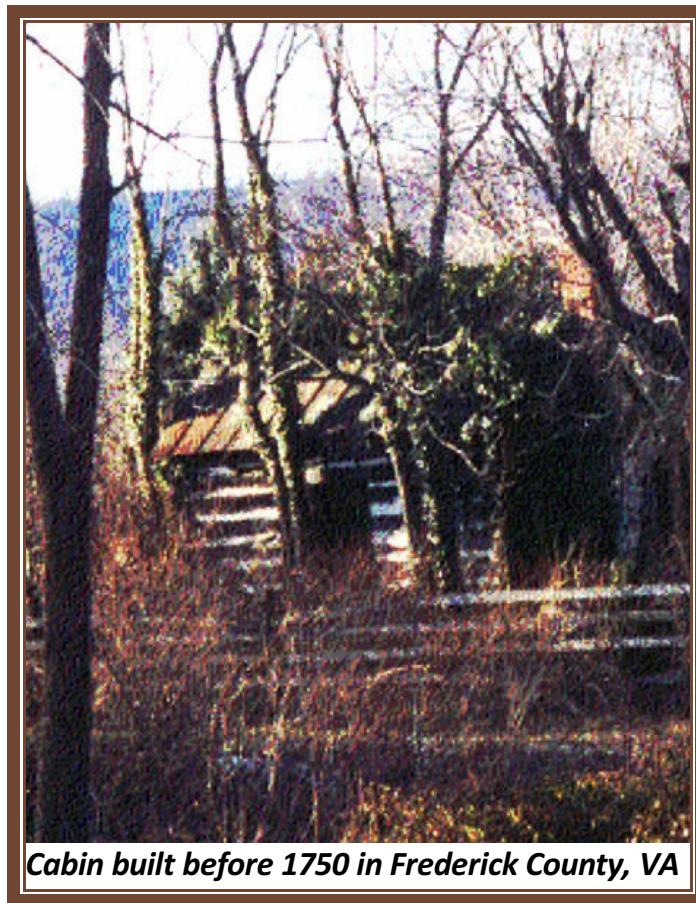


Pricketts, Connected Families, & Native Americans

by
Patricia Prickett Hickin



Winchester, Virginia
2016

Introduction

Recently it occurred to me that there was a lot of interaction between American Indians and people on the paternal side of my family, so I decided to compile all the relevant information I've accumulated over the years. As it turned out there were even more interactions than I'd realized.

Relationships ran the gamut – from humorous to horrifying; from marriages to massacres – there is even one family connection who was famously burned at the stake.

The first known interaction involves one Thomas Prickett (whether he's related to our Prickett line, I do not know, but I'm including that story as well). As Indians vanished from the East in the early nineteenth century so too, of course did the interactions

I hope you'll find the details that follow of interest, and that you will gain a deeper appreciation of the trials your ancestors endured so that we might live our own relatively easy lives.

First, a word about terminology. I think we can rest assured that our colonial ancestors never used the term "Native American." They were probably most likely to call them "savages" or "Indians" or "redskins" or "natives" or sometimes by their tribal names – or they used terms like "braves" and "squaws." I have used the term "Native American" in order to be politically correct and also because I like the rhythm of the title.

Next, a word about organization. I tell the stories in roughly chronological order, then geographical, and finally by surname. The dates following the name in the heading refer to the years of interactions between the subject and Indians.

I think it's important to show the relationship to our family and I have used our ancestor Capt. Jacob Prickett (1722-c1797), my four times great grand-father, and his wife, Dorothy Springer Prickett (1716-1785) as the lynchpins. I include his and Dorothy's ancestors, children, grandchildren, nieces, nephews, and their connections.

Jacob and Dorothy moved from New Jersey to Back Creek in Frederick County, Virginia, (now Berkeley County, West Virginia), probably in 1747. There they lived alongside others from New Jersey, most notably for our purposes Dennis Springer (1712-1760) and his wife, Ann Prickett Springer (1715-1778; she married a LaRue after Dennis died). There is no extant documentary proof, but it is ordinarily assumed that Jacob and Ann were siblings and that Dennis and Dorothy were also. I am making the same assumption in this paper. At or near the beginning of each new story I show how the person or family to be discussed is connected with Jacob and/or Dorothy.

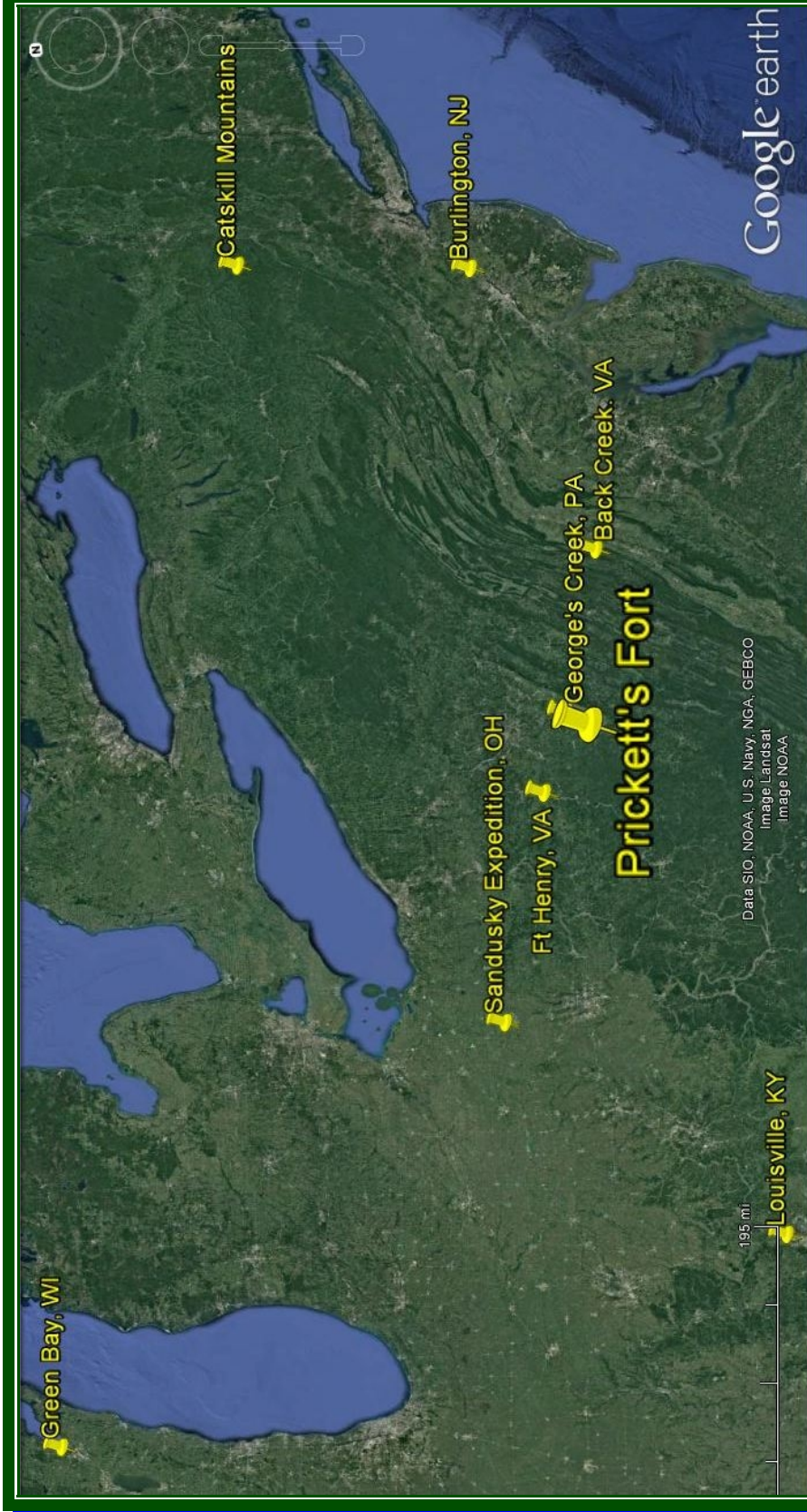
After the French and Indian War both families moved from Back Creek to southwestern Pennsylvania (thought at the time to be within the bounds of Virginia). A few years later, in 1771, Jacob and his family moved south up the Monongahela River to the area of present-day Prickett's Fort State Park.

