

Chapter 3

SOUTHWEST VIRGINIA: THE LAST VIRGINIA FRONTIER

At the Montgomery County, Virginia, wedding of Bird Bowker Smith and Rhoda Ingles in 1781, a “mightly frolick” was had by those who attended wrote Anne Christian, wife of William Christian, to Ann Fleming on November 20, 1781. [86] When Bird Smith married into the Ingles-Draper family, he married into families who had been among the earliest settlers in southwestern Virginia.

George and Eleanor/Elenor (Hardin) Draper had migrated from County Donegal on the northwestern coast of Ireland in 1729 and settled at the mouth of the Schuylkill River in the Philadelphia area. Their son, John Draper, was born in Philadelphia in 1730. Two years later, in 1732, their daughter, Mary Draper, was also born in Philadelphia. [87] In the early 1740s the Drapers moved to Virginia, to Colonel James Patton’s settlement on the James River. Exploration of the new area was active at this time, and Colonel Patton had selected 7,500 acres. Patton encouraged the Drapers and others to buy and locate on his land. [88]

Patton, “a doughty Indian fighter,” [89] was associated with the Loyal Land Company which had been formed by a group of land speculators in Albemarle County headed by the well known Dr. Thomas Walker, “a native of King and Queen County and a leading physician and botanist, as well as a notable explorer.” [90]

Ultimately the 500 acres where the Drapers settled in 1746 became known as Draper’s Meadows. In the beginning the settlement was a collection of small cabins, but the surroundings have been described as some of the most beautiful land to be seen. This settlement, established west of the Allegheny Divide, grew and flourished. An “undulating plain, with rich limestone, blue-grass soil... numerous bold, never-failing limestone springs...the drainage is to New River, through Toms Creek,

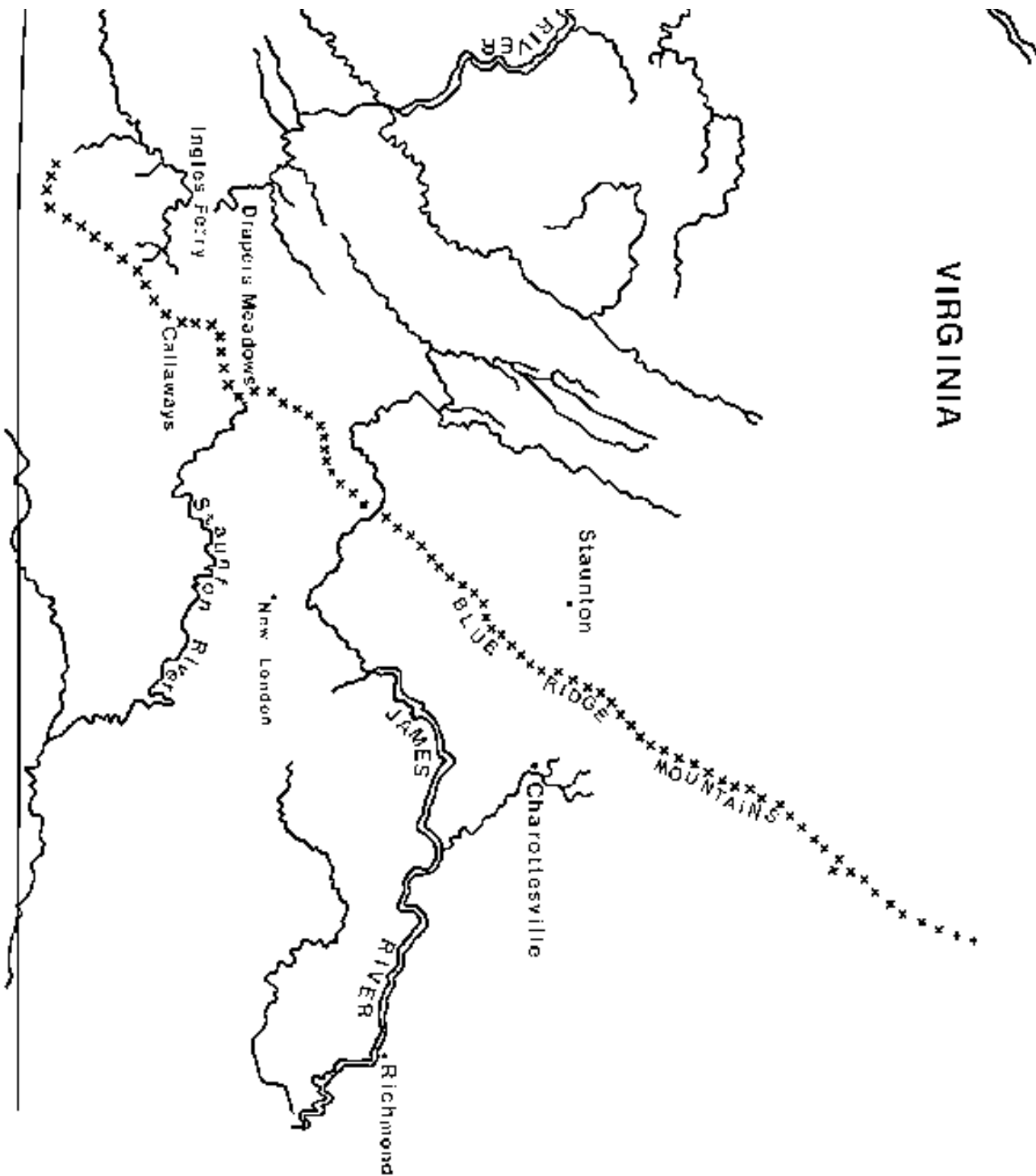
Straubles Creek, and Walls Creek.” [91] It was from his land on Tom’s Creek and Strauble’s Creek that George Draper set out in 1749 on a “game-hunting and land-seeking expedition, westward. He never returned, and was never again heard of by his family; it was supposed that he was killed by Indians.” [92] “When George Draper’s estate was appraised, he was listed as having among other things, eight horses and thirteen cows.” [93]

Young Mary Draper had moved to the raw frontier in her teens and with no sisters and only her older brother, John, as a playmate, Mary led an active childhood, which served her well later. In 1750 Mary, 18, married William Ingles, who was from another early pioneer family. She may have met William Ingles the year before in 1749 when he helped appraise her father’s estate. Their marriage is said to have been the first white marriage west of the Alleghenies.

