

Dave Carey's History of Beaverdam Valley

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This page contains the text of a history written in 1998 by late-resident David E. Carey (pictured below) entitled Beaverdam Valley: A Historical Perspective. It was dedicated to "the many descendants of the original families who pioneered Beaverdam Valley and the Asheville area."

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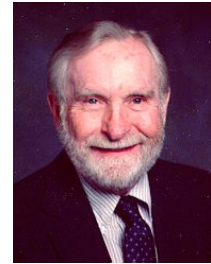
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Foreword

This Beaverdam Valley, which historically included Webb Cove, Lynn Cove Roads, and what is now Beaver Lake, was entered by the early settlers via Craven Gap and Bull Creek. In fact, this valley and Reems Creek Valley seem to have been settled before Asheville itself. Names of early valley settlers, like Swain, Lane, Baird, Killian and Rice, appear repeatedly in the history development of Buncombe County and, indeed, the history of the state.

Whether there was an Indian village in this valley is debatable. Certainly Indian hunters traveled this area, because arrowheads and other Indian artifacts have been found here. The Shawnee had a village near the present entrance of the Biltmore Estate, and also by a lake on Bull Creek. The Cherokee lived on the banks of the French Broad. They all, undoubtedly, hunted here because the valley was full of deer and elk, and the streams with fish and beaver.

This historical perspective is intended primarily for residents of Beaverdam Run. And, because many residents have come here from out of state, I have tried to sketch the development of all of present Western North Carolina, especially Asheville and Buncombe County.

In compiling this material, I have drawn liberally on the expertise and research of other much more qualified writers. I'm especially indebted to Dr. Foster Sondley, who published an exhaustive "History of Buncombe County" in 1930. I have quoted some of his relevant comments. Also Ora Blackman's book "Western North Carolina, Its Mountains and Its People" is a mine of information. A Beaverdam Run resident did some research on this matter, and his writings appeared in "Beaver Tales" published by Beaverdam Run Condominium Association, Inc. I have quoted from Rodger Warshauer's material.

I have also attempted to pick the brains of local residents in the valley, notably Bill and Maxine Ference, who are now residents of Beaverdam Run; Les Stradley, Jr., the golf pro at the Country Club of Asheville, whose great-great grandfather once owned our log cabin; and Mrs. Laura Stephens and her mother, Mrs. Mary Pearson, both descendants of

the original Rices. Their families lived in the valley before Beaverdam Run was a glint in anybody's eye. And very special thanks to Dixie Guthrie and Gwen and Bob Higgins for their wizardry on computers putting all this material together.

I mention all this because in writing this story, I am not trying to reinvent the wheel. I am attempting to put in a few pages the relevant and interesting facts about this area gleaned from a wealth of material and expertise.

Hopefully, later writers will add to this and later residents get an even fuller picture of this valley's history.--*David Carey*

Early Origins of This Area-- Native American, Spanish, French and English

The first recorded mention of Beaverdam Valley seems to have occurred in a report around 1721 by Colonel George Chicken of Charleston. The governor of South Carolina at that time felt that the Cherokee in these western mountains were becoming too friendly with the French and some English influence was needed. So Colonel Chicken was dispatched to meet and talk with the Cherokee. In his report back to the governor he mentions visiting a Cherokee village "near Beaverdam." He was probably referring to a known Cherokee settlement on the banks of the French Broad River.

To put all this into perspective it may be helpful to go back in history and pinpoint the various cultures that existed in this area.

The Native Americans. The Cherokee were part of a migration of peoples that came into North America from Mexico and Central America. They spread into the whole Mississippi Valley, into Florida, and to the East Coast.

The group we know as the Cherokee traveled north and gradually settled in an area comprising present Western North Carolina, South Carolina, North Georgia, East Tennessee, and parts of South Virginia. Gradually, tribal groups merged into what became the Cherokee Nation, probably the most powerful Indian grouping next to the Iroquois. This was pretty much the situation when the white man entered the picture.

The only other local Indian presence was a Shawnee village in the present Biltmore Estate area. The Shawnee were the "Bedouins" of the Indians, constantly on the move. Their celebrated chief was Tecumseh.

It was in May 1640 that an Indian runner, out of breath, announced to his village that pale men in metal clothes riding strange animals were near at hand.