Thanks go to my cousin, William Franklin "Bill" Bedwell for proof-reading this despite the heat of the summer and a broken air-conditioner.

I have tried to put quoted section within quotation marks but I fear I have not always done so.

Contents

Introduction	3
Map of some locations mentioned in text	6
The first Pricketts in America	7
NEW YORK - Van Meters - 1663	11
NEW JERSEY - Thomas Budd - 1678-88	13
- Benjamin Springer - 1747-1780	15
VIRGINIA - Van Meters in Va 1715-1774	19
Chief Logan, painting	24
VIRGINIA, MONONGAHELA	25
Pricketts; James Taylor - 1745	25
Jacob Prickett, Innocent Bozarth	26, 32
Isaac Beesley	34
James Leggett	36
MONONGAHELA. David Morgan 1757-1779	37
Horatio Morgan	42
Nathaniel Springer	43
Fort Henry, picture	44
VIRGINIA OHIO David Shepherd 1775-1782	45
KENTUCKY, OHIO Van Meters 1779-1810	49
PENNSYLVANIA, OHIO William Crawford 1782	53
William S. Jolliffe on Sandusky Expedition	58
Thomas Gaddis 1782	59
Chenoweth Massacre 1789	62
Levi Morgan 1791 ff	63
James Prickett	66
John Beasley 1790s	66
Josiah Prickett	69
Richard Prickett	69
Shawnee village, 1780, painting	74
William "Indian Billy" Dragoo	75
Typical frontiersman, painting	90
NEW ENGLAND to OHIO 1631-c1830	91
The Washburns, Nicholas and Cornelius	91
Unknown Washburn Girl 1790s	97
SOURCES	99

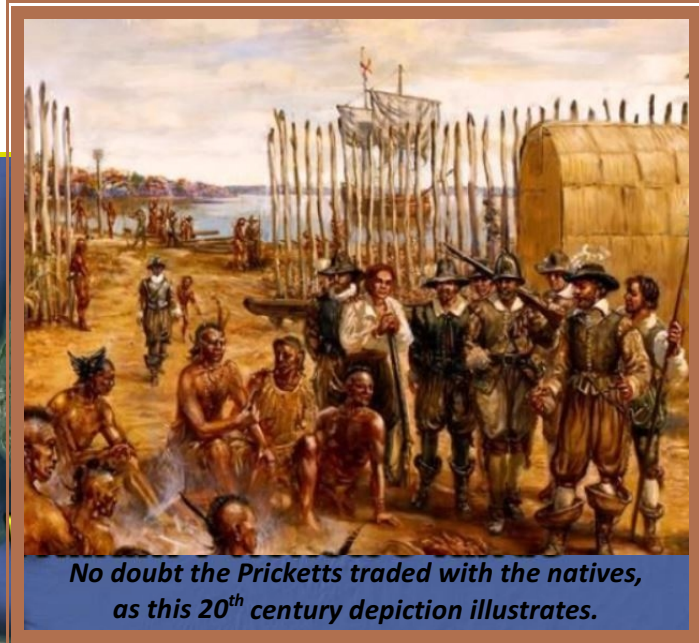
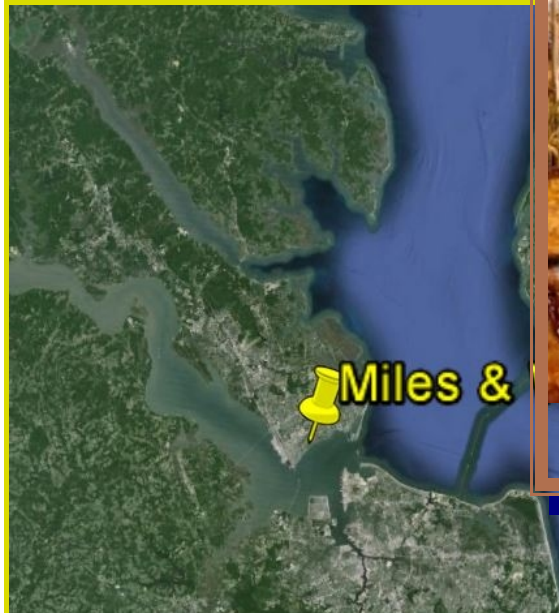


Some locations mentioned in the text

The first Pricketts in America

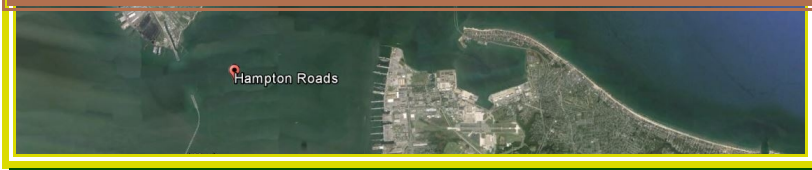
The first known Prickett to settle in the New World was Miles Prickett (c1591-1637), a baker of Canterbury, England, who migrated to Jamestown in 1610 and became salt maker to the Virginia colony. Apparently his brother William came too for they owned adjoining land on Hampton Roads near the Hampton-Newport News line. You can see approximately where on the maps above and at left.

Nothing is known about their interactions with the Indians except what can be inferred from the fact that a great many Indian artifacts have been found on the land they owned. Nor do we know much about the Prickett



No doubt the Pricketts traded with the natives, as this 20th century depiction illustrates.

Celeys was, of course, occupied by the Indians before the white man came. On the land now owned by him just west of Curle's Creek, Capt. J. C. Robinson has found many evidences of Indian occupancy. He has collected about one hundred and fifty arrow heads, thirteen spear heads, a hoe, several mortars, a pestle, and other Indian utensils. A few feet below the surface, Capt. Robinson discovered a clay bowl. A hole had been dug in the ground, the bowl deposited, and fresh dirt filled in on it. Marks on the bowl indicate that it had been molded by hand in a rush or grass basket and then baked. The arrow heads and spear heads are made of stone not native to these parts and, therefore, must have been brought from afar. There must have been a small Indian village where Capt. Robinson now lives, or perhaps a hunting lodge. It is known that one of the best deer stands in the county was near Capt. Robinson's house.



brothers. A Thomas and a John Prickett may have come on the same ship. William seems to have had a wife named Margery; otherwise we know nothing about him. William disappears, but both Miles and Margery are known to

have survived the **infamous Indian Massacre** of 1622. Miles returned to England soon thereafter, per-

haps because he was in failing health. His will, written on 30 November 1626, was probated on 30 June 1627. In it he mentions brothers John and Thomas and William's two children.

So it must have been another Thomas Prickett, who was killed east of Jamestown at "Warwick Squeak" (Warro-squoake Shire, renamed Isle of Wight County in 1637), in the Indian Massacre of 1622.

Wikipedia describes the event thusly: "Captain John Smith, though he had not been in Virginia since 1609 and was not a firsthand eyewitness, related in his *History of Virginia* that braves of the Powhatan Confederacy "came **unarmed into our houses with deer, turkeys, fish, fruits, and other provisions** to sell us." The Powhatans grabbed any tools or weapons available and killed all the English settlers they found, including men, women and children of all ages. Chief Opechancanough led a coordinated series of surprise attacks by the Powhatan Confederacy that killed 347 people, a quarter of the English population of Jamestown."