The Ingles family has been depicted as “among the most interesting of the early settlers.” [94] In 1851, Thomas Ingles of Lovely Mount, Montgomery County, a grandson of William Ingles, wrote, “My great-grandfather, Thomas Ingles, was a merchant of Dublin, Ireland, who upon suspicion of entertaining liberal principals and engaging in a rebellion (sic) him and his 2 sons were sent as convicts to Wales from whence (sic) they made their escape to the United States, my grandfather William Ingles being one of the number, they came first to Pennsylvania and from there to this county.” In his book *Trans-Allegheny pioneers*, which was written in the late nineteenth century by John P. Hale, an Ingles descendant, the author writes that there was a family tradition that the Ingles were descended from a Scottish family. The author says that Thomas Ingles was “born and reared in London and lived from about 1730 to 1740 in Dublin, Ireland where he was a large importing wholesale merchant, was wealthy, owned his own ships and traded with foreign countries, chiefly to the East Indies.” As to Thomas Ingles’ ancestry, supposedly, during the reign of James I, there was a Sir Thomas Inglis who owned baronial estates on the border of England and Scotland and who was tired of the constant “raids and border forays of those days.” So he exchanged his estates, “Branx-Holm” with a “Sir William Scott, ancestor of the late Sir Walter, and of the Dukes of Buckleu, for his Barony of ‘Murdiestone’, in Lanarkshire.” This may be the ancestor of Thomas Ingles of London, England, but in what manner, if any, is unknown.

After their 1750 marriage, William Ingles and Mary Draper continued living on the North Fork of the Roanoke River for another three years. William then “purchased a tract containing 255 acres on Stroubles Creek a branch of the New River.” [95] “In 1750, Dr. (Thomas) Walker (of Albemarle County) wrote that he spent the night at William English’s (Ingles).” Walker wrote that Ingles had “a Mill,





That your Petitioner ... moved into
the Country among the earliest Adventurers ...

W:ngles

From petition of William Ingles to the Virginia General Assembly, 1781

which is the furthest back except one lately built by....the Duncards, who are the upper inhabitants of New River.” [96]

The next year in 1754 Mary’s brother, John Draper married Elizabeth (Bettie) Robertson/Robinson[97] and the newlywed couple joined the Ingles on the edge of the frontier in Draper’s Valley. Accompanying them was Elenor Draper, the widowed mother of Mary Ingles and John Draper. By 1755 the young Draper family had a new baby boy who joined his Ingles cousins, Thomas and George, in the little settlement at Draper’s Meadows.[98] What happened next has been the subject of plays, nonfiction and fiction books.[99] There had always been Indians passing by the little settlement of Draper’s Valley, but now hostilities between the French and English had broken out. With the advent of the French and Indian War, as it was called in America, there was a swarm of Indian raids and attacks all along the American frontier.

Confrontations with the Indians up to this point had been limited to settlers losing furs, cattle, dogs and the like to Indians who most likely were passing through the area. On Sunday, October 8, 1755, about a dozen people in the little settlement of Draper’s Meadows were preparing to harvest their fields. Nine were in the area of the cabins. Colonel James Patton who apparently was visiting, had sent his young nephew, William Preston, to a nearby cabin to tell them it was time to come help with the harvest. William Ingles and his brother-in-law, John Draper, were out in the fields. Bettie Draper first saw the Shawnee Indians and gave the alarm, but in a few short moments the Indians were upon them. Colonel Patton, 63, who had been writing at a table, had his broadsword with him and cut down two Indians, but he himself soon lay slain. Lying dead with him was Eleanor Draper and the baby son of John and Bettie Draper. The baby had been seized from his mother’s arms and brained against the side of the cabin. Bettie Draper’s arm had been broken. Mary Ingles, her young sons and Bettie Draper were taken captive. William Ingles had been close enough to hear the alarm and gun shots, but when he approached the cabins, two Indians spotted him and started chasing him. It was only by the narrowest of margins that he was able to escape his pursuers. The Indians carried off their captives and the two survivors, William Ingles and John Draper, ran for help. Unfortunately, the captives were carried far into Indian territory. One family story says that Mary Ingles, twenty-four, was pregnant and about to deliver, when the small group was taken captive. The baby girl was born along the way into captivity.

Once in the Indian camps, Mary Ingles was separated from her two sons and the other captives. A few months later Mary and an old Dutch[100] woman captive were taken to a salt licks to help make salt. It was here that Mary saw the opportunity to escape, taking the old woman with her. It

was, however, impossible for Mary to take her baby daughter with them, so Mary had to leave her to meet a certain fate of death. Their trek back to southwestern Virginia was over some of the most difficult terrain known, crossing rivers, steep cliffs, gorges and mountains. At a point into the trek the “old Dutch woman”, discouraged and desperate in the face of snowy weather and little food, turned on Mary Ingles, blaming her for their dire situation. Finally, when the woman made an attempt on Mary’s life, Mary slipped away and continued on the journey alone. At last Mary struggled onto the land of the Harmons, neighbors to the Draper’s Meadows settlement. The Harmons took her to find her husband, William Ingles, who had been seeking to ransom her and their children back from the Indians. In all, Mary had been gone for nearly five months. Some 42 days of those months were spent trying to get back home.