The Spanish. This was the arrival in this area of the Spanish under Ferdinand de Soto. A year earlier he had arrived in the Tampa area of Florida and, under his prerogative as Governor of Cuba, was exploring and possessing any lands he could find. Earlier in the century he had been with Pizzaro in Peru, and he reasoned that treasures similar to those in Peru were to be found in North America.

To some extent de Soto was right. They found enough gold and silver in these mountains to keep them here for 125 years. De Soto found gold along the Broad and Catawba Rivers, and gold mines were in production in the Hot Springs area of Madison County. The Spaniards were involved mainly in mining. On all of their expeditions they carried expert mineralogists and mining engineers. They made no attempt to settle or colonize in this area.

In later years, during the early 1800s, North Carolina became known as the Golden State. Between 1804 and 1829 all the gold produced and minted in the new United States of America came from North Carolina. Besides mines in this area there were also gold mines in the Charlotte area, notably the Reed Gold Mine, and Gold Hill Mine, both now restored and open to the public as historical sites.

These western mountains also abounded with many minerals and precious stones--emeralds, rubies and sapphires, feldspar, granite, marble and large commercial deposits of mica.

There is a little known group associated with the Spaniards that had some interesting impact in southern history. These people were called the Melungeons. Recent historical discoveries place these people in the southern Appalachians before there were any settlements in Jamestown. In 1607 native Americans told the Jamestown people that only a six-day walk to the west there were people "like you who wear their hair short and use axes to fell trees and build log cabins." In the 1690s French explorers reported the presence of "Moors" in the Western North Carolina mountains. These Melungeons were dark skinned, almost certainly of Moorish descent.

When the Spanish started colonizing the New World their ships were filled with conscripts. Many of these were Moors, who after 800 years in Spain were being driven out by Spain's rulers and the Inquisition. So, a crew job on a ship to the New World was a good way to get out of the country. Groups of the Melungeons were with the Spanish expeditions that pushed north from Florida and went west from the Spanish headquarters at Beaufort, South Carolina.

When the Spaniards left these areas in Western North Carolina, these people stayed on and formed permanent settlements. As the country grew and developed and immigrants pushed West, these Melungeons were forced into mountain enclaves. Their history is beginning to be researched now by Dr. Brent Kennedy, of Atlanta, a direct descendant of one of the original families. Current research indicates that Abraham Lincoln was a descendant of the Melungeons.

The French. In the late 1600s furs became important and the French entered the picture. Moving into this area from Eastern Canada, they soon dominated the whole Mississippi Valley. Their plan was to unite this part of the country with their Canadian possessions.

In the French-Indian War of 1754, the French persuaded the Cherokee to side with them. For the Cherokee, this was an unhappy decision. These local hostilities were all part of the larger Seven Years War going on in Europe between the French and the English. This the English won. So in the Treaty of Paris in 1763, all the French-held possessions in America were turned over to the British. And because the Cherokee sided with the French, their lands were forfeited too.

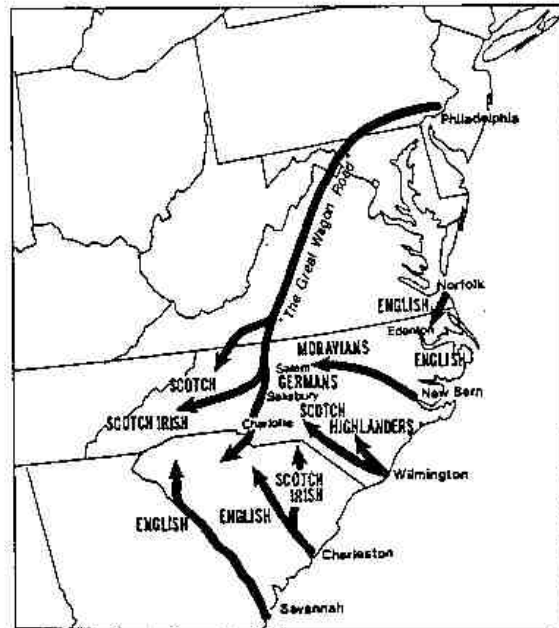
Events were further complicated for the Cherokee when they sided with the British in the Revolutionary War of 1775. At the conclusion of this, involving a British defeat, all Cherokee lands from the Clinch River (near Knoxville) to the Blue Ridge were turned over to the new American nation. In 1835 the Trail of Tears took place and the main Cherokee Nation was moved to Oklahoma.

