

ROYAL OAK VIRGINIA

By: Lawrence J. Fleenor, Jr.
Copyright and All Rights Reserved
Big Stone Gap, Virginia
June 2019

There are several threads of history that weave themselves together at Marion, Virginia. This town is on the Wilderness Road, the most significant route of travel in the Eastern United States. It connected the Indians of the Northeast with the Midwest, and served as the main route of migration for the Europeans who were arriving at the port of Philadelphia.⁽¹⁾ The rich bottomlands at the junction of Hungar's Mother's Creek coming in from the northwest and the Middle Fork of the Holston River had been settled in prehistory by Indians and Europeans before records other than oral history began.⁽²⁾

On the early 18th Century the French were aggressively expanding their fur trading interests in the interior of North America. They completely bisected the present United States with settlements running from the St. Lawrence River to Lake Ontario to the Alleghany River to its union with the Monongahela River, where they built Fort Duquesne at present Pittsburgh.⁽³⁾ These extended down the Ohio and Mississippi to New Orleans, with outposts even on the Tennessee River at present Nashville and Knoxville. The Monongahela comes very close to touching the headwaters of the Greenbrier River near Morgantown, West Virginia, and provided them passage into it. The French translation of Greenbrier is Ronceverte. That valley runs parallel to the Valley of Virginia, and the passes between them provided routes of war parties going in both directions during the French and Indian War.⁽⁴⁾

King George II became alarmed at these developments. The French settlements threatened to isolate those of the English along the Atlantic Coast. He sought to protect his settlements in Tidewater Virginia by settling large numbers of Scots-Irish in the Valley of Virginia, who would serve as a buffer to protect the English from the French and their allies, the Indians. As a direct result of this policy, in 1732 Col. William Beverly was awarded a 15,000 acre patent which he tried to locate near present Harrisonburg, only to find that he had to move his claim because Germans, who had valid title to that region, were already there. His patent was extended to 60,000 acres to encourage him to move his claim. He did do so, acquired what is now Augusta County, Virginia. This tract of land was officially named 'Beverly Manor', but unofficially was called 'The Irish Tract'.^(5, 6, 7, 8)