Little two-year-old George Ingles died in the Indian camps, and four year old Thomas Ingles was to spend thirteen years with the Indians before being ransomed back to his family. Bettie Robertson/Robinson Draper was held for six years before her husband, John Draper, was able to ransom her.[\[101\]](#)

William and Mary Ingles spent that winter at the fort at Dunkard’s Bottom when the Indians themselves would be wintering far into the Indian nation. With spring, however, Mary began to fear the renewed Indian attacks. William moved them to Fort Vause some twenty miles away on the headwaters of the Roanoke River where there were more families and a more secure fort. As the Indian attacks continued to flare on the frontier, however, Mary still felt uneasy and finally William moved them down below the Blue Ridge mountains to Bedford County. This turned out to be a very wise decision because the French and Indians attacked Fort Vause on June 25, 1756.

There is some confusion about certain Ingles family members regarding either who did what or who was what relation to whom. The two stories related below by family members concerning the Fort Vause attack illustrate a confusion over which Ingles did what.

John Ingles Jr. wrote that he frequently heard his father relate that William’s two uncles, John and Matthew Ingles, and their families were at the fort when it was taken. John Ingles, according to his great-nephew, John Ingles, Jr., was out of the fort when it was attacked. Hearing the guns, he ran toward the fort only to find it surrounded by the Indians. Since his family was in the fort, he tried to rush through the Indians to get to his family, but the Indians surrounded him. John fired his gun at them, but they continued to close in around him. He beat them off with his gun until it broke into pieces, and then tried to get through using the barrel of the gun. He was overpowered, however, and killed. The other Ingles uncle, Mathew, was taken captive and carried off with the other prisoners and plunder. A little way on, the Indians stopped to organize themselves. Mathew was not confined, and when the Indians did something to offend him in some way, he seized a frying pan nearby. Setting his foot in the bowl of the frying pan, and being a strong man, he wrenched off the handle of the frying pan

and attacked the Indians until they overpowered him. This daring feat “pleased the Indians so well that they treated him with more respect than any of the other prisoners while ever—he was with them & he got released some years after & returned to the Country again.” [102] Mathew returned to Ingles’ Ferry and died soon there after as result of the wounds he suffered in the Fort Vause attack.

John P. Hale, the Ingles descendant, writes in his book that Thomas Ingles “with his three sons, William, Matthew, and John—he then being a widower—came to America and located for a time in Pennsylvania, about Chambersburg.” [103] In describing the battle of Fort Vause, Mr. Hale writes that both John and Matthew Ingles were involved. “John and Matthew Ingles, the younger brothers of William Ingles, were at this Fort. John was a bachelor. Matthew had a wife and one child.” It is a tradition, Hale wrote, that an Indian who had climbed a tree to see into the fort, was brought down by the rife of John Ingles. Matthew Ingles, who was away from the fort hunting, heard the firing, ran back to the fort and tried to force his way in by battling the Indians. Although he was able to kill one Indian with his rifle and club others with the rife stock and frying pan after the rifle was wrestled from him, he was eventually overpowered. Tradition says that he killed two Indians with the frying pan. His bravery evoked admiration from the Indians who did not kill him, but took him captive. Sometime later he was able to make his way back to civilization, but died from complications of his wounds. His brother, John, his wife and daughter are supposed to have all died in the battle.

There are obvious similarities in the two stories told about the Ingles men, but there are substantial differences also. One source stated that the wife of one of the Ingles men killed in the Fort Vause attack was returned from Indian captivity, remarried a man named Miller and moved to North Carolina. Oral history or tradition in the Ingles family probably accounts for some of the discrepancies in the various accounts.

Other writers seem confused over the Ingles’ relationships to one another. Givens, in her history of Montgomery County, states that at the battle of Fort Vause in 1756 the “men killed...were...John English or John Ingles identical.” Earlier in the same book she writes, “Thomas Ingles and his sons, William, Matthew and John.” [104] Kegley, however, in her book on the Virginia frontier writes, “William Ingles came to the Roanoke with his father and Uncle John.”

Confusion, at least as far as one relationship is concerned, may be cleared up by a lawsuit filed in Augusta County in 1800. It states that “William Ingles, son and heir of Thomas Ingles, who was brother and heir of John Ingles...Thomas and John Ingles settled there (Burke’s garden) about 1749; they were brothers. William Ingles, only son of Thomas, built a cabin, but did not settle there. Thomas had another son, a seaman, who never married and died at sea. William Ingles was heir to John Ingles, who had no family. He was killed before the death of Thomas, who was his eldest brother. He was

married, but left no children.” (Samuel Wilson’s deposition, aged 67, February, 23, 1800.) One point on which all Ingles stories agree is that William was the son of Thomas.[\[105\]](#)

William and Mary Ingles remained in Bedford County, which had been established that year (1755) until the frontier settled down. As previously noted, William Ingles bought one of the first lots in the town of New London, county seat of Bedford. After William and Mary returned to the New River area, there were some more Indian incidents, but after 1760, with the end of the French and Indian War, peace returned to the frontier. The Ingles family settled in the area that was to become Ingles’ Ferry when the ferry was established by a law passed in the House of Burgesses in 1762, the first ferry on the New River.[\[106\]](#)

In about 1768 the long lost son, Thomas Ingles, was ransomed from Indian captivity. Now around 17 years old, he was completely Indian, speaking no English. Slowly, he adapted to his family and civilization. After several years, William sent his son, Thomas, to his old friend of Loyal Land Company days, Dr. Thomas Walker, of Albemarle County, to continue his education. “There was a school for young men at or near Dr. Walker’s residence, Castle Hill. While in Albermarle (sic), he made some progress in his studies; but books were not to his taste, and study was very irksome to him.” Thomas attracted much attention due to his adventures among the Indians. He also made “acquaintances, some of whom were afterwards very distinguished people. Among these were Madison, Monroe, Jefferson and Patrick Henry. Since Dr. Walker was also the guardian of the young Thomas Jefferson, Thomas Ingles came into frequent contact with Jefferson and “both being musically inclined, took lessons on the violin together, from the same instructor.” [\[107\]](#) Years later when Jefferson was governor of Virginia, he gave a commission of Colonel to Thomas Ingles.

