers had to suffer all the hardships incidental to pioneer life everywhere, but with strong arms and stout hearts they went to work and cleared their lands. In time the first cabins that had been hastily raised to shelter themselves and families gave way to better houses, and still later they were able to surround themselves with at least some of the comforts of life.

These settlers, with those who had come in from other parts, had come to stay. While they were at times harassed by Indian war parties, and sometimes were compelled to take refuge in the forts and blockhouses that they had erected for their safety, we have no account of their ever having been run out of the country.

There were at least two of these forts or blockhouses, one being at the point of junction between the Castleman's and the Youghiogheny rivers, the other where Ursina now is. It is more than probable that these forts, as they are called in the traditions that we have of them, were really stockades; that is, built by cutting timbers of the proper length, setting them up on end and embedding them in the earth to a depth of three or four feet, leaving the timbers some ten or twelve feet above the ground. They usually were of an area large enough to contain a house or two for sheltering the women and children who might be compelled to take refuge there. Sometimes, however, they were blockhouses built of heavy timbers, usually two stories in height, the upper one projecting over the lower one and pierced with loopholes. We have no definite information as to the manner in which these particular defenses were built.

Quite a number of these early settlers whose names have here been given participated in the Revolutionary war, some of them serving in the Continental line, others in the organized militia, or as rangers for the defense of the frontier. These will be referred to elsewhere in these pages.

That these early settlers were a God-fearing people goes without saying, and we may assume that they brought their religion into the wilderness when they came, for here was organized the first known religious congregation in the county, and which has a written history that dates back to the year 1775.

Not all of the names that we have given as being those of these first Jersey settlers appear on the assessment list of 1773. Indeed, it is ten years later before some of them do appear. Why this is so cannot be explained, but their absence from these lists cannot well be held to mean that they were not here when those lists were made, for there is other documentary evidence showing that at least some of them were then here. As an illustration, the name of Robert Colborn we first find on the assessment list for 1783, yet his name appears on the record as one of the organizers of the Jersey church or congregation in 1775, and there are other names on that list which up to that time had not been returned by the assessor, and if this was the case as to him, might it not be the same as to others? We may therefore assume that the year 1770, given as the time of the coming of these Jersey settlers, is substantially correct.