Artist'S depiction of 1622 massacre.

New York

The Van Meters (1663-)

(The Van Meters are connected with the Pricketts through Jacob and Dorothy's nephew Levi Springer (son of Dennis and Ann), whose second wife, Sarah Shepherd Duke, was the granddaughter of Elizabeth Van Meter Shepherd, who was the grand-daughter of Joost Jans Van Meteren and Sarah Du Bois, below. (For Van Meters in Virginia, Kentucky, and Ohio, 1715-c1810, see further below.)

The first Van Meters (Van Meteren then, with the first e pronounced like a long a) arrived in New Amsterdam from Holland in 1662 and settled near **what is now Kingston, on the Hudson River about 90 miles north of New York and 60 miles south of Albany.** The family of seven (Jan, his wife Maycke, two children plus three from her first marriage) did not have to wait long to encounter trouble with the Indians. On 7 June 1663, while the men were away working in the fields, the Minnisink Indians (an especially warlike branch of the Leni Lenape Indians) entered several villages under the pretext of selling vegetables and suddenly began murdering their unarmed victims. They took all they could find of value, set the villages on fire and took about forty-five women and children captives.

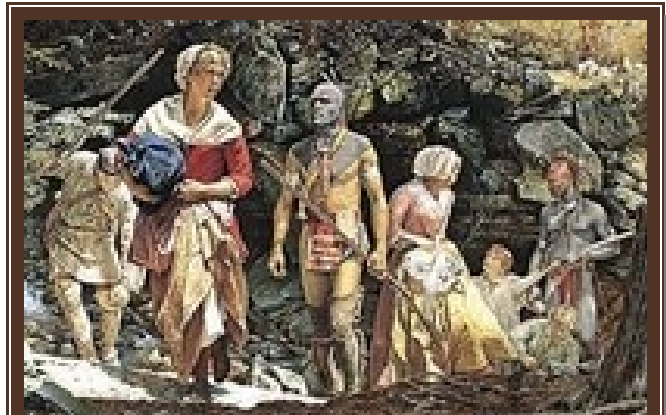
Among those captured were Jan's wife and children, five-year-old Jooste Jans being one of them, as well as Catherine du Bois, the wife of Louis du Bois, and their daughter Sarah. They were taken to the Catskill Mountains and remained in captivity for months.

For three months the men searched the Catskills looking for them, but had no success until a friendly Indian gave a clue to the location of the captives. Immediately Louis DuBois and Capt. Kreiger formed a rescue party. Kreiger's journal relates the event.

About this time, he wrote, "The Indians decided to celebrate their own escape from pursuit by burning some of their victims and the ones selected [to be burned first] were Catherine du Bois, and her baby Sara. A cubical pile of logs was arranged and the mother and child placed thereon; when the Indians were about to apply the torch, Catherine began to sing the 137th Psalm as a death chant. The Indians withheld the fire and gave her respite while they listened; when she had finished they demanded more, and before she had finished the last one her husband and the Dutch soldiers from New Amsterdam arrived and surrounded the savages, killed and captured some, and otherwise inflicted terrible punishment upon them, and released the prisoners." The psalm that Catherine Du Bois allegedly sang as the Indians prepared to burn her and her child to death goes like this, in part:



By the
rivers of
Babylon,
there we
captives sat
down, yes,
we wept



Indians taking the Van Meteren and DuBois families into captivity

when we earnestly remembered Zion
the city of our God imprinted on our hearts.
On the willow trees in the midst of Babylon we hung our harps.
For there they who led us captive required of us a song with words,
and our tormentors and they who wasted us required of us mirth,
saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

How shall we sing the Lord's song in a strange land?

(Some nineteen years later Joost Jans and Sarah were married.)

Little Joost (c1658-1726), too young to be much affected by the horrors of captivity, thoroughly enjoyed his three months of Indian life. Later as an adult he frequently left home to spend many weeks at a time with various tribes and in this way he was among the first whites to explore the

wilderness areas to the west of the coastal settlements. He was particularly impressed by the beauty of the Valley of Virginia. We shall learn more about his activities there in later pages.



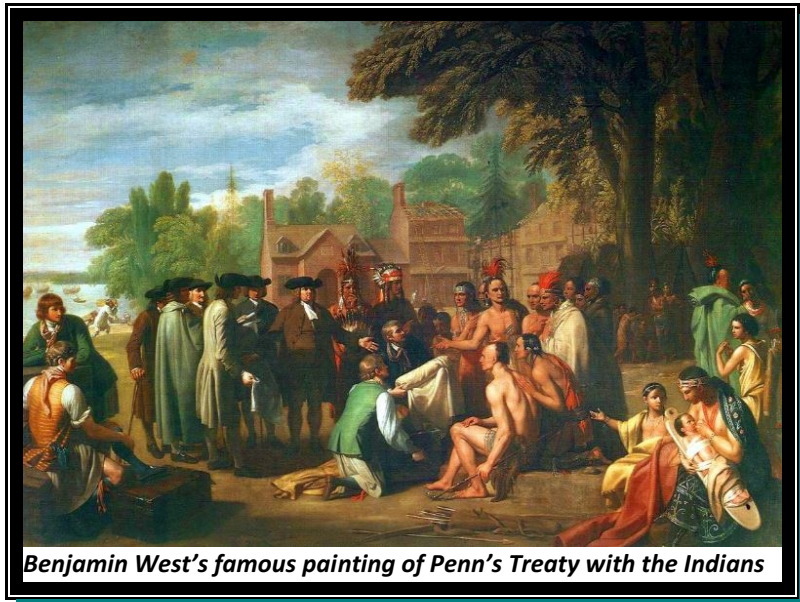
*Painting of Catskill Mountains
Asher Brown Durand*

New Jersey

Thomas Budd (1678-1688)

In Pennsylvania and New Jersey, the Quakers went to some lengths to cultivate peaceful relations with the Indians. Among prominent New Jersey Quakers was one Thomas Budd, who was active there as a proprietor for the Friends, particularly in Indian affairs. *Thomas's brother, Judge William Budd, Sr., was the grandfather of Ann Clagput Budd, who married Benjamin Springer, who in turn was probably Dorothy Springer Prickett's brother.*

Thomas Budd was in his early twenties when he migrated from England to New Jersey in 1678. A few years later he and one Francis Collins were voted each 1,000 acres, "parts of lands to be purchased of the Indians above the falls" in return for building a market and court house at Burlington. It was good land, the site of present-day Trenton. In 1685 Budd was appointed Indian land commissioner. In 1687 several New Jersey proprietors conveyed to Thomas 15,000 acres of land, "he to pay the Indians for their rights." This land "was allotted said Budd by the Country for Satisfaction of a Debt "which they owed said Budd; it is said to be the best Land in the Province."



Benjamin West's famous painting of Penn's Treaty with the Indians

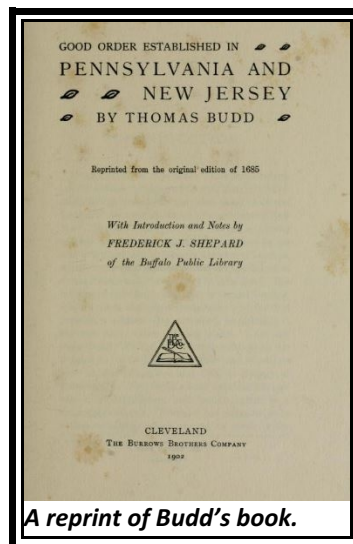
At about the time that Thomas settled at Burlington, the Indians were causing a good deal of alarm. Thomas and several others held a conference with them in Burlington to ascertain their grounds of complaint.