The English. The English entered this interesting saga around the late 1500s when Queen Elizabeth granted to Sir Walter Raleigh "patents for discovering and colonizing" the New World. Thus Jamestown and Virginia came into being and English colonists spread up and down the Atlantic Coast. Most of the early settlers came by boat to Philadelphia. By the early 1700s the good land in Pennsylvania had been settled. So many headed inland to the Piedmont area of North Carolina.

Thousands walked or rode on horseback over a trail mistakenly called the Great Philadelphia Wagon Road. This "road" in fact was a tortuous trail. It went west through Lancaster to a ferry on the Susquehanna River and from there to York. Then it went through Virginia, crossed the James River, and turned south at Roanoke. It crossed three more rivers--the Backwater, the Irvine and the Dan--and finally ended in the Yadkin Valley in the Piedmont (see map below).

These immigrants were often a mixed group usually of reform religious movements. Lutherans from Germany established settlements in Kannapolis and Statesville. The Moravians settled in Salem, on land they called Wachovia meaning "meadow and stream."

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*Eighteenth Century
migration routes
into North Carolina.*



Between 1705 and 1775 an estimated 500,000 Scots and Scotch-Irish (Ulstermen of Scottish descent), mostly Presbyterians, emigrated to the New World. The "back country" of North Carolina became the home of the largest proportion. By 1775 North Carolina was the fourth most populous continental colony, roughly 265,000. These included the Scotch and Irish settlers, English, German Swiss who settled in Bern, and French Huguenots. These early settlers heard stories of "amazing mountains within five days journey of the coast." The general belief was that these mountains bordered on the mythical South Sea, the gateway to India and the spice riches. In 1670 Governor Berkeley of South Carolina sent an expedition under John Lederer to explore these mountains. He never did cross the Blue Ridge, but had contact with the Spaniards.

Charles I, the only English king to be beheaded, was active in promoting colonies in the New World. In fact the Carolinas are named after the Latinized version of Charles, "Carolana."

Early on, all of present North Carolina was under jurisdiction of the governor of South Carolina. Even when North Carolina became a separate state in 1710 this area of Western North Carolina remained under South Carolina jurisdiction. It wasn't until 1729 that this area became part of North Carolina.

Perhaps a good wind-up of the influences in this area is a quotation from an early historian. He describes the French as "politic, adroit and unscrupulous." The English he said were "arrogant, cruel and oppressive," and the Cherokee "corrupt, vacillating and treacherous."

The First Real Settlers in This Area-- What Life Was Like

The first non-Native American settler west of the Blue Ridge, and in present day Buncombe County, was Samuel Davidson. Of course there were white men here earlier--mountain men, French couriers du bois, Jesuit priests and the early Spaniards. But none of these came here to settle, raise families or farm.

In 1784 Samuel Davidson left his relatives in Old Fort and crossed the mountain. He built a log cabin on the Swannanoa River near the present Biltmore Estate, then returned to Old Fort and journeyed back with his wife, small daughter and a servant. For Samuel it was a short-lived experience. He found the pastures so lush that he didn't bother to tether his horse but tied a bell around its neck so it could be easily retrieved. A Cherokee raiding party noticing this removed the bell from the horse and enticed Samuel into an ambush in the woods, killing him. On finding her husband's body the next day his wife, the young child and servant left home immediately and walked the 16 miles back over the mountain to her family in Old Fort.

But the Blue Ridge couldn't keep settlers out of this area for long. Many of those who had fought under General Washington in the Revolutionary War were paid off with land grants in Western North Carolina. Soon settlements were springing up in Beaverdam Valley, Reems Creek, and Hominy Creek. A large proportion were of Scotch-Irish descent. Among the first settlers were the Sams, Gudgers, Rices, and Youngs.

The presence of the Cherokee continued to be a factor in the area. Fights between Cherokee and white settlers continued. One such encounter in the Biltmore Forest area lasted 11 days. There also were fights between different Native American tribes. One between the Cherokee and Shawnee that took place where the present Asheville Civic Center stands ended the Shawnee's influence in the area.

Around this time, January 14, 1787, the first white child was born in what is today Buncombe County. His name was James McDowell. His father, who had fought in the Revolutionary War, was given a tract of land where the Asheville Railroad Station used to be. James, who built what is now called the Smith-McDowell house, is buried at Riverside Cemetery

Life for these early settlers was very difficult. For instance, winters seemed to have been much colder than today. In the middle-1800s it is recorded that the French Broad froze so thoroughly that "a four-horse wagon loaded with hay crossed it." During most winters, rivers and lakes froze completely, facilitating travel and skating on them.