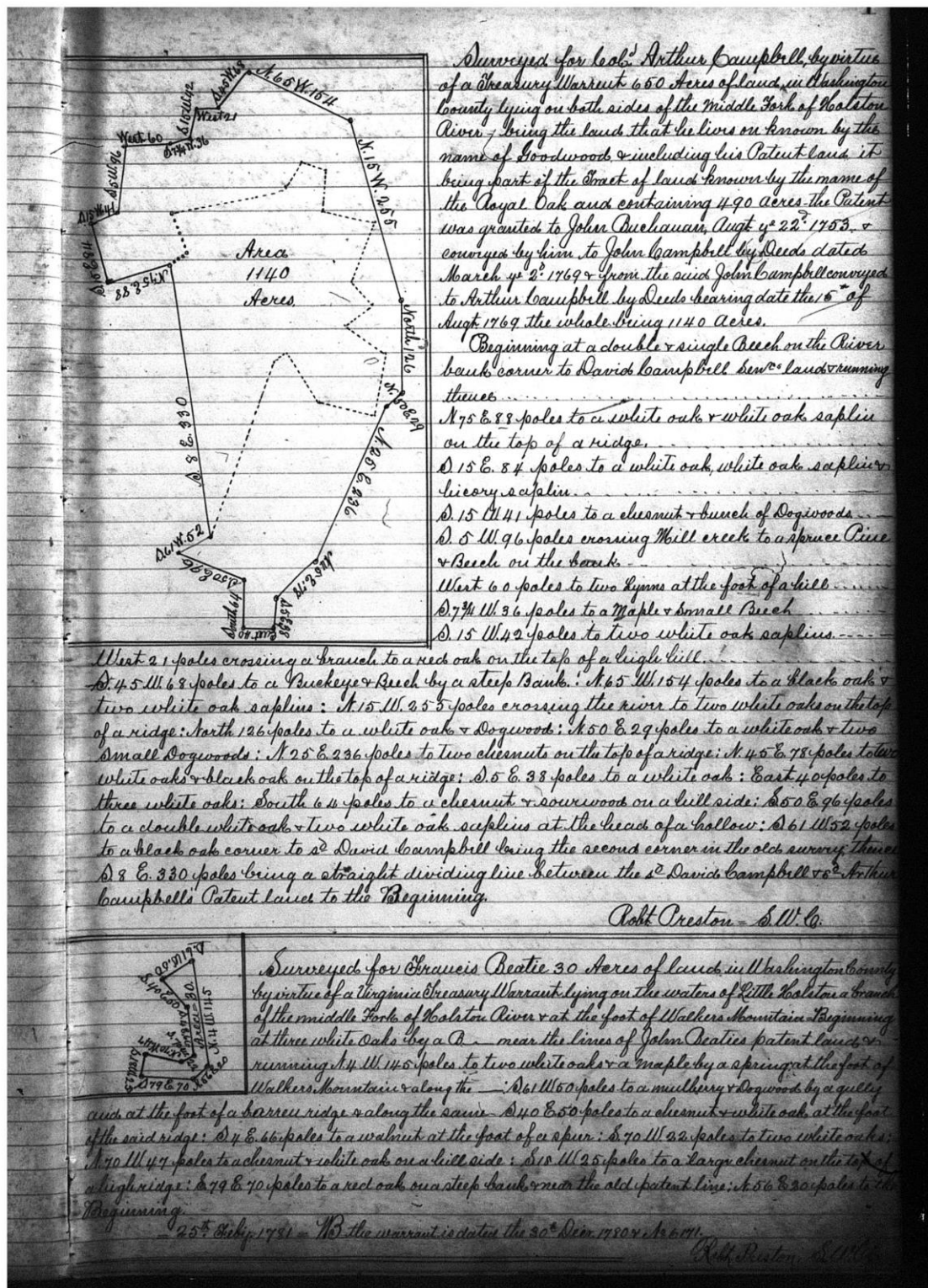
Among the Scots-Irish who settled in the Irish Tract was Col. Patrick Campbell Ist, who was born in Drumboden, Kilmachrenan, County Donegal, Ulster, Ireland.⁽⁹⁾ The genealogies available on line do not agree with each other. The Campbells had trouble keeping track of themselves due to frequent recycling of names, and of consanguinity, and often resorted to nicknames. However, one chart has Patrick as having been the father of Major Charles Campbell and of "White" David Campbell, who was the father of

Col. Arthur Campbell.⁽⁷⁾ Arthur was born Nov. 3, 1743 in the Irish Tract. During the French and Indian War, at age 15, he volunteered for the militia. In 1757 he was stationed at Fort Dickinson, which guarded a ford on the Cow Pasture River, on the trail that led from the Irish Tract to Warm Springs Valley, and then on to the Greenbrier. As part of the general offensive conducted by the French allied Indians, and which included Kerr's Creek near Lexington, the Wyandotte from southern Ontario attacked. Arthur and other militiamen were out picking plums, and he was wounded and captured. He was carried to either northern Ohio or Detroit. There he was adopted by a chief, and for two years lived as an Indian. In 1759 he made his escape to approaching British forces, for whom he served as a guide. Upon his return to Virginia, Gov. Dinwiddie awarded him 1000 acres near Louisville, Kentucky for his service.^(10, 11, 12, 13, 4)

The period between the end of the French and Indian War and the beginning of the Revolution was fraught with difficult tensions in Southwest Virginia west of the New River. The Crown officially recalled the settlements, but the response was only partial. This caused increased tensions with the 'Northern Indians' (Shawnee, Delaware, Mingo, Iroquois), the 'Southern Indians' (Cherokee), the settlers, and the Royal Government of the colonies, and of England. It was a period of numerous and short lived treaties, and of shifting allegiances. Joseph Martin grew in influence as an intermediary between the colonial government of Virginia and the Cherokee, and Arthur Campbell between the government and the Northern Indians.^(11, 14)