In 1685 Thomas published a pamphlet describing the country, and quoted a speech made by one of the Indian chiefs at the conference.

"We are your brothers and intend to live like brothers with you. We have no mind to have war, for when we have war we are only skin and bones; the meat that we eat doth not do us good; we always are in fear; we have not the benefit of the sun to shine upon us; we hide us in holes and corners; we are minded to live at peace. If we intend at any time to make war upon you, we will let you know of it, and the reasons why we make war with you; and if you make us satisfaction for the injury done us, for which the war was intended, then we will not make war upon you; and if you intend at any time to make war upon us, we would have you let us know of it, and the reason; and then if we do do not make satisfaction for the injury done unto you, then you may make war upon us,

otherwise you ought not to do it. You are our brothers with you; we are willing to have a Indian is asleep in this path, the Englishman Englishman is asleep in this path, the Indian Englishman, he is asleep; let him alone, he must not be in this path a stump to hurt our

brothers, and we are willing to live like broad path for you and us to walk in, and if an shall pass by, and do him no harm; and if an shall pass him by, and say, "He is an loves to sleep." It shall be a plain path; there feet.



A reprint of Budd's book.

The Springers

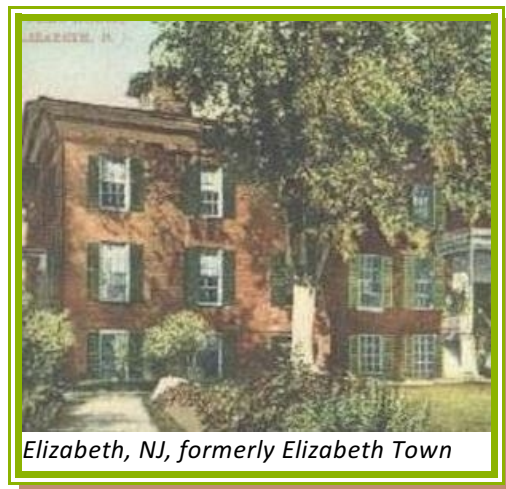
Benjamin Springer (1747-1780)

Benjamin is thought to have been Dorothy Springer Prickett's brother.

Benjamin was captured by Indians in 1756. He managed to escape and make his way home. An article describing something of his ordeal appeared in *The Pennsylvania Gazette* on 9 September 1756:

We hear from New Jersey, that on Sunday Night, the 29th last past, 3 Men arrived at Elizabeth Town in a poor, weak, and starving Condition, to wit, Thomas Sherby, Benjamin Springer, and John Denite, who had been Prisoners among the Indians, and were almost naked, having only old Indian Blankets about them to cover their Nakedness.

They made their escape from the Indians at a Place called Jenango or Venango, an Indian Town, situate near the Head of Susquehannah, and were 32 Days in the Woods, during which Time they suffered great Hardships, for want of food, and were obliged to eat Rattlesnakes, Black snakes, Frogs, and such Vermin; and sometimes they could find nothing to eat for Days together. The first Settlements they made, where they found any Inhabitants, was the upper Fort, upon Delaware River, in New Jersey, called Cole Fort; and from thence they were sent under a Guard to Elizabeth Town, for fear the White People should annoy them, they looking more like Indians then Christians, being very swarthy, and their Hair cut by the Savages after the Indian fashion, and dressed only in Indian Blankets.



Elizabeth, NJ, formerly Elizabeth Town

Springer says, that he was taken Prisoner the 22d Day of May last, when being at Work at one Anthony Swartwout, in Sussex County, New Jersey. [A]bout ten o'clock in the Morning two Indians attacked the House, and shot Swartwout[’s] Wife dead upon the spot. They then seized Swartwout and Springer , and three of the Indians drove Springer away with a Negro, who they had taken the Night before at one Capt. Hunt[’s] in said County, making them run all the Way, until they came to the River Delaware, which they crossed on a Raft of Rails, about 8 Miles above Col. Van Campen.

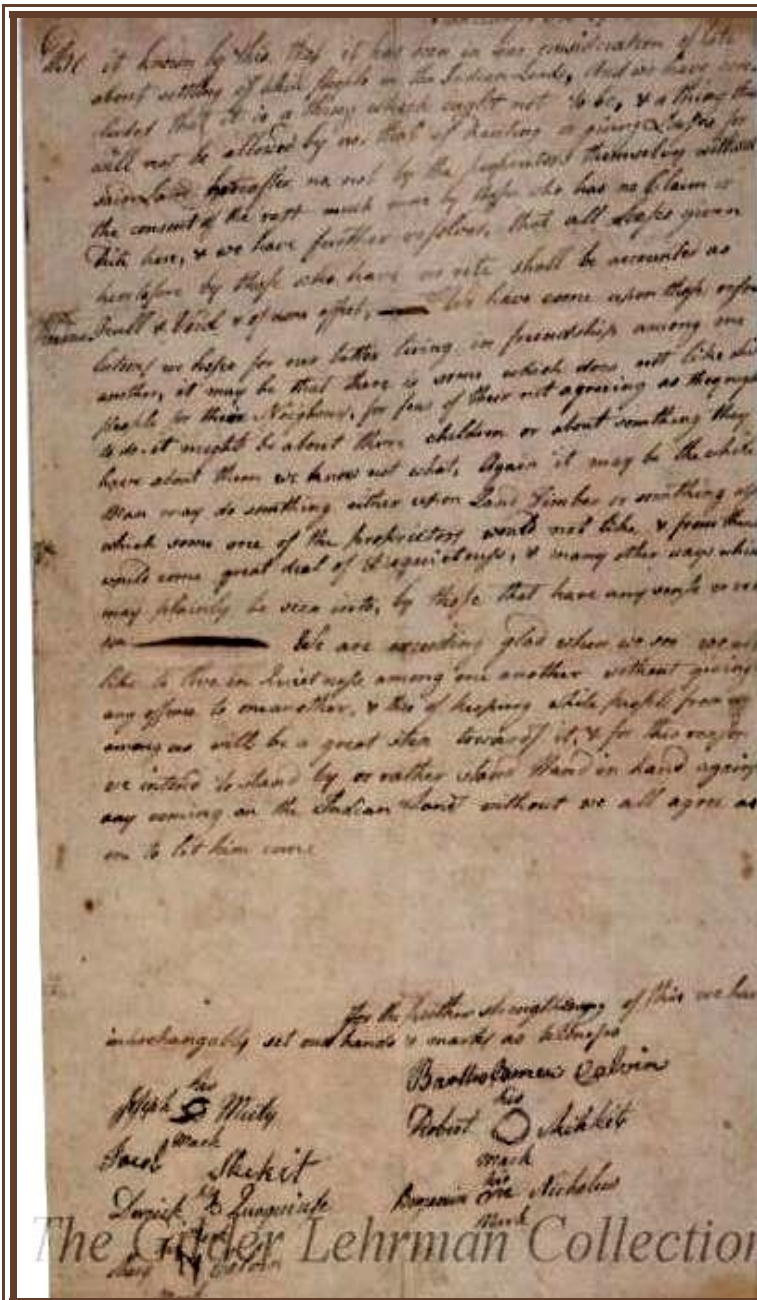
When they were got about a Mile and a Half into Pennsylvania, they waited in the Bushes for the two Indians who were left behind with Swartwout and his Children; and in about an Hour and a Half the said Indians came to them with only two of Swartwout[’s] Children, a Girl about 12 Years old, and a Boy about 9. These Children told Springer that the Indians had killed three of the Children at the House, and had killed and scalped their father about seven Miles from the House, near a Brook, where they likewise killed their little sister, and threw her into the Brook.

