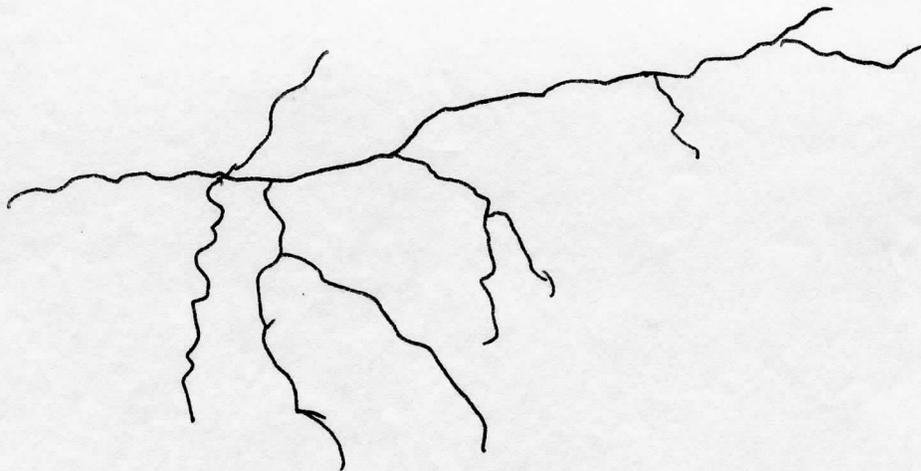
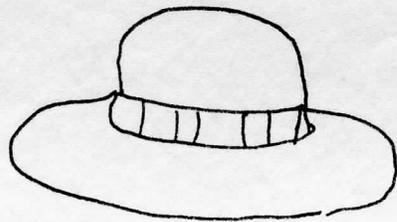


Facts and Fiction
about



John Irvin, one of seven brothers, who with his wife, Mary Boyd, in company with the McDowells, McCunes, Mitchells, Campbells, McElroys and others, set sail from Londonberry, Ireland, on the 9th day of May, 1729, aboard the ship "George and Anne" (from Boyd: Irvines and Their Kin). This ship made the voyage without storm or tempest, but whales attacked it enroute, and Abraham, the first child of John and Mary B. Irvin, was born in mid-Atlantic. These families all landed at Philadelphia and settled in the same Pennsylvania county, where the Irvins lived until seven other children were born. Upon hearing glowing reports of the frontier parts of Virginia, John made an exploratory trip to Virginia. He found the reports true and before returning to Pennsylvania he selected as a site for a future home Hat Creek in (then) Brunswick County, Virginia. A year later, he together with his family and two servants, returned to the Virginia site previously selected and established himself and family in the house, built on his first trip to the area, about one mile north east of this church near the banks of Little Falling River. This was between 1736 and 1739.

John Irvin found no white man within thirty five or forty miles of Hat Creek except one old man who soon died and was buried by Irvin near Little Falling River in compliance with a promise he made to the old man on his first trip to Virginia.

Pioneer John and Mary Irvin had the following children:

1. Abraham, who married a granddaughter of John Caldwell of the near by Cub Creek colony. Abraham was killed during the Revolution, 1777, at the battle of Dumphries, Virginia.
2. Robert or Robin, who married Mary South "in the reign of George III"
3. William, who became a Presbyterian minister and was a moving figure in the establishment of Liberty Hall, afterwards Washington and Lee University; and the seminary afterwards realized as Hampden-Sidney College. William married Elizabeth Holt of Albermarle County, Virginia and they were the progenitors of
 - 1 lawyer
 - 1 judge of Supreme Court
 - 1 judge of Circuit Court
 - 1 Congressman
 - 1 governor of Wisconsin Territory
 - 1 County Magistrate
 - 4 daughters
4. Elizabeth, who did not marry. She is buried in the church cemetery.
5. Margaret
6. Nancy Ester All married McElroy brothers and moved to Kentucky. They produced many worthwhile citizens, including the late Governor Knott of Kentucky fame.
7. Mary
8. Major John, who married Mary Ann Tucker of Amherst County, Virginia, and by her had twelve children, from whom came a host of descendents, including

many present day folks of this area. Rev. Dr. Lawrence I. Stell, who broadcasts from Charlotte, N. C. each Sunday night, Pendleton Clark, the Lynchburg architect and Nancy Faulkner, the Lynchburg-New York author of children's books are among the present day descendants of Major John and Mary Ann Tucker Irvin.