By 1773, 11 years after the establishment of the ferry, William Ingles had built “a commodious house and the Ferry Tavern” and “well known people came to the Ferry. During the American Revolution Lord Henry Hamilton, British Commandant at Detroit,[\[108\]](#) on his way to imprisonment at Williamsburg, rested a day at the Ingles home. He wrote in his diary of the loveliness of the Ingles daughters. Daniel Boone and his men, hewing out the Wilderness Road, drank at the tavern.” [\[109\]](#)

In 1775 “the freeholders of Fincastle County met at the Lead Mines and approved the election of a committee and resolutions submitted to the Continental Congress. The committee was composed of county leaders and officials” [\[110\]](#) and included Major William Ingles, as well as Colonel William Christian and Captain Stephen Trigg. In 1780, during the American Revolution, Colonel William Ingles was accused of “misbehavior and treason against the State” and was brought to trial along with others by Montgomery and Botetourt counties. Among those serving as justices were William Christian and Daniel Trigg. “In the case of William Ingles, upon examination the case was not proven, but his bond was valued at 100,000 pounds and was to be in force until final determination of the matter was made. He was to appear when called.” [\[111\]](#) How William Ingles felt about the American Revolution some four years into the war is impossible to say, but it would be logical that he would not be happy about the involvement of the French on the American side. While French intervention on the American side was essential to the final American victory, William Ingles would surely remember the French and Indian War in which he lost two children and his son, Thomas, was held captive for years. William also lost other Ingles relatives as a result of the attack on Fort Vause during that war. In the French and Indian War, the French had roused the Indians to raid the frontier settlements that had resulted in the disastrous raid on the Ingles and Draper homesteads and the subsequent attack on Fort Vause. If William Ingles felt less than kindly towards the French, it would be completely understandable.

In 1782 at the age of about 52 then Colonel William Ingles resigned his position in the militia due to poor health and died later that year. William Ingles was one of the wealthiest men in southwestern Virginia—“if wealth can be based on pioneer possessions.” That he was educated as well is shown by “letters of acceptable quality,”[\[112\]](#) not just a signature, which in some cases was the extent of the signer’s literacy.

The settling of southwest Virginia and the opening of new lands in Tennessee and Kentucky drew people from the more settled areas of the Piedmont into the Transmonte area. Members of two families moving from the Piedmont into southwest Virginia, the Callaways and the Triggs, would play parts in the Smith family history. Members of the large landowning Callaways of Bedford County may have been in southwest Virginia as early as 1750, when Dr. Thomas Walker noted that they went to a William Calloway’s to get supplies.[\[113\]](#) Thomas Callaway[\[114\]](#) was one of those who viewed the carnage of Fort Vause in 1750. [\[115\]](#)

The Callaway family, originating in Carolina County, Virginia, consisted of five or seven brothers, Thomas (1712), William (1714), Francis (1716), James, Richard (1722) and probably Joseph and John. There were also two Callaway sisters. The brothers, after the death of their parents and a brother from a fever, settled about 1740 in that part of Brunswick County that later became Bedford County. While the family as a whole appears very successful, the most successful brother was William Callaway, who had extensive land holdings and was a Burgess in the Virginia Assembly for several years. Richard Callaway, another member of this large family, was later associated with Daniel Boone in the settlement of Kentucky. Richard was one of the first Burgesses to the Virginia Assembly from the new Kentucky settlements, when Kentucky was still part of Virginia. The abduction of two Callaway daughters and a Boone daughter by Indians in Kentucky was the basis for James Fenimore Cooper’s *Last of the Mohicans*. Boone and Callaway afterward had a falling out, but Callaway County in Kentucky is named for this pioneering family. A Smith daughter, Ann Bowker Smith, daughter of John Smith, Jr. of Pittsylvania County, married into this Callaway family when she married William Callaway, son of William Callaway of Bedford County, who was mentioned above. William Callaway Jr., who married Ann Booker Smith in 1772, was a Lieutenant Colonel, served in the Revolutionary War, served as a vestryman and as a surveyor for Bedford County. He also was a Justice for Bedford Court and County.[\[116\]](#) Members of these Callaway families would reappear in later Smith generations.

The other family, which figured in the Smith history in southwest Virginia, were the Triggs. In 1771 Daniel Trigg who six years later married Ann Smith, the daughter of Guy and Ann (Hopkins) Smith, first appeared on the records of Botetourt County when he served as deputy sheriff. Daniel, born in 1749, was the son of William and Mary Trigg of Lunenburg and Bedford counties. In 1772 Fincastle County was formed out of part of Botetourt. Five years later in 1777, the new county of Montgomery was formed from Fincastle. In the year Montgomery County was formed, Daniel Trigg was selected to serve as justice of the county. He also served as a captain in the militia in Montgomery. This also was the year in which he wed Ann Smith in Bedford County. He brought his bride from Bedford County to the new county of Montgomery and continued his military service, becoming a colonel. In 1790 he was recommended to serve as coroner for Montgomery County.[\[117\]](#)