The Indians then carried Springer, Swartwout[’s] two Children, and the Negro, to the Indian Towns, where they were dispersed about. [The] Negro told Springer That young Hunt, Brother to Capt. Hunt, who was also taken Prisoner with him, was killed by the Indians in endeavoring to make his escape from them.

This is the first Intelligence we have had of Swartwout and his Children, and of young Hunt and the Negro, since they were missing in May last, when Captain Hunt[’s] House was burnt to the Ground. . . . They were all three taken care of at Elizabeth Town, and a Collection was made for them to cloath them, and to enable them to travel to their several Places of Abode.

In 1747 and 1749 Benjamin SPRINGER bought land in Evesham Township in Burlington County, which he sold on 9 August 1758 to colonial New Jersey commissioners acting as a result of an Indian claims act. This land became the very first Indian reservation in the colonies and was called Brotherton by the New Jersey governor. It was located in what is now Shamong Township about twenty miles southeast of Philadelphia. On the map above, it would be located near the top of the “E” in the word “New.”





1780 document of Brotherton Indians: "Be it known by this, that it has been in our consideration of late about settling of white People on the Indian Lands, & we have concluded that it is a thing which ought not to be, & a thing that will not be allowed by us We are exceeding glad when we see we are like to live in Quietness among one another without giving any offence to one another, & this one of keeping white people from among us will be a great step towards it, & for this reason we intend to stand by or rather stand Hand in hand against any coming on the Indian Lands without we all agree as one to let him come"

Most but not all of the 200 or so Indians remaining in New Jersey went to Brotherton. In 1780 they complained about the encroachment of whites on their lands (see above). (In 1802 those few who were left moved to western New York and later went to Wisconsin with a number of New England and New York Indians.)

(For more details, see

<http://www.accessible-archives.com/2013/08/colonies-first-new-jerseys-indian-reservation/>
and https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brothertown_Indians
and <http://www.brothertownindians.org/>.

Virginia

The Van Meters (1715-1808)

Joost Jans Van Meteren urged his two sons (John "the Indian trader," 1681-1745, and Isaac, c1691-1757) to settle in the Valley of Virginia, which they eventually did.

In fact, John and his brother Isaac Van Meter and their father are considered to be among the first white pioneers to enter the Valley between the Blue Ridge and Allegheny mountains (German physician John Lederer had explored there in 1669 and a John Howard had discovered the South Branch Potomac River). The area was controlled by the Shawnee Indians, who were considered to be highly dangerous. John and Isaac were both Indian traders who explored frequently and various dates are found as to how early they first visited this area.



The South Branch of the Potomac River

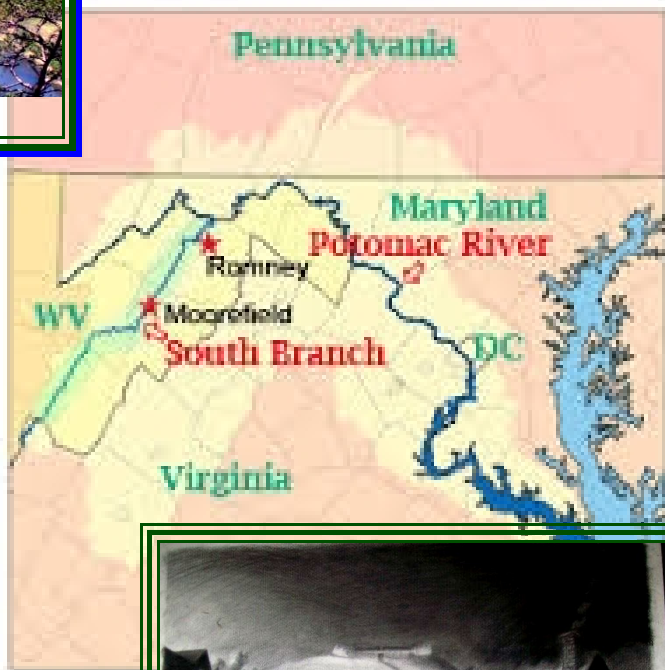
A family legend claims that as early as 1715 Joost Jans (he usually went by the name John) was on an expedition with the Delaware Indians. He equipped the Delawares at his own expense and explored with them in the Shenandoah Valley. The Delawares met the Catawba Indians coming from the south and both tribes disputed the right of entry to the Valley. A major battle occurred and the Delawares suffered a devastating loss. The whole tribe would have been annihilated had it not been for the return of their allies, the Shawnees, from their annual hunt on the South Branch of the Potomac. The Shawnees overwhelmed and slaughtered the Catawbans. A remnant of the Delaware tribe and John managed to escape. But he had noticed how fine the land was. It is said he explored the Valley again the next year. On one occasion he went

in command of a band of Cough Indians on a trading expedition to Virginia, and on this excursion he explored country almost unknown to white people -- the valley of the South Branch of the Potomac, known then by the Indian name Wapatoma. When he returned home he urged his sons to lose no time in possessing that land, declaring that it was most beautiful and fertile.

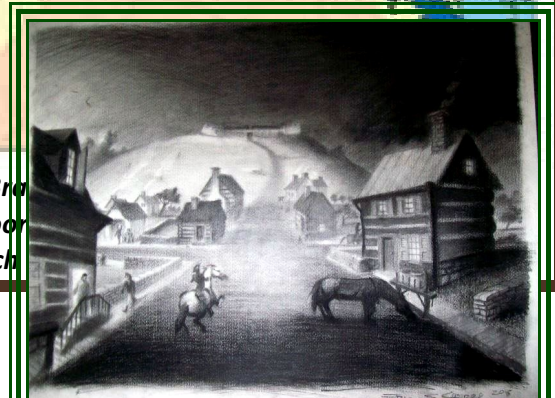
John and Isaac soon developed a plan to settle their relatives and friends there. They applied to the Governor and Colonial Council of Virginia for land and received a grant for 40,000 acres on the South Branch, much of it located in present-day Berkeley County, West Virginia. They soon sold most of the land to their cousin Jost Hite, who settled near present-day Winchester, Virginia. John also settled in Winchester, while Isaac attempted to move to a spot near present-day Moorefield, Hardy County, West Virginia, on the South

Branch of the Potomac River.

After two unsuccessful attempts (the Indians burned his cabin on at least one occasion), Isaac finally succeeded in establishing a settlement on the South Branch and moved his family there by about 1748, when a young (sixteen-year-old) George Washington visited him on a surveying trip for Lord Fairfax. Isaac's nephew Henry Van Meter moved nearby and when the French and Indian War broke out, Isaac had a fort constructed on Henry's property. It was a simple stone structure,



The South Branch through Moorefield and North Branch



Winchester in the 1750s



Fort Van Meter was built for the protection of the Van Meters and their neighbors about 1754.

designed as a haven for his family and also for his neighbors. It is doubtful that any troops were ever stationed at this place because it was too small to house a garrison. The stone walls made it impervious to musket or rifle fire, and those inside, so long as they had food, water, and ammunition, were safe from the attack of even a large body of Indians. The work of constructing Fort Van Meter is attributed to Nathaniel Kuykendall or his son, Isaac, as both were skilled stone masons living along the South Branch River at the time.

In 1756, with the outbreak of the French and Indian War, George Washington, now a colonel, directed that a larger fortification be built near Isaac. The new fort and its supporting structures were erected on Isaac's property by Captain Thomas Waggener under Washington's orders. The fort was first known by the name of the Van Meter family, who assisted in its construction and maintenance. It was a substantial palisaded defense enclosing a blockhouse and log houses. (Washington's written instructions indicated a quadrangular shape with 90-foot-long walls, bastions in the corners, barracks, and a magazine.) Fort Pleasant was one in a chain of forts that ran along the frontier of the Allegheny Mountains and for a time it served as the local headquarters for the Virginia Regiment on the South Branch. (Eventually, Isaac's son Garrett Van Meter (1732-1788) had most of the old fort and original family cabin removed and built a strong brick structure half above ground and half below for defensive purposes.)