Dr. Sondley, in his history of Buncombe County, writes, "log-rollings, house raising, corn shucking and quilting were primitive customs in Buncombe. These things tended strongly to development in the participants' character of industry, social proclivities, fellowship and general intelligence, which daily newspapers, and radio sets can never produce."

The writer continues, "In the early days of this mountainous settlement and for more than three quarters of a century every woman there was occupied in making all of the dozens of articles of domestic use employed or needed in the family. She regarded such work as an indispensable part of her household duties. These women contributed in equal degree with the labors of the men to the founding and upholding of this mountain community and whose training of their sons and daughters developed that sterling character once famous of the people of Buncombe."

These mountain settlers enjoyed a self-sufficient economy. Food was plentiful. The streams rippling past their log cabins offered refrigeration and were full of fish. The meadows furnished an abundance of "greens" and berries. Bee trees provided honey. The woods were full of nuts and wild herbs.

Era of Incorporation-- Buncombe County (1792) and Asheville (1797)

By the early 1790s immigrants with land grants were flocking into the western part of what is now North Carolina. This was so much so that two members of the state legislature from this area took the matter in hand. These men were Colonel David Vance, representing Burke County, and Colonel William Davidson, representing Rutherford County. In 1792 they presented a bill to the state legislature for the incorporation of Buncombe County. It was passed, and our county came into being, comprising the western areas of existing Burke and Rutherford Counties. The county's boundaries included all of present Western North Carolina west of Mitchell County and stretching to the Mississippi. So large was the area that it became known as the State of Buncombe. When Tennessee was admitted to the Union in 1796 it consisted of areas turned over by North Carolina.

Three months after the formation of Buncombe County, the first County Court met in the home of Colonel Davidson, which was near the entrance of Biltmore Forest. The house proved too small for the proceedings so they moved to the barn. Present were James Davidson, James Alexander, William Whitson, James Brittain, David Vance and Colonel

William Davidson. James and William Davidson were brothers of Samuel Davidson who had come to this area in 1784 and been killed by the Cherokee.

The first order of business was a resolution passed unanimously that the men should remove their coonskin caps so business could be conducted in a decorous manner and the opening prayer could be said. Buncombe County was named after Colonel Edward Buncombe, an American officer who died in 1778 from wounds suffered in the Revolutionary War. Western counties in present Western North Carolina were often named after Easterners in order to get the Eastern vote for their incorporation. Colonel Buncombe, who had no known connection with Western North Carolina, fought under Washington at Brandywine and was wounded in the battle of Germantown. David Vance and William Davidson fought with Colonel Buncombe at Germantown.

Soon after Buncombe County came into being, there was a movement to incorporate the city of Asheville. This was confirmed by the State Legislature in 1797, and Asheville (not Asheville) in the County of Buncomb (not Buncombe) came into being.

Samuel Ashe, for whom the city was named, was born in 1728 in the eastern part of the state. He was educated at Harvard and became a lawyer. He was one of the 13 members to govern the state during the Revolutionary War. Later he became Chief Justice and served as Governor for three years.

Before its official incorporation, Asheville was known as Morristown, probably after Robert Morris who helped finance the American Revolution and had extensive land holdings in this area. A committee was appointed to decide on the exact location of the city. The question was, "Would it be in the Swannanoa River area around Biltmore Forest or in the Beaverdam Valley-Reems Creek area?" The committee, appointed to settle this issue, set out on its exploration. They stopped off at a tavern run by a man named Patton. This tavern was located about halfway between these two undecided areas. After imbibing happily they unanimously agreed to look no further and to locate the city where they were, which was a plateau between the two areas.

Asheville quickly grew and prospered. Land grants were being settled, and by 1810 Western North Carolina had a population of 5,000. In 1824, the Buncombe Turnpike was chartered and built. This opened up all of Western North Carolina to the rest of the state.

Trade and Commerce. Quickly this area became a crossroads of trade from Kentucky and Tennessee to South Carolina markets. In particular, the coastal plantation economy required meat and dairy products. Asheville became the hub of huge consignments of turkeys, hogs and some cattle from Kentucky and Tennessee headed for these southern markets.