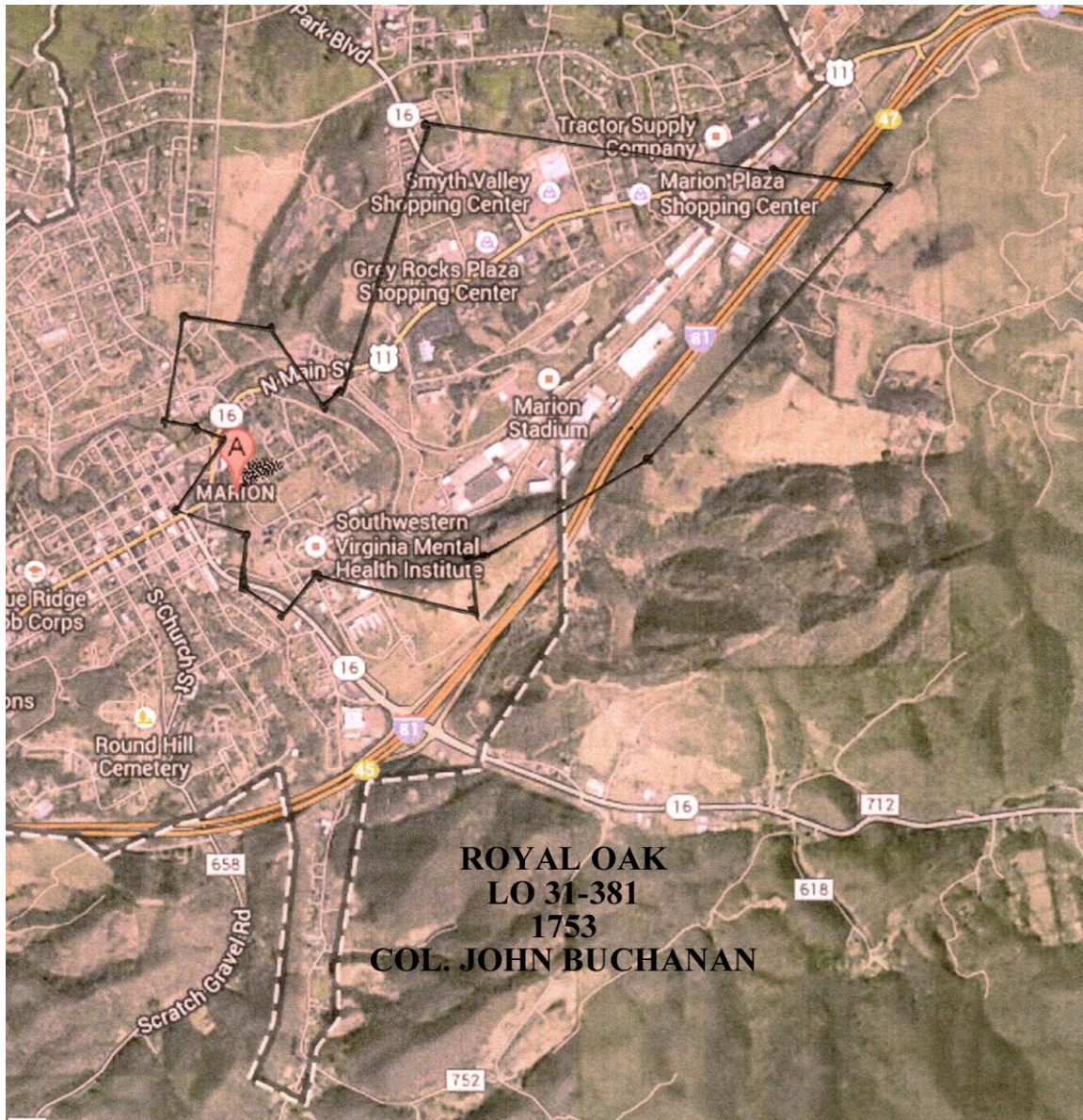
August 22, 1753 the Colony of Virginia granted to John Buchanan 740 acres (LO 31-381) "on the Indian River", which was the older name for the Middle Fork of the Holston. It specified that the place was known as Royal Oak.⁽¹⁶⁾ A second grant for this survey plus additional acreage (LO F-220) of 1782 mentions that this tract adjoined a previous grant to David Campbell, who was Arthur Campbell's father. Within the family he was known as "White" David. John was Arthur's third cousin. He also was the chief surveyor for the Loyal Company, which together with the Potomac Land Company, had been set up by King George II. The survey of 1782 continues to define this tract of land both by history of possession, but also by mets and bounds. March 2, 1769 Buchanan sold the land to John Campbell (precisely who this was is debatable), August 15, 1769 John Campbell sold the land to Arthur Campbell, and noted that it contained Arthur's original patent at this site, and further noted that he already lived on it, and that it has earlier been known as 'Royal Oak', but was as the time of the survey was known as 'Goodwood'. There is no date on this survey, but the change in the name from Royal Oak to Goodwood was a bit of Revolutionary War maneuvering. This presents a number of ambiguities, such as the date of the survey discussed above, the precise extended family relationships, and the date of the first Campbell to settle at the site of the confluence of Hungar's Mother's Creek and the Middle Fork of the Holston. However, this survey does match the second granting of this tract to Arthur in 1782 (LO F-220), along with the additional acreage he had obtained totaling 1,140 acres. He paid again for the grant, even though the survey referenced his ownership of the original patent. This showed that the Commonwealth considered the original patent to have become invalid. As for Buchanan, he was in the act of skimming the