Indians never attacked Fort Pleasant directly but several raids occurred nearby. Soon after its construction, a disastrous skirmish took place about a mile and a half to the north in and around the large river gorge known as The Trough. In 1757, while working unprotected in his fields near his home at Fort Pleasant, Isaac Van Meter was attacked, scalped, and killed by Indians of the Delaware and Shawnee tribes. (The existing Federal style Van Meter house known as Fort Pleasant was built about 25 years later, just after the American Revolution.)

John and Isaac had other brothers about whom very little is known. Abraham (c1721-c1783) and his family lived briefly in Chester County, Pennsylvania before joining John's in Berkeley County, Virginia. Jacob (1723-1796) settled near Isaac in Hardy County, but he too was



A year after the fort was built a battle was fought at the Trough, a mile and a half away.

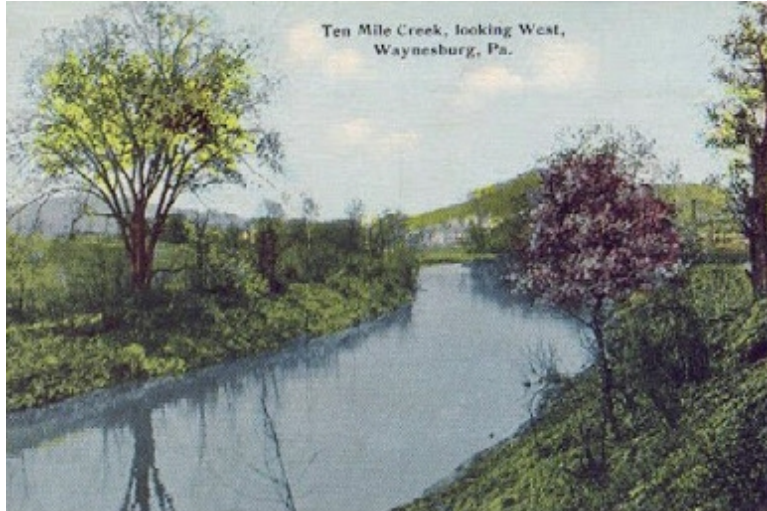


Washington gave written instructions for the building of Fort Pleasant

murdered by Indians within a few years after settling there. Isaac's children prospered, and his descendants became prominent horse breeders and cattlemen. His grandson Jacob was a partner with Chief Justice John Marshall in the breeding of thoroughbred horses.

during the French and Indian War). Despite being a mother of twelve, she was doctor and nurse of the region, traveling with a big dog and carrying a heavy rifle strapped to her shoulder. It left an indentation there which she carried to her grave. The Indians respected and dreaded her because she had shot several in defense of her home, but they never captured her scalp. One day when only women and children were in the fort near her home, the Indians attacked. She made the women load rifles while she did the shooting from one porthole after another until the Indians were driven off.

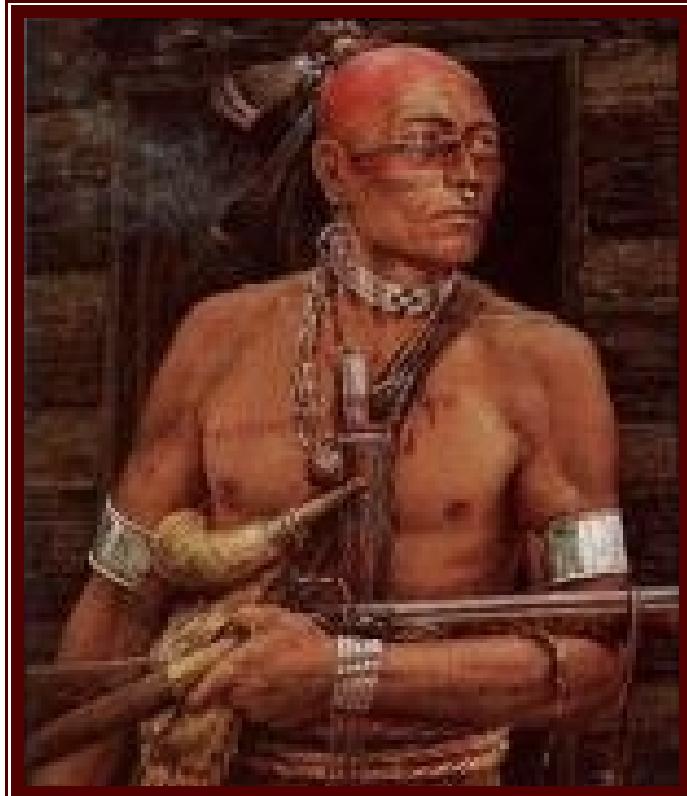
Turning back to John Van Meter's Berkeley County clan we find an especially interesting person, Polly Van Meter Evans, wife of John Evans (who built Evans Fort, completed in 1756



Van Meters in both Berkeley and Hardy counties were restless after the war, and several sold their land and prepared to move west to the Monongahela Valley, where Jacob Van Meter and others received land in southwestern Pennsylvania as compensation for fighting in the French and Indian War. They settled on the west side of the Monongahela River in what is now known as Ten Mile Country because of its proximity to a tributary of the river called Ten Mile Creek. They "tomahawked" their claims (that is they marked the land they claimed by using an iron tomahawk to cut identifying notches in trees) along Muddy Creek in what was then the District of West Augusta, Virginia. There they took their families, slaves, "and such household goods as could be carried on pack horses." Altogether, they numbered about fifty people. To protect themselves against Indian attack, particularly during and after Lord Dunmore's War in 1774, many of these settlers constructed stockaded "forts" around their log cabins.



Artist's depiction of pack horse



Chief Logan

The original refuge fort on Prickett's land was built by civilian militia in the spring and early summer of 1774 in response to an uprising of the Mingo and Shawnee tribes sparked by the murder of Chief Logan's family by a band of rogue frontiersmen.

This would lead in turn to Lord Dunmore's War, in which the Prickett's Fort militia were active participants.

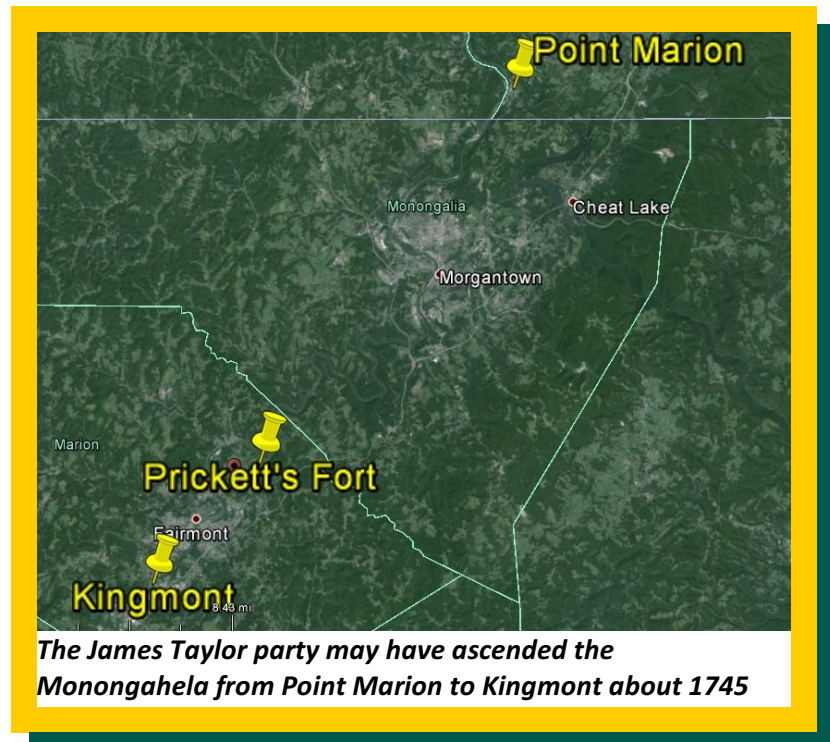
Virginia (the Monongahela), Kentucky, and Ohio

Pricketts, James Taylor (1745-1769)

Meanwhile many New Jersey Quakers became Indian traders, including the progenitor of most Virginia/West Virginia Pricketts, Captain Jacob Prickett (who was probably engaging in the trade by the mid-1740s). About 1747, Jacob left New Jersey to settle on the Virginia frontier north of Winchester. He had married Dorothy Springer in 1745 and their first child, Josiah, was born in October 1746. Jacob is thought to have gone on an interesting expedition to the Monongahela River (see below), about the time he moved to Virginia.