Sam and Moll were the first colored citizens of Hat Creek. They came as servants of pioneer John and Mary.

Nancy, the young daughter of John was an Indian captive in Pennsylvania before the family moved to Hat Creek.

Hat Creek Church was built on this site soon after the first Irvines arrived. A little later the celebrated Gilbert Tennent of "Log College" fame came here from Pennsylvania, assisted in organizing this Presbyterian church, and remained in the colony for one year to help it get off to a good start. The church has seen an unbroken history of at least two hundred and thirteen years. The present building, the fourth structure on the same site, was erected in 1846.

About a half mile from this church, on a prominent knoll overlooking Little Falling flats, there lived a family of Hect---. While the colony was still in its infancy, marauding Indian bands massacred this entire family. As a result, a fort was built on the near by John Irvin place. This fort stood through two centuries until persons, still alive, remember it in detail. A sketch of this fort has been reproduced by O.C. Elliott.

Soon after Hat Creek was colonized, Thomas Daugherty owned large tracts of land at the headwaters of Hat Creek. Thomas' three year old daughter, Sarah, was stolen from her father's house by the Indians. Thomas and his friends and neighbors searched diligently day and night, but could find no trace of the tribe who had stolen the child. The sorrowful father finally gave up the search when he was told the child had been scalped by the Indians.

Twenty years passed. The government affected a truce with the tribe of Indians who had stolen little Sarah Daughterty. One stipulation of the truce was that all white captives must be returned by the Indians to the nearest of kin. News reached Thomas Daugherty that his Sarah was still alive and had been reared as an Indian girl in their tribal camp. Immediately the jubilant Thomas and his neighbors set out to find the child who had now certainly grown to young womanhood. With mixed emotions Thomas came upon the sought after tribe beyond the mountains to the west. As the men neared the tribal home, the Indian braves and their women drew up in array before the approaching white men. The anxious father scanned the group of Indian women for a glimpse of his daughter Sarah. He saw only rough, weather hardened, red skinned faces. But he quickly stepped forward and called, "Sarah". Not a figure before him moved. He repeated the address. Still no response. Thomas Daugherty's heart sickened. He and his own had suffered long and bitterly in the loss of Sarah. He had walked many weary miles in glad anticipation of once again seeing and reclaiming her. Now he must face the sad fact that she was not among the Indians before him. He must take this sorrowful news back to his waiting family. After repeated efforts to recognize his daughter and seeing no resemblance to a white girl in anyone of the assemblage, Thomas Daugherty and his friends turned their weary steps homeward. When they had journeyed some distance, Thomas, thinking over the baby days of his little Sarah, recalled how she liked to lend her infant voice as the family sat around the fireplace each evening singing hymns, as was the custom in many of these pioneer homes. He recalled that she was especially fond of one particular hymn and while very young, learned to prattle, in her infant way, its words. Thinking of this, Thomas turned in his path and once again made his way back to the Indian village. Again the Indians drew up before him. With unsteady emotions, Thomas Daugherty stood apart before the Indian group and sang the first verse of the hymn Sarah had so loved as a child. When he had finished this verse, he stopped and listened. From the rear of the Indian group he heard the second verse of this beloved hymn being softly sung by an Indian maid. Thomas Daugherty found his Sarah. He reclaimed his own; brought her home and very soon the rough, red skin and black hair (braided) were replaced by the coloring and charm of a beautiful white woman of great promise. Sarah married her cousin, John Rodgers, a grandson of John Caldwell, of Cub Creek colony, and their daughter, Ann Phillips Rodgers, married Felix Grundy. Shortly after their marriage,

Ann and Felix went to live in the new Capitol, Washington, where Felix was in government service. The rules of protocol had not at that time been established in the infant republic and the lawmakers often found themselves in social and political situations which were baffling and difficult. Ann Rodgers Grundy, with instinctive Scotch-Irish grace and good sense, soon began to take the lead in unraveling such situations, and shortly "Ask Mrs. Grundy" became the way out for a host of fledgling Congressmen and Statesmen. After the expiration of his term in Washington, Felix and Ann Rodgers Grundy moved to Tennessee. In the face of much opposition and criticism, Mrs. Grundy established and conducted the first Sunday School in Nashville, Tennessee. Her grandson, John M. Bass, was recording secretary for the Tennessee Historical Society around the turn of the century.