Daniel and Ann (Smith) Trigg had at least 12 children, eight sons and four daughters. Ann Smith Trigg died before 1796, when Daniel Trigg married a second time to Lucy Booker Clark,[\[118\]](#) by

by whom he had four more children. When Daniel Trigg died in Montgomery County in 1819 he owned 1,200 acres of land, 17 slaves and had an estate valued at \$7,999.83.[\[119\]](#)

Daniel and his two brothers, Stephen and Abram, were a notable family among the settlers in the New River area of Virginia. Stephen Trigg, the oldest of the three brothers having been born in 1742, was a merchant in Fincastle County. He married Mary Christian, who was the sister of William Christian, another prominent man of the area, who was himself married to a sister of Patrick Henry. It was William's wife, Ann Christian, who wrote about the "mightly frolick" at the wedding of Bird Smith and Rhoda Ingles in 1781. Stephen Trigg served as justice for Augusta, Botetourt and Montgomery counties, was a delegate to the Virginia assembly in 1774 and deputy clerk for Fincastle County in 1775. In 1777 he moved to Kentucky, as did many others in the New River area during these and subsequent times. In Kentucky he claimed 1,000 acres of land, but in 1782 "Colonel Stephen Trigg fell at the Battle of Blue Licks." He was described as having a "high degree of intelligence, with a splendid physique, and with chivalrous bravery, he had become noted as an Indian fighter." [\[120\]](#) A county in Kentucky is named for Stephen Trigg.

Another Kentucky county was named for William Christian who moved to Kentucky with his family in 1785. When Indians attacked their settlements, Christian led pursuing troops and was killed by Indians north of the Ohio River in 1786. [\[121\]](#)

The third Trigg brother, Abram, was born in about 1750 in Liberty, located in Bedford County, and was educated as a lawyer. He first appeared in the records of Fincastle County in about 1775, but is said to have started his legal career in Montgomery County. It was in about 1775 that Abram married Susannah Ingles, daughter of William and Mary (Draper) Ingles and sister of Rhoda Ingles, wife of Bird Smith. Abram served in various local public offices as well as in the local militia. In 1774 he was elected to the United States Congress, where he served until 1809. He also served as a delegate to the convention that ratified the United States Constitution in 1788.[\[122\]](#)

Young Bird Bowker Smith, 19, arrived in Montgomery County in 1780. This was three years after his sister, Ann, had married Daniel Trigg and moved there. The American Revolution had started in 1776, and the war had raged on in fits and starts. Now with Thomas Jefferson as governor of Virginia, southwestern Virginians were witnessing a year that brought two American defeats in South Carolina, the treason of Benedict Arnold, and the stunning American victory of the "Over the

Mountain Boys” at the Battle of King’s Mountain. Bird enlisted in the local militia and served in Captain Israel Lorton’s Company as a lieutenant. Lorton had received orders from Colonel Joseph Cloyd to raise thirty men to help defend the people on Clinch and Bluestone rivers.[\[123\]](#) For this service Bird was recognized in the Auditor’s Account (18), p. 682 under Militia “Richmond, Va. 19th May 1784, Warrant to Byrd Smith for his service in the militia of the state, 2 pounds, 1 shilling.” [\[124\]](#)

Sometime after January 10, 1781, Bird’s father, Guy Smith, died in Bedford County, Virginia, since that was the date of his will, proved in Bedford County on September 24, 1781. Guy expressed a wish in his will that one of his two sons, Bird or Guy, who was still a child of about 12, “shall possess the place whereon I now live in case of the death or marriage of my wife.” At the time Guy Smith was writing his will, three of his daughters had married, Guy had made a settlement on each newly married child. Fathers of brides at this point in history would negotiate the dowries of their daughters with the families of the grooms. By the terms of his will, the remaining five unmarried children would also receive a “child’s share” of his estate upon their marriage (both Bird and his sister Jenny married in the same year their father died, 1781). It would logically appear that the final settlement of Guy’s estate would have to wait until the death or remarriage of his wife, Ann Hopkins Smith, and until the minor children attained their majority or adulthood.

In Montgomery County, November 10, 1781, Bird Bowker Smith, 20, married William Ingles’ daughter, Rhoda, who was about 19. Rhoda Ingles brought land as dowry to her marriage, land that was deeded by her father to her new groom.[\[125\]](#) The couple’s wedding appears to have been a great party that may have lasted for several days, as was the frequent custom of the times in that area.

In 1782, again appearing on the Montgomery County records, Bird received “certain Negroes” [\[126\]](#) as directed by the will of his father-in-law, William Ingles,[\[127\]](#) who had died. By this time the young couple were the parents of a baby son, William Ingles Smith, named for his maternal grandfather. In

1784 William Christian sold some of his land to Abram Trigg and Bird Smith[\[128\]](#) and moved to Kentucky. The death of Stephen Trigg had delayed his move, but the opportunity to claim large amounts of acreage proved to be a great motivator. In 1785 William and Ann Christian sold 200 more acres of land to Bird. In the same year Bird stood as surety for the marriage of Mary “Polly” Ingles, the daughter of the deceased William Ingles and his wife, Mary, to John Grills.[\[129\]](#) John Grills may have been a relative of Eleanor Grills of Albemarle county, who married Thomas Ingles, Rhoda Ingles Smith’s older brother.

In 1784 a Bird Smith and his small family were shown as living in Cumberland County just east of Buckingham County and just west of Richmond. There was more than one person named Bird Smith in Virginia at the time and this may have been one of the other Bird Smiths. If this was Bird and Rhoda Smith, why they would be living in Cumberland County can only be speculated. It is known from the accounts of Guy Smith’s estate from 1783 through at least 1790 that the estate paid several legal fees involving courts in Buckingham County. It is possible that Bird returned temporarily to Cumberland, adjacent to Buckingham County, to take care of legal problems involving the estate of his father, Guy Smith. If this was Bird and Rhoda, however, the family was soon back in southwestern Virginia.