cream off of the Loyal Company's land for himself. The 22rd of August 1753 he registered twelve patents whose deeds continue to exist at the Library of Virginia.(5, 7,2,16)



SURVEY OF ROYAL OAK TO ARTHUR CAMPBELL

However, there is no patent in the digitalized land patent / grants section of the Library of Virginia for David Campbell. Considering the political turmoil concerning land patents in Virginia in general, and specifically those west of the New River, and the political trouble the Loyal Company was in during and following the Revolution, and the havoc caused by the burning of Richmond in 1865, none of this is surprising.

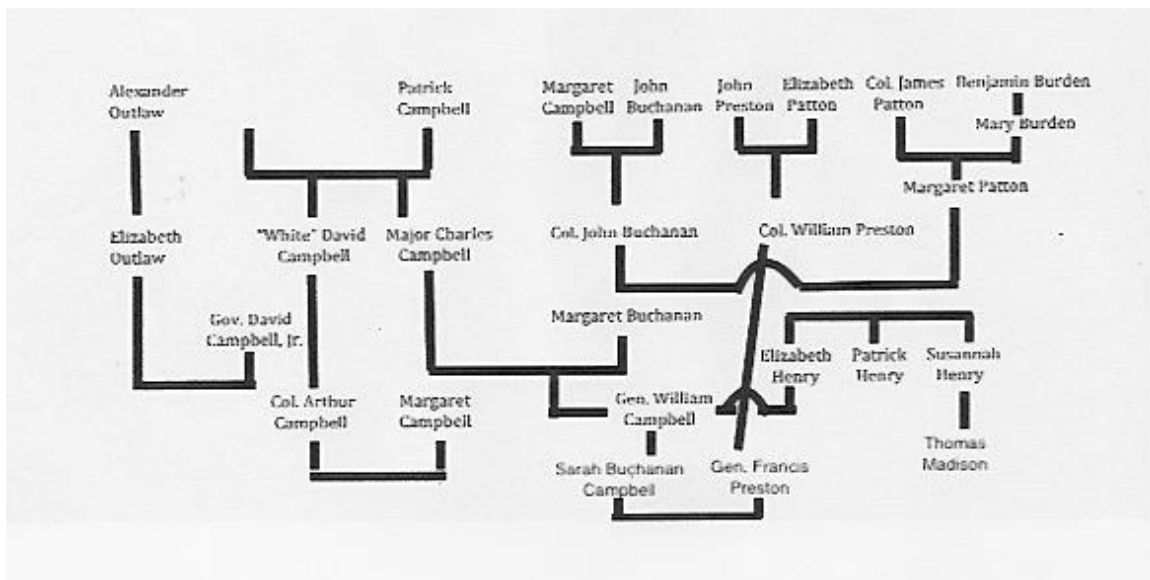


ROYAL OAK LOCATED ON A MODERN MAP OF MARION, VIRGINIA

What we can gather from all this is that the first generation of American Irish of the Irish Tract were deeply invested in British land policy in Virginia in the prelude of

the French and Indian War, and that they treated the land granted by King George II as their private domain. After that war, they openly violated the terms of the treaty that ended it, and vigorously began to acquire the most desirable land in it for themselves. We will never know if “White” David Campbell ever lived on his land at Royal Oak, but we do know that Arthur Campbell did. Arthur married his niece, Margaret, the daughter of Major Charles Campbell. Charles surveyed for the Patton Expedition of 1748, and took for himself the great salt beds of present Saltville.⁽⁷⁾

