

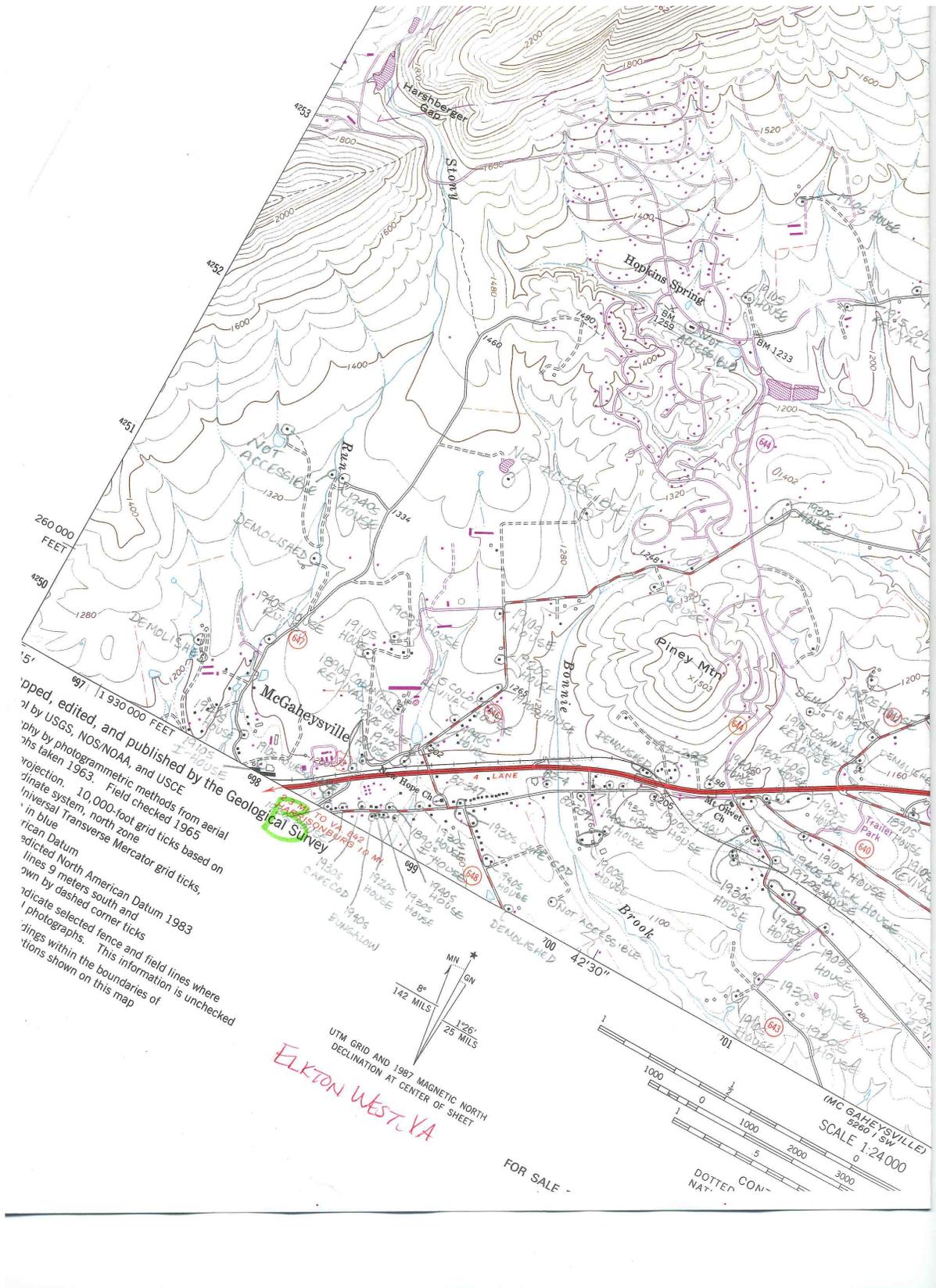
Appendix 5

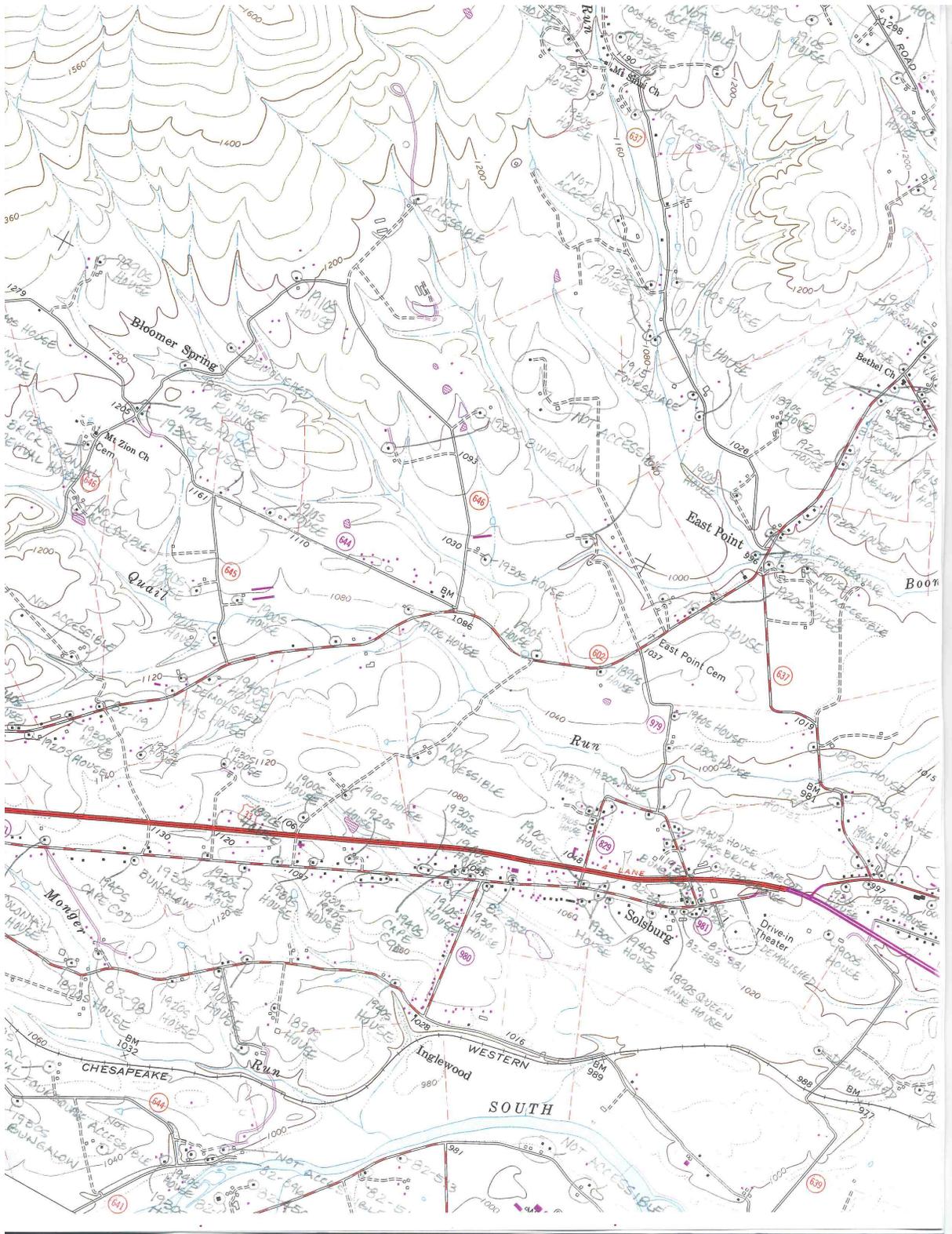
History and Historic Site Maps

Historic Site Maps

Following are four excerpts from the historic site survey maps prepared by the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Complete and full size copies of these maps are available in the County offices.







History of McGaheysville

Submitted to the CAC by Kitty Hensley-Snyder
From article by Mrs. Hunter Gibbons

The earliest records of the town of McGaheysville and the community adjacent to it date back to 1716 when Governor Spotswood made his famous expedition west of the Blue Ridge Mountain and into the Valley of Virginia. He crossed the mountain at Swift Run Gap and followed Indian trails as far as Stony Run Creek, then followed this in an easterly direction, on to the Shenandoah River.

Shortly after this expedition, settlers of German, Dutch and Scotch descent from the North began to settle this area. In 1763 King George III granted to Peter Miller and Jacob Harman a land grant for lands in and around McGaheysville; on what was then most probably an Indian trail. Miller's part of the grant passed to John Long and on to his grandson J. C. Whetzel. The Harman part of the grant passed on to a Mr. Peter Conrad. There are other families in the area still holding parts of their original grant.

The first church established south of Winchester was the Union Church located near Stony Creek at the foot of Peaked Mountain, just west of the present village. Another church near the head of Church Run was known to have existed. There is a copy of the original baptismal record from 1745 to 1874—translated from the German in which it was written into English. Records show that on October 23, 1768, the Lutheran and Reformed Union Church near Peaked Mountain in Augusta County was dedicated by Rev. Mr. Schwarback, Evangelical Lutheran pastor at that time. A third church was dedicated, according to a later record, on May 27, 1804. This building was occupied jointly by the Reformed and Lutherans until the Reformed people separated and erected a new church building known as "Brown Memorial Reformed Church," on a site very near the present church site. In 1835 a Methodist Church was built by Mr. Bader, and later a Baptist Church was erected.