Before he went on that expedition his newly-born son's future father-in-law may have attempted to settle in the area. James Taylor was living on the South Branch of the Potomac near present-day Romney, West Virginia, when, according to tradition, he and a friend by the name of John Nichols, their wives and several children, left their homes in 1745 and traveled westward to the confluence of the Cheat and Monongahela rivers at the present-day town of Point Marion, Pennsylvania, about 10 miles north of present-day Morgantown, West Virginia.

There the families paused long enough to construct three large canoes, in which they ascended the Monongahela (then called the Muddy River) to the mouth of the present Tygart Valley River. Near present Kingmont, Marion County, southwest of present-day Fairmont, the families made temporary camp.



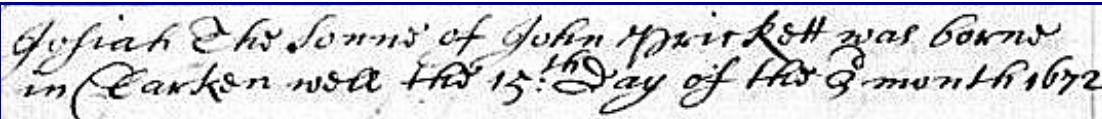
A few days later, while out hunting, Nichols and Taylor discovered what they are said to have described as "a cracked-stone pavilion, made solid with mortar composed of crushed mussel shells." After examining the curiosity, and believing it to be the work of Indians, they decided to use a part of it as the floor for the cabins they were wanted to build. There they erected two small cabins about ten feet apart and joined them with a gallery or "dog-walk." These twin cabins were often referred to as an Indian fort.

In 1767 James Taylor's daughter Charity married Captain Jacob Prickett's oldest son, Josiah, and it has been said that in 1769 their second daughter, Ann, (who married John Dragoo c1792, *see below*) was born in "an Indian Fort" neat Hoult, about 1½ miles from Prickett's Creek. (This may be erroneous; the Pricketts were living on Georges Creek in southwestern Pennsylvania at that time and are not known to have moved up the Monongahela until 1771.)

Later, near Prickett's Fort, Josiah built a house of half-hewed logs, which is said to have had windows a half-log high so the Indians could not see inside the house. They were probably used as holes for rifle firing at any Indians lurking about.

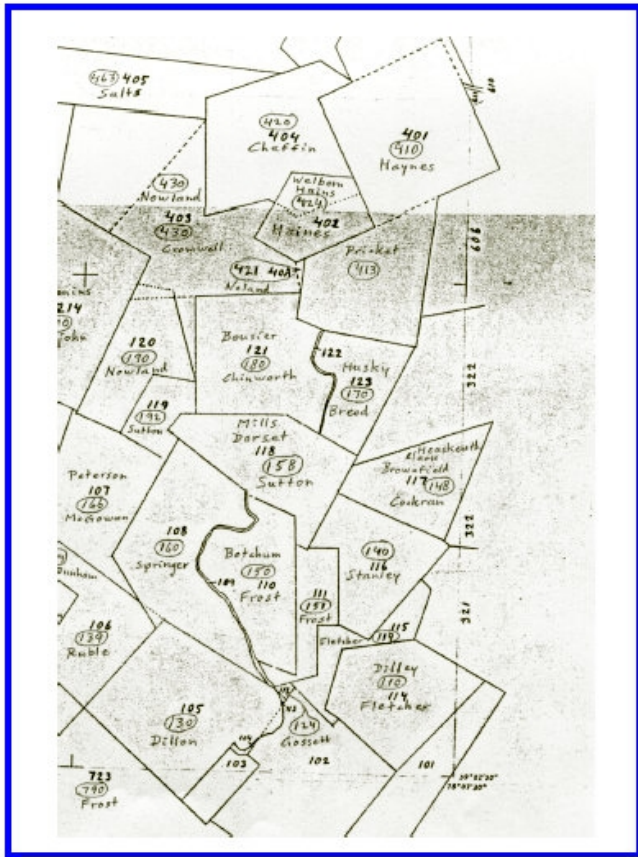
Captain Jacob Prickett, Sr. (1722-c1799)

The Pricketts, who were Quakers, had come to New Jersey from England in the late decades of the seventeenth century. There were at least two brothers, Josiah and Zachariah, born in London in 1672 and 1674, and perhaps their father, John (the name of their mother is unknown).



*Josiah the Son of John Prickett was born
in Carken well the 15th Day of the 3rd month 1672*

The original record of Josiah's birth. Clarkson is in London.

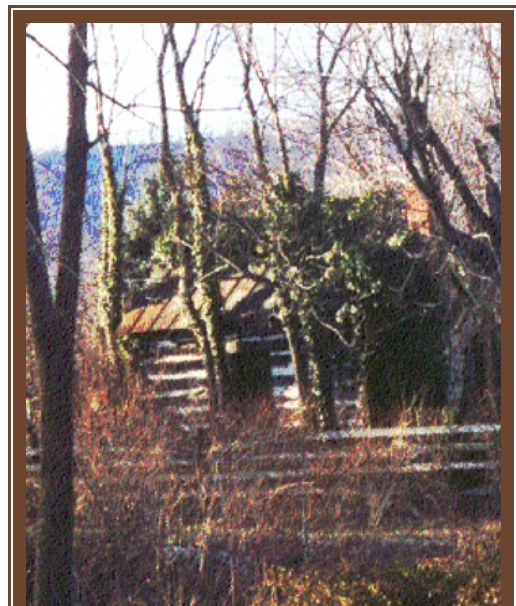


Dennis Springer's land can be seen to the west of Back Creek (lower left center); the Chinworths [i.e., Chenoweths] in the upper center, and [Abraham] Prickett to their northeast. Jacob's deed was never recorded.

Both brothers had sons named John and one of those Johns became the father of "our" Jacob. We think our John was the son of Josiah because there are many Josiahs among his descendants but no Zachariahs.

Nothing is known of the appearance of any of them except that Jacob is said to have been about 5'10" tall with black eyes and "stiff black hair." He is said to have "loved children" and that "children loved him." So far as we know, he moved his small family to Back Creek, in present-day Berkeley County, West Virginia, about 12 miles north of Winchester, Virginia, in the spring of 1747, when his first child was

about six months old. His brother Abraham and two sisters Ann Prickett Springer and Mary Prickett Chenoweth and their families, as well as other New Jersey natives, had recently moved to the area or would soon do so. One John Springer, who may have been a relative or even a brother of Dorothy's, lived a few miles away near present-day Gerrardstown and built a log cabin that is still standing. This was raw country in those days and they were the first white people to settle on the land.