Bird Smith served in various public capacities in Montgomery County. In the mid 1780s, he served as road overseer,

while in 1786 he was the deputy clerk for the county. On the Montgomery County personal property tax roll for 1787 Bird, who was about 26, is shown as paying taxes on six slaves (three under the age of 16 and three over the age of 16), 11 horses and/or mules and 12 head of cattle.[\[130\]](#)

Before 1790 he was a justice for Montgomery County and was captain of the 2nd Troop of militia cavalry. In 1792, Christiansburg was established in honor of William Christian. Bird Smith was made one of the trustees for the newly formed community. Soon thereafter Bird began to sell his land, 160 acres in 1793 and 183 acres in 1797, although he also bought 100 acres in 1797.[\[131\]](#) Meanwhile, back in Bedford County, Bird “of Montgomery County” and his brother Guy “of Bedford County” as “ devisees of Guy Smith, dec’d” [\[132\]](#) sold 300 acres of land on Falling Creek in 1793. This is some 12 years after the death of their father by which time Guy had reached adulthood and his majority. In 1805

Bird, along with Daniel Trigg, his brother-in-law, and James Reid, his son-in-law, was selected to evaluate the estate of a neighbor.[\[133\]](#)

While Indian threats were gone from this area, things were not always quiet. At one point there were some voting irregularities, but the original papers that might tell what happened are missing from the folder at the Virginia Historical Society in Richmond. In Mary Kegley’s book, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, however, she relates what apparently occurred. Abram Trigg, Rhoda Ingles Smith’s brother-in-law, was a candidate in the spring of 1793 for United States Congress. Running against him was Francis Preston of the various prominent and wealthy Prestons, who incidentally were relatives of James Patton, who was killed years before in the raid at Draper’s Meadows in 1755. Perhaps fearing that his brother Francis might lose the election, Captain William Preston, an officer in the federal army, brought a troop of his soldiers to the Courthouse in Christiansburg, and interfered with the election by causing a great disturbance around the courthouse and terrorizing the voters. One of the soldiers “struck and knocked down one of the justices of the court, without any just provocation.” It is entirely possible that justice might have been Bird Smith who, at least in 1790, was serving as a justice of the court. Bird Smith, according to the index of the folder with the missing papers, was one of those who was to give a disposition concerning the matter, so it may be presumed that Bird was at the Christiansburg courthouse on that day.

Since votes in that day were usually cast by a voice vote, it is not difficult to see how Preston’s soldiers might intimidate voters. When Francis Preston was apparently elected, the Trigg camp violently voiced their disapproval in the form of petitions, including one to George Washington. What exactly happened as a result of the petitions is unknown, but on “March 4, 1797 Abram Trigg was elected to serve in Congress and remained there until March 3, 1809.” [\[134\]](#)

Education was not neglected, and there is evidence that families like the Christians who could afford to hire tutors for their children. The social graces were also considered, and dancing instructors were hired to teach the young charges. The beginning of the present institution of Washington and Lee University was founded nearby in 1749 by Scotch-Irish settlers and offered more educational opportunities to the youth of the area.

By 1805 Bird and Rhoda Smith, who were in their middle 40s, decided to leave Virginia, as the birth of their 13th and last child, Mary, is recorded not in Virginia but in Kentucky. It can only be speculated why Bird and Rhoda Smith migrated to Kentucky, but there are indications of both personal and environmental (political and

economical) factors. The impact of the 1755 raid on Draper's Meadows and the subsequent captivity and death of members of the Ingles and Draper families should not be lightly dismissed. The flight of Mary Draper Ingles to Bedford County after the event indicates the trauma that the raid caused her. The prolonged captivity of her son, Thomas, and the death of two of her children should have had an affect on the children who were born afterwards and grew up hearing the stories. This event therefore might have caused Rhoda Ingles Smith to be reluctant to move to an area that could expose her to a like experience. During the early part of their marriage, Kentucky

Sir
Westfork Oct^r 2^o 1797
I am using all the industry I can to get the money
so long due you and shall shortly be able to pay you with
Interest. Thanks for the kind indulgence given me. I mean to
hope you will not require me to try more expence as you
will be sure to receive your money long before it can
be recovered
I am Sir your obed^t
Burd Smith

Francis Preston Esq.

1797
of
Preston
to
Burd Smith



Bird Smith Note to Francis Preston

was still suffering from Indian attacks. Despite friends and relatives moving to Kentucky, the Smiths remained in Virginia.

Yet Virginia itself was in a state of decline. Simply considering the large families that were being born, outward migration would have had to occur, but now tobacco had finally depleted the fields of nutrients in the Tidewater and Piedmont areas of eastern Virginia. The plantations and farms were no longer able to support the families and the slaves who lived on them.

Another factor that led to the decline of Virginia was the stratification of Virginia society that had started with the very first immigrants. Not fleeing a culture or religion that they disdained, like the Puritans or Quakers, the early Virginia settlers were quick to recreate the more stratified society that existed in England. This stratification of Virginia society was reinforced when tobacco became the cash crop and thus the most important crop. Growing tobacco requires a large work force and Virginia was short of manpower. At first, white indentured servants were used as a labor force, but like the white settlers, they fell to the many diseases indigenous to Tidewater Virginia. Afro-American slaves, however, were able to survive and work in the climate so adverse to the European worker.

Thus Afro-American slaves grew in importance in Virginia in response to the need for a work force. Besides the obvious ethical problems that exist with any form of slavery, many regarded slavery by its nature to provide an inefficient work force, which is doubtlessly true. Regarding the decline of Virginia at this time, the main negative force of slavery seems more to be its effect in causing a re-enforcement of stratification of the society that existed before slavery.