(cont'd)

The first settlement somewhat west of the present village was called "Ursulasburg," a name derived from the name of the wife of the first minister. In 1801 Tobias Randolph McGahey came to the Valley as a surveyor with a Scotch-Irish colony, and spent the night at a tavern run by Mrs. Eva Conrad. The tavern was located at the site of the present post office and consisted of two rooms downstairs and a loft above. It was said that this loft was curtained off into individual rooms for the comfort of its guests. Shortly after this, Tobias married the wealthy widow Conrad and in 1802 established a post office which he called McGaheysville. Tobias McGahey was an ambitious, industrious man. He built flour mills, accumulated real estate and built a large brewery on his farm "Bonny Brook." There is a whiskey keg owned by John Hopkins, with an inscription on the keg: "Apple Brandy distilled by T. McGahey, Tax paid 1870."

The first school was of log construction and was located near the present school site. The building was enlarged several times. The teacher-principal, Joseph Salyard, was a very gifted teacher, poet, and writer. Classes ran from first through high school and because of the four large oak trees on the grounds, he named the school "Oakhill Academy." Many of the older citizens attended this academy and are very proud of this fact.

During the Civil War, McGaheysville was a thriving town of approximately 311 citizens, according to first records. There was a blacksmith shop, tannery, grist mill, woolen mill, shoe shop, hat shop, tailor shop, bar room, and several general stores. The first store was built in 1805 by Joseph Mauzy and operated by Mauzy and Armentrout. Older community residents say you could buy anything there from a darning needle to a threshing machine. Farmers from all directions took their eggs and chickens to the store to trade for coal oil, coffee and other household needs. Young boys in the area made their spending money selling rabbits to the store for 25¢ each. Families from the mountains around brought in tubs of blueberries to sell also. All these items were stored in a large room back of the store building in which the tanks of coal oil were kept. Later, all were shipped to Baltimore or Philadelphia for sale.

Dr. Bashaw was the first physician—next was Dr. Thresher who located here in 1830.

About 1920 the "Stonewall Bank" opened. It was located in what is now Sheets Grocery Store building, and Arthur Yancey was cashier. In the depression of the 1930's this bank closed and never reopened.

Many of the earlier settlers built log homes on a small acreage near the edge of Peaked Mountain, and the family members worked on farms in the cultivated area. General Tyson Hopkins owned and operated a large farm east of the town. He also owned a lot of what was then considered worthless mountain land. There were six mineral springs on the mountain land—each a different flow; local residents considered this very healthy drinking water. G. T. Hopkins and a cousin, Edwin B. Hopkins, built a hotel of three stories surrounded by large porches and a number of cottages. It was interesting that Mr. Hopkins owned 1300 acres of this mountain property and obtained additional acreage by paying some of the struggling families with barrels of flour and sides of meat. They moved to homes farther down the Valley where they could get farm work. This resort was first called "Rockingham Springs" and later "Hopkins Springs." Families from Richmond, Baltimore, and Philadelphia came down to spend the summer at a cost of \$12 per week per person. This included maid service, three meals and drives through the area. Perhaps the most famous and certainly the most revered guest was Sidney Lanier, poet, artist, sculptor, musician and writer. On February 3, 1879, Lanier received notice of his

appointment as "Lecturer of English Literature" at Johns Hopkins University. He immediately sought a haven in the country where he could prepare his lectures for his fall classes. Mrs. Lanier and two of their children accompanied Mr. Lanier by train to Harrisonburg and by stagecoach to the Spring's resort. He was a popular guest as he frequently played his Boehm flute, and Mrs. Lanier accompanied him on the piano to entertain hotel guests. In the fall of 1879, Mr. Lanier returned to Baltimore and died in 1881. The very popular Hopkins Spring's buildings burned about 1940. The remaining woods and grazing land, passed from one generation to the next until 1970 when J. L. Hopkins III began a development of an even larger area than the Springs. The Massanutten Lodge and nine ski slopes again provide recreation for the area.

The Civil War was very much a part of this area, as battles were fought within a seven-mile radius. The Northern soldiers came through, and several families gave help in return for not burning their barns and homes. About two miles east of the present town of McGaheysville, Mrs. George Hedrick was known to have kept the Northern soldiers, feeding them and their horses, and she also gave them her last \$10 gold piece to prevent their burning her barn and home. This barn is the only one of the Civil War period left in this area. The Gibbons family just across the river to the east was also known to have fed the soldiers and their horses, until they were rested; to prevent the burning of their property.

The citizens of the McGaheysville area provide a hospitality to visitors from far and wide that they seldom find elsewhere and never forget.

—This article written by Mrs. Hunter Gibbons



"Bonny Brook," the McGahey Homestead.