After the Buncombe County Turnpike was built between Paint Rock and Saluda Gap, as many as 150,000 hogs passed along it each year, particularly in the months of November and December. Traveling eight to ten miles a day, these hog drivers took a week to traverse the county. One Kentucky "drover" by himself handled 2,785 hogs along the turnpike. To encourage the hogs to keep going, small boys ran ahead of them scattering corn. About 25,000 bushels of corn were needed to feed these animals as they came through. All this was grown in Buncombe County, and some of it no doubt in Beaverdam Valley. About every three miles there were "stands" where the drive halted and feeding and watering took place. These stands also provided sleeping quarters for the drivers or drovers. The owners of these stands were not only hotelkeepers but merchants selling corn and other necessities to keep the drive going. Local inhabitants said that during these drives there was a continuous stream of animals.

The tolls for the Buncombe Turnpike were:

12-1/2 cents	A man and a horse
6-1/4 cents	Loose horses and mules
1 cent each	Hogs and sheep
5 cents each	Beef cattle

\$1	Road wagons
50 cents	Carriages

Originally, the responsibility to maintain the road was by those who lived along it. In the 1700s anyone who refused to repair his part of the road was fined 10 shillings a day.

All trade was done by barter. Coins were scarce and hardly ever used. Some English, French and Spanish coins may have been available. It wasn't until 1809 that counties started keeping their accounts in American currency.

Schools. The first school west of the Blue Ridge was the work of Robert Henry, who arrived in the area around 1793. He was well educated, a lawyer and a surveyor. On a knoll about one-half mile north of the Swannanoa River he built a log cabin school in 1793. The school was called Union Hill.

By the middle of the century, schooling became more available to boys and girls. Newton Academy was opened in 1846. The building, located on Biltmore Avenue opposite the new Memorial Mission Hospital parking garage, remained until the early 1990s.

Young ladies could receive the type of education "suitable to female capacity" in a school started by the Reverend John Dickson in his house. This school, St. Genevieve, was at the present intersection of McDowell and St. Dunstan Road. It was later moved to the present corner of Patton and Church Streets where the Wachovia Bank is located. This special focus of education on "the ladies" continued in Asheville until into the 1980's when St. Genevieve's closed.

On May 1, 1884, a public school opened in Beaverdam Valley beside Beaverdam Road on the Rice Cornell property. Mary Mathilda Rice Cornell, daughter of James Overly Rice and Mary Elvira Wolfe, owned the property and allowed it to be used for the school. The school was named the Cornell School in honor of Mary Mathilda's husband, William Stephen Cornell. It had only one room and was a three-month subscription affair, where children of all ages attended. The children were taught according to their grade level and personal skills. Each student was furnished with a slate board and soapstone pencils for class work. In the winter, the larger boys kept the wood-burning stove, located in the middle of the room, full of firewood to ward off the cold mountain winter.

Outside, in the rear of the school, was a large chestnut tree which provided recreation and a tasty treat for the children when the chestnuts were ripe. The children assembled during recess and picked up chestnuts that had fallen from the large tree. An outside toilet was on the property as well. Anything available was used for toilet tissue--leaves, corn shucks and catalog pages to name a few.

Water for the classroom was carried by the larger boys from the sulfur spring on Horace Smith's property, several hundred yards down Beaverdam Road. The school provided two ten-quart water buckets and two dippers. Most everyone drank from the same dipper; however, several students brought tin cups from home.

Each school day opened with the ringing of a bell kept on the teacher's desk. First, a devotion was read, followed by the teacher reading an entire chapter from the Bible. After singing a hymn and pledging allegiance to the United States flag, classes began.

Teachers of the Cornell School, if they were from outside the area, usually boarded with a family in the community. Among the teachers at the school was a Mr. Pitillo, who was fired for his ill treatment of the children. It was said he lacked self-control and would whip the children for little reason. Other teachers employed by the Beaverdam community were Horace King, Edith Stradley, Mr. Garren, Grace Haynes, Maude Waddell, Pearl Fitzpatrick, Minnie Plott and Mary McDowell.

The school building eventually outlived its usefulness, and around 1905 a different building was used. This was St. Titus' Episcopal Church, at the top of what is now Beaver Valley Road and where the George Henderson home is located. The church contained an

old organ which was used both by the school children and the church's congregation. Some of the teachers who taught at the new school were Nannie Falsom, Minnie Gibbs, and Birdie Hughes who later married Judge Guy Weaver. Neighbors who boarded the teachers included the Jim Jones family, the Charlie Joiner family, and the Cyrus Rice family of Rice Branch Road. Water for the school and church was provided from a spring on the old Swain Lane property, at that time owned by the Reverend Thomas Stradley--the site that is now Beaverdam Run.