Arthur Campbell became deeply embroiled in Revolutionary War politics. He fought the Shawnee in Lord Dunmore’s War of 1774, which was an act to defend the settlements of Southwest Virginia, and an act of defiance against the Crown. War broke out in Boston immediately afterward. The British countered with what the rebels called “The Intolerable Acts”, and in January 1775 the rebel settlers of Southwest Virginia met at the Lead Mines at Austinville and wrote the first document advocating armed rebellion against the Crown. It was entitled “The Fincastle Resolutions”. Among the signers were General William Campbell, Col. Arthur Campbell, and Col. William Preston (who was the father-in-law of Sarah Buchanan Campbell, General Campbell’s wife). General William Campbell was the son of Major Charles Campbell and Margaret Buchanan Campbell. The Fincastle Resolutions were sent to George Washington, who was a delegate to the First Continental Congress. This was before the Battles of Lexington and Concord.^(17,18) All these Campbells lived in or around Royal Oak.



GENEALOGY OF THE SCOTS-IRISH FROM THE 'IRISH TRACT'
WHO WERE CONNECTED TO ROYAL OAK

The oak tree was worshipped by the Druids of the ancient Celtic religion, and also by the pagan Germans. It became the symbol to the British Royal Family. It often stood in the town squares and militia drilling grounds of England and of the American English Colonies. Front Royal, Virginia was named after the ancient oak that graced that community's militia drill field. Either John Buchanan or David Campbell named their settlement on the Middle Fork of the Holston "Royal Oak" out of loyalty to King George II because of his Loyal Co. grant. Out of revolutionary zeal they renamed it "Goodwood", and then "Marion" after Francis Marion, the famous Swamp Fox of South Carolina.⁽⁷⁾

The Campbell's political rebirth as fire breathing rebels was crowned by General William Campbell, who led the Over Mountain Men in their pivotal victory at the Battle of Kings' Mountain over loyal British-American forces in 1780.⁽⁷⁾

Bibliography

- 1 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – Athawominee, The Great Warrior's Path
- 2 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – "Hungry Mother" - <http://bigstonegappublishing.net/HungryMother.pdf>
- 3 – Fort Duquesne - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fort_Duquesne
- 4 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – "Kerr's Creek" - <http://bigstonegappublishing.net/THE%20KERR%20CREEK%20MASSACRES.pdf>
- 5 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – "James Patton" - <http://bigstonegappublishing.net/JAMES%20PATTON.pdf>
- 6 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – "Three Groups of Settlers In Southwest Virginia- the Scots-Irish" - <http://bigstonegappublishing.net/otherwritings.html>
- 7 – Fleenor, Lawrence J – History Tours by the Southwest Virginia Museum and State Park at Big Stone Gap, Virginia – The Saltville Tour, B – The Kings' Mountain Tour – in their digital collections on site
- 8 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – "The Tate Family" - <http://bigstonegappublishing.net/otherwritings.html>
- 9 - Col. Patrick Campbell I - <https://www.geni.com/people/Colonel-Patrick-Campbell-I/6000000001013134075>
- 10 – Col. Author Campbell - <https://www.geni.com/people/Arthur-Campbell-Indian-Scout/6000000009899092242>

- 11 – Col. Author Campbell - Wikipedia – Arthur Campbell -
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Campbell_\(Virginia\)](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arthur_Campbell_(Virginia))
- 12 – Summers, Lewis Preston – History of Southwest Virginia and Washington Co.
- 13 - Wyandotte Indians - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Wyandot_people
A synonym for the Hurons of southern Ontario
- 14 – Fleenor, Lawrence J. – “General Joseph Martin” -
<http://bigstonegappublishing.net/GENERAL%20JOSEPH%20MARTIN.pdf>
- 15 – survey that was freely circulating on the internet in 2013, without a statement of origin, but supplied to me by Edgar A. Howard
- 16 – Library of Virginia on line -
https://lva.primo.exlibrisgroup.com/discovery/search?vid=01LVA_INST:01LVA&lang=en
- 17 – Fincastle Resolutions - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Fincastle_Resolutions
- 18 – Fincastle Resolutions - <https://sarfinres.wixsite.com/fincastleresolutions/fincastle-resolutions>