A very successful short-term solution to the problem of Virginia's work force for growing its cash crop of tobacco, slavery brought prosperity to Virginia's tobacco growers. What works in one circumstance, however, can be a disaster when circumstances change. It is a given in human nature that there is a reluctance to change what is perceived as a very successful mode of thinking or behavior even when circumstances have changed. Too much success may create stasis: a tendency to keep using old solutions for new problems. The soil depletion from growing tobacco required new solutions.

Resistance to change caused Virginia to lack the flexibility to change when the need arose, such as when the soil was depleted. It caused Virginia to ignore the need for an educated population, which could have solved many of its problems. Before the American Revolution, the Anglican ministers of the local parishes educated the children of the Virginian gentry. Many of these rectors were holders of bachelor and even doctoral degrees from universities and colleges like Cambridge. With the American Revolution, the Anglican church fell into disfavor and governmental support of the ministers was eliminated. Consequently, the educational efforts of the ministers were lost.

Across the Blue Ridge mountains in western Virginia, the settlers, being mostly Scotch-Irish and German immigrants, were very different from the Virginians of the Tidewater and Piedmont. These settlers could have been a valuable asset, an infusion of new blood for Virginia. The settlers instead, finding little to support their needs,

which included strong support of education, stopped only for a generation or so and passed on south out of Virginia. The passing of this valuable talent was caused by attitudes of the older parts of Virginia. Those who held the power were in the eastern part of the state, still focused on past glories of colonial and revolutionary Virginia, and the role of their ancestors in those pivotal times. These people were not at all willing to share their power with those late comers across the Blue Ridge mountains. One cannot but wonder what the political repercussions would have

been if Transmonte Virginians, beyond the Blue Ridge, had not had new lands to go to, but had to stay and deal with the eastern Virginians.

Events apart from Virginia probably also effected the decision to migrate. In the first few years of the nineteenth century, westward migration was picking up with the support of the American government. In March 1803, Congress passed legislation providing for the sale of all uncommitted public lands in the Mississippi Territory, and in April the United States purchased the Louisiana Territory from France. The Louisiana Purchase doubled the size of the United States. The port of New Orleans was extremely important to Western settlers as a means to get their cash crops to market. In the same month as the Louisiana Purchase, Spain restored to American traders the right of deposit at the port of New Orleans. [\[135\]](#) Without a doubt new opportunities were ripe for the taking in the West.

Immigrants from southwestern Virginia had three common choices in their migration: to go to North Carolina, to go to Tennessee, or to go to Kentucky. Settlers had arrived in eastern Tennessee by the time of American Revolution as the Valley of Virginia directed the pioneers into that area in their search for land. This migration path was the one chosen by Rhoda's brother, Thomas Ingles. Some southwestern Virginians had settled in northwestern North Carolina as early as the 1750s, fleeing the Indian attacks of the French and Indian War. Even Daniel Boone had settled his family for a time in northwestern North Carolina. The Great Wagon Road traced its way from Pennsylvania through the Great Valley of Virginia, crossed Ingles Ferry in southwestern Virginia, and ended in North Carolina. Many families, especially Scotch-Irish families, followed this path to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, by the time of the American Revolution, including the Scotch-Irish family of Andrew Jackson. Now, thirty years after the Revolution the most promising frontier lay in Kentucky and middle Tennessee.

Without doubt, however, the single most important factor that might have influenced the Smiths' decision to move would probably have been the death of Bird's mother, Anne Hopkins Smith. The probate records concerning the estate of Guy Smith of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, continued until 1803, which is an indication that Anne Smith lived until about that time. The single best indicator that a Smith family would soon move seems to be the death of the last parent, in this case Anne Smith. Once the last parent died, any estate was settled, the assets were disbursed, and the children had no legal responsibilities that might detain them in the old area. This would especially be the case for an eldest son, such as Bird Bowker Smith, who would have the most legal responsibility.

Bird, Rhoda and their family migrated to Tennessee through Kentucky. The Smith family may have settled temporarily in Kentucky since their 13th and last child, Mary, was born in that state. The trip to Kentucky took the Smith family through the Cumberland Gap into southeastern Kentucky. When the Smiths decided to move on to Tennessee, it was then a relatively simple trek on down into the Nashville area. To get to middle Tennessee from eastern Tennessee was not so easy. The Appalachian Mountains were a formidable barrier from eastern Tennessee, and many settlers entered middle Tennessee through Kentucky. On the segment of the trip to Kentucky the Smiths were following the footsteps of many of their friends and relatives, who had left Virginia and moved into Kentucky

and sometimes on into Tennessee. Stephen Trigg and William Christian in 1785 had

preceded them into Kentucky. Relatives of Bird's cousin, Ann Smith Callaway, had migrated into Kentucky before the American Revolution. Even a sister of Thomas Jefferson had migrated with her husband and children into Kentucky.

The Smiths were part of a vast westward migration. From 1790 to 1800, the population of the United States had increased 35 percent from about four million to 5.3 million. Ten years later in 1810 the population had risen nearly two million to over seven million.^[136] The increase was not due so much to immigration as to the astonishing growth in the size of families. The children were not just being born, but were surviving to grow up and start new families. This is well illustrated by the birth of 13 children to Bird and Rhoda Smith. Left behind, the state of Virginia, which was the most populous state in 1800, would soon enter a period of declining population.

[86] Kegley, Mary B. and F. B. Kegley. *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters, the New River of Virginia in Pioneer Days, 1745–1800*. Orange, VA: Green Publishers, 1982, volume 1, p. 359. Note: There are numerous references to the Ingles and Drapers families in both volumes of this reference as well as many references to the Smith, Callaway, Patrick, Trigg and Christian families which intermarried.