The early settlers established a school and erected a building for same on the corner of the Hat Creek church grounds. From that day to the present time, Hat Creek has shown advanced interest in schools and local history records school buildings as having been located in a field on the farm of W. J. Elder, known as "Pine Tree Academy", on the farm of Robert Chaffin just south of his dwelling; in the woods to the rear of Harry Reynold's house; in the grove east of the village of Hat Creek, opposite Leon Dodd's house; in Miss Lou Smith's House now the home of Robert Chaffin; in the "home of Mr. Hammersley"; and in the village of Hat Creek proper. Often the ministers of the community were guardians of the intellectual torch and "Classical Academies" were conducted by them for the education of the youth of the area.

Hat Creek had a library Society in early 1819.

Nancy Hanks, Abraham Lincoln's mother, was born within sight of this church.

To Spring

Nature now her prime beholdeth,
Lillies doth begin to bloom,
She a pleasant year unfoldeth,
The air is filled with sweet perfume.

Flying o'er the vales and mountains,
Is beheld the winged bird,
Drinking from the crystal fountains,
While its melody is heard.

While the heart of man's distilling
Gladness from the Fountain Head,
While the great decrees fulfilling,
Which the Gods of Nature spread.

Seed time, nor the busy harvest
Summer, winter, day and night
Shall not cease to keep their circuit
Nor the Spring, before my sight.

____ William Irvin 17??--1855

Hat Creek settlers emigrated to North and South Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, Ohio, Texas, Missouri and on to the Pacific.

Throughout its more than two centuries of life Hat Creek has been a place of PEOPLE not THINGS. Some few of its citizens have passed into the World of Usefulness through the halls of fame, but a far vaster number have been recorded on Eternity's honor roll as good, plain honest folks whose value in the sight of God and man was stamina and character rather than possessions and gold.