The John Springer cabin



Lawrence Washington

In the spring of 1747 Jacob joined two friends (who were also connected with him by marriage), David Morgan and Nathaniel Springer, and others to make an exploring trip west for Lawrence Washington (the older half-brother of George Washington), who was interested in acquiring western lands. The party traveled to the Monongahela River around present-day Clarksville, Pennsylvania, where they happened upon some Mingo Indians – a chief called Guyasuta with eight warriors and four young squaws, all of whom they found friendly. (Six years later, Guyasuta accompanied 21-year-old George Washington when the latter carried a letter from the Virginia governor to French authorities in western Pennsylvania insisting that they leave the area.)

Jacob asked Guyasuta the name of the stream that entered the river at their camp, and the chief said it had no name that he had heard of. Jacob declared he would name it in the chief's honor, and thus it was called Guyasootha Creek for many years. (It is now known as Ten Mile Creek.)

The expedition apparently brought home a favorable report of the lands they had seen. Their expedition was followed by another, which led to the founding of the Ohio Company: that company's claims to western lands conflicted with French claims in the Ohio River Valley and precipitated the French and Indian War, which in turn led to the ouster of the French from Canada. (Guyasuta, incidentally, sided with the French in that war and with the English in the American Revolution, but after the war he worked to establish peaceful relations with the new United States.)



Guyasuta

During the French and Indian War, Jacob is said to have served under Colonel George Washington (who was still in his twenties) and to have been present at Fort Necessity on July 3rd, 1754, when nine hundred French soldiers, along with numerous Indians from various tribes, forced the Virginians to surrender. Jacob may also have taken part in General Braddock's campaign a year later when the English suffered another major defeat at Fort Duquesne (and the death of General Braddock himself).



The statue of Col. Zackquill Morgan was unveiled in June 2016

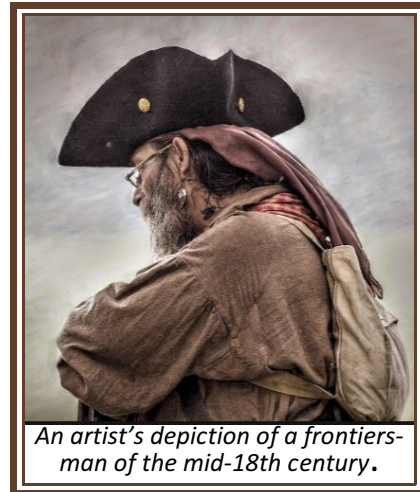
I know of no written evidence to that effect, however, although Jacob had apparently forgotten his Quaker pacifism and *was* in the Frederick County militia during the war. He served first as a private and – in the latter years of the war – as a sergeant under the command of Zackquill Morgan (who was to marry Jacob's niece Drusilla Springer in 1765 and found present-day Morgantown, West Virginia, soon after).

At some point, perhaps even during the war, Jacob may have established a trading post with the Indians near present-day Prickett's Creek, exchanging herbs, fur skins, etc.; it has been said he was there by 1759. He is known to have dealt with leading merchants at Winchester: Thomas and Robert Rutherford and James Wood.

Otherwise we know few details of his Indian activities during the war. We do know that when war broke out people from the Shenandoah Valley poured over the Blue Ridge to get away from the Indians. Whether the Pricketts were among them we do not know. After the war was over, relations with the Indians were relatively peaceful for a decade or so and Pricketts, Springers, and other families moved west to settle in the Monongahela River valley.

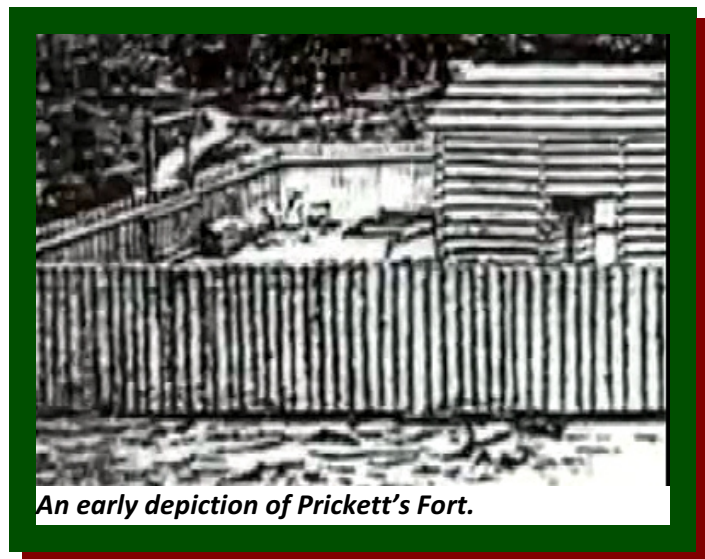
Our ancestors were real sure-enough pioneers. Of them and their contemporaries it has been written:

“The backwoodsmen of Pennsylvania and Virginia were a special class, formed chiefly of Scotch-Irish and German settlers [the Pricketts were English], whom Lord Dunmore, governor of Virginia, characterized thusly: ‘They acquire no attachment to Place: but wandering about seems engrafted in their nature; and it is a weakness incident to it, that they should forever imagine the Lands further off are still better than those upon which they are already settled.’ Into the vast transmontane region [*i.e.*, west of the Allegheny Mountains], . . . these men feverishly pressed, eager for fresh hunting grounds and virgin farms. Collision between them and the aborigines, many of whom denied the validity of the cessions, was inevitable. (Thwaites, *et al.*, *Documentary history of Dunmore's war.*)



An artist's depiction of a frontiersman of the mid-18th century.

Jacob and his family settled in the Georges Creek area northeast of present-day Morgantown near Uniontown (where Pennsylvania and Virginia disputed ownership) but in 1771 they moved south up the Monongahela to Prickett's Creek, among the first whites to settle in the area. But soon the Indians, who were subjected to some unwarranted attacks by whites and resented white encroachment on their hunting lands, became restless. Fearing hostile attacks, in 1774 Jacob and his neighbors built a refuge fort on his land. At first, no doubt, it was a simple affair, merely a stockade fence around a cabin. Built where Prickett's Creek empties into the Monongahela, it was within ten miles of three major Indian trails.



An early depiction of Prickett's Fort.

At the time the Monongahela valley was thickly covered with huge oaks and chestnut trees.

It was a Herculean task to clear enough land for a crude cabin and garden, to say nothing of a fort. Wagons were not used because of the forest, so settlers carried what little they could on pack animals and on themselves.



Reconstructed Indian wigwam.

(For more information on Native Americans of the day, visit <http://www.nativetech.org/> and <http://www.nativeweb.org/>.)

Construction of the fort was not enough to prevent tragedy. Josiah (the oldest son of Jacob's older brother John) was killed by Indians at Dunkard Creek (about eight miles north of Prickett's Fort) in September 1774. Just days later, on 3 October 1774, Jacob's teenage son Isaiah went out from the fort with a neighbor, a Mrs. Susan Ox, to look after their cattle. (Born in 1757, Isaiah was the seventh of Jacob's eleven children.) They did not return. Isaiah's body was found scalped; Susan Ox was never seen again.

In her old age, Jacob's oldest daughter-in-law, Charity Taylor Prickett, said that Isaiah's scalp had been found and that a grieving Jacob had asked her and another woman to sew the scalp back on his head and they had done so.

"Testimonies from the earliest traders and settlers in the region make clear that there were small Indian settlements scattered throughout the region in the first half of the 18th century. There were extensive trade relationships between the Indians of the Ohio River Valley and the European frontier settlers during those years. [M]any treaties were made and wars were fought. Often times, land ownership was at the root of these confrontations. Documented evidence suggests that some of the primary Indian inhabitants of the middle Ohio River Valley during the 1700's and 1800's were people who spoke two general languages: Macro-Siouan, particularly Iroquoian languages, and Macro-Algonquian. These people can be traced to the ancestors of modern day Shawnee, Delaware, and Iroquois people."