[87] Hale, John P. *Trans-Allegheny pioneers, Historical Sketches of the First White Settlements West of the Alleghenies, 1748 and After*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, (1886) 1988, p. 13.

[88] Givens, Lula Porterfield. *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*. Pulaski, VA: B.D. Smith Printers, n.d.

[89] Dabney, *Virginia, the New Dominion*, p. 95.

[90] *Ibid.*, p. 92.

[91] Hale, *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, p. 17.

[92] Ibid., p. 14.

[93] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 18.

[94] Kegley, F.B., *Kegley's Virginia Frontier*, p. 194.

[95] Ibid., p. 352.

[96] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 18.

[97] Bettie Robertson/Robinson's family consisted of her mother, Esther, six brothers and a sister Ann.

[98] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 18.

[99] See *Follow the River* by James Alexander Thom for a “novel based on the true ordeal of Mary Ingles”; a television movie made from this novel was aired nation wide in April 1995.

[100] Sometimes this woman is referred to as being German.

[101] For the most complete description of the events at Draper's Meadows in 1755 see Steele, Roberta Ingles and Andrew Lewis Ingles, eds. *Escape from Indian Captivity, the Story of Mary Draper Ingles and son Thomas Ingles as told by John Ingles, Sr.* Radford, VA: Commonwealth Press, 1969 (from manuscript written by John Ingles, Sr., son of Mary Ingles and younger brother of Thomas Ingles); see also Hale, John P. *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*. Bowie, MD: Heritage Books, (1886) 1988. This was written by the son of one of Mary's daughters.

[102] *Escape from Indian Captivity*, p. 19–20.

[103] Hale, *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, p. 12

[104] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 33, 17.

[105] Chalkley, Lyman. *Chronicles of the Scotch-Irish settlement in Virginia, extracted from the original court records of Augusta County, 1745–1800*. Baltimore, Genealogical Publishing Co., 1965, p. 87.

[106] Hale, *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, p. 258.

[107] *Ibid.*, pp. 122–123.

[108] “At times, the infant Kentucky settlements seemed near extinction as many settlers fled eastward to safety (from Indians). George Rogers Clark...may have saved Kentucky by his 1778–1779 invasion of the territory north of the Ohio River and his later expeditions against the Indian tribes living in that area. While Clark never succeeded in taking Detroit, he did capture Lieutenant Governor Hamilton, the British commander at Detroit, who directed the Indian attacks in the west.” *Our Kentucky, a Study of the Bluegrass State*, James C. Klotter, ed., n.p.: The University Press of Kentucky, 1992, p. 77).

[109] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 9.

[110] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, p. 102.

[111] *Ibid*, pp. 144–145.

[112] *Ibid*, pp. 171, 169.

[113] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 17.

[114] Note the different spelling of the surname, Callaway. It sometimes is spelled Calloway, other times it is spelled Callaway. One might argue that these indicate different families, and that might be so, but while a given family might

consistently spell its name the same way, county clerks and other public officials, including census takers, probably would not have been so consistent. In any event, the biggest problem was simply that frequently “a” appears to be a “o” when people look at others' writings.

[115] Givens, *Highlights in the Early History of Montgomery County, Virginia*, p. 33.

[116] Ackerly, Mary Denham and Lula Eastman Jeter Parker. *Our Kin, the Genealogies of Some of the Early Families Who Made History in the Founding Development of Bedford County, Virginia*. Harrisonburg, VA: C. J. Carrier Co., 1976, pp. 310–311.

[117] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley. *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, p. 370.

[118] Note that since Bowker was sometimes spelled Booker, it is possible that Lucy Booker Clark was some sort of relative of the Smiths.

[119] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1., pp. 274–276.

[120] *Ibid.*, v. 1, pp. 370–372.

[121] The three counties, Callaway, Trigg and Christian, are located one next to the other in western Kentucky.

[122] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, pp. 274–276.

[123] *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 237.

[124] Papers of Mary McClellan O'Hair of Coleman County, Texas, granddaughter of Juliet Lewis Smith McClellan.

[125] Kegley, Mary B. and F. B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, p. 359: “Bird (or Byrd Smith) left Botetourt County in March 1772 and went to what is now Tazewell County to look for lands for a permanent residence. He had a family, and the land he viewed belonged to Colonel William Ingles, who refused to let him settle there, but agreed for him to purchase the property. Smith settled anyway, and lived there twelve years without paying remuneration. Ingles devised the tract to his daughter Rhoda who became the wife of Bird Smith.” Bird Bowker Smith, who was born in 1761, could not possibly have been the above described “Bird Smith” as he would have been only 11 years old in 1772.

[126] There were not a large number of slaves in southwestern Virginia since hemp, not tobacco, was the main crop grown. The larger number of slaves were found in the Tidewater and Piedmont areas of eastern Virginia.

[127] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, p. 358.

[128] *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 339.

[129] *Ibid.*, v. 1, pp. 314, 351.

[130] *The 1787 Census of Virginia*. Compiled by Netti Schreiner-Yantis and Florene Speakman Love. Springfield, VA: Genealogical Books in Print, p. 451.

[131] *Ibid.*, v. 1, pp. 292, 108, 107, 115, 210, 314–318.

[132] Wulford, *Smith of Virginia*, v. 2, p. 66.

[133] Kegley, Mary B. and F.B. Kegley, *Early Adventurers on the Western Waters*, v. 1, p. 362.

[134] *Ibid.*, v. 1, p. 275.

[135] *The Almanac of American History*. Edited by Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1993, p. 178.

[136] Ibid., pp. 156, 174, 191.