JOHN IRVIN 2ND FAMILY ENTER THE VIRGINIA FRONTIER - NEAR HAI CREEK

CIRCA 1737



JOHN IRVIN

MARY BOYD IRVIN

ELIZABETH
NANCY ESTHER

ABRAHAM

JOHN

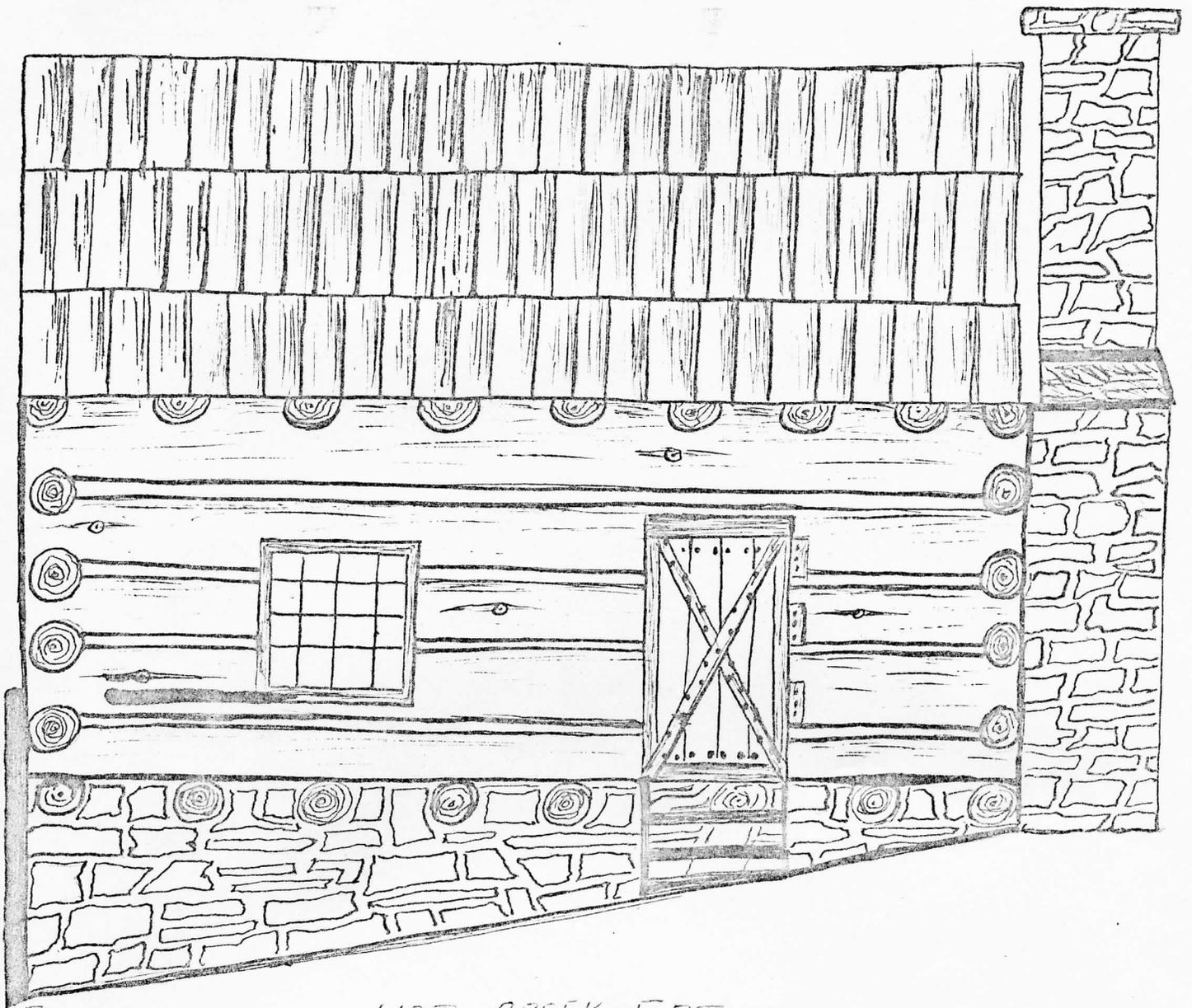
SAM

BABY-MARGARET

MOLL
MARY IRVIN

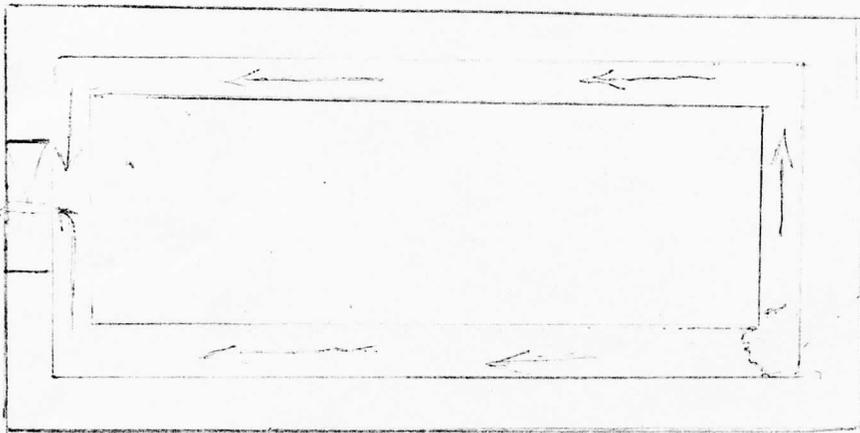
ROBERT

WILLIAM



HAT CREEK FORT

Door



BASEMENT FLOOR PLAN

spring

Wooden trough around basement floor with outlet under door - to carry off spring overflow

THE FORT

This fort was built by John Irvin, close to his pioneer home on the banks of Little Falling river, when there were very few white settlers in the area. It was built of heavy, hardwood logs on a rock wall, varying in height from six to ten feet. The building contained a first floor room similiar to that in any log cabin of the times, and a basement which served as a place of safety during Indian raids. In the center of the upper room floor was a concealed trap door or entrance to the cellar which could be fastened from the inside. This rock enclosed room was so constructed as to enable its occupants to live under siege for some time. There were no windows, making for safer defense. In one corner of the room was a spring, the overflow from which was carried off by a wooden trough running around the wall and emptying to the outside under the one heavily reinforced door that opened out, but which could be barred from the inside. Certain basic foods were kept stored in this room in preparation for an attack. There was no stockade around the building.

This fort stood for many years, until the early nineteen hundreds, being used in its latter years as a spring house for the family then living in "Irvindale", the old Irvin-Clark homestead. We have spent many hours as children playing in its cool recesses.