The Civil War. In this western mountain area men often from the same valley fought on opposite sides in the Civil War. Union sentiment was especially strong in Henderson, Transylvania, Yancy and Mitchell Counties. On the average, enlistment for the south was about ten to one.

Western North Carolina saw no major battles. There were some small skirmishes in Asheville and near Craggy and in the Waynesville area. But North Carolina provided more soldiers than any of the other southern states, and they all had to be outfitted, armed and fed by the state. Had the South won, Asheville would have been the likely capitol of the new southern nation. At one point Federal troops occupied Asheville. A plant in the city had been supplying Enfield rifles for the South at a rate of about 300 a month.

ABC Liquor Stores had not yet been invented, so during these years many farmers had their own stills. There were no restrictions on manufacturing liquor. It wasn't until after the Civil War that the state started taxing stills.

Beaverdam Valley's Early Settlers

In this narrative, we seem to have taken a round-about route before coming to Beaverdam Valley. There's no doubt that this area attracted settlers. It was abundant in food, provided logs for home, the valley was fertile and protected by surrounding mountains. Early Native American and trapper trails from the east and north seemed to have crossed these mountains at Craven Gap and come down into Beaverdam Valley and continued on to Reems Creek.

Among those persons who figured prominently in the valley are the Methodist Bishop, Frances Asbury, and the Danial Killian family with whom he stayed.

Bishop Asbury never actually lived in the Valley but he was a frequent visitor and in 1805 he was responsible for the first Methodist Church in Western North Carolina. The Methodist Church that stands at the corner of Kimberly and Beaverdam Road is named after him and stands on the site of the original log church.



Left--Bishop Francis Asbury (1745-1816), Right--The Wally Killian house on Beaverdam Road is located not far from the site of this father's (Daniel Killian's) log cabin where Bishop Asbury often stayed and preached (PHOTO BY BOG HIGGINS).

Francis Asbury was the son of one of the earliest followers of John Wesley. In 1771 he was sent to America by Wesley and was responsible for creating the Methodist movement

in America. He was made a bishop in 1784. His territory went from Maine to South Carolina, covering North Carolina and Tennessee, including Indiana. DePauw University in Indiana was originally Asbury College.

During his lifetime he covered some 300,000 miles, mostly on horseback and foot. Quite an incredible parish for an itinerant preacher bishop. When in this area he stayed with the Killians, whose house was on the present Elk Mountain Highway, and it was the Killians, together with the Cravens and other Valley residents, who gave the land for the first Methodist Church. Killian made a straight-back chair, with a woven bottom, for the Bishop. The chair is presently on display at the Methodist Church. Bishop Asbury kept a daily journal, and many references to Beaverdam Valley appear in it.

For instance, his journal of Sunday, November 7, 1802 reads, "We preached at Killians. On Monday I made for Mrs. Fletcher's on Mud Creek. We could not be prevailed to tarry for the night so we set off after dinner and we housed that night at the widow Johnson's."

"On Thursday I lodged with Benjamin Davidson (probably in the Biltmore Estate area), where I had lodged and preached two years ago. Next day we set off for Saluda. We labored 18 miles ascent on the west side and as many on the east side of the mountain. The descent to Saluda exceeds all I know from the province of Maine to Kentucky and Cumberland. I dreaded it, fearing I should not be able to walk or ride such steeps. Nevertheless, with time, patience, labor, two sticks and above all a good Providence, we made it."

His journal of Tuesday, October 25, 1803 states, "We reached Buncombe County. The road is greatly mended by changing direction and throwing a bridge over Ivy. We called a meeting at Killians and a gracious session it was. My subject was I Corinthians 15."

"Sunday, October 25, 1810, I preached in great weakness. I am at Killians once more. Our ride of 90 miles to Staunton Bridge on the Saluda River was severely felt and the necessity of lodging at taverns made it no better."

Bishop Asbury died March 31, 1816. He preached 17,000 sermons and ordained 3,000 preachers. During his 300,000 miles of preaching he crossed the Appalachians over 60 times.

The original log church was replaced by a frame building in 1879 and called the Mount Pleasant Methodist Church. In 1927 that building and steeple was torn down and the present brick structure was built and named Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church.

Many descendants of the early church members are active members today, and their names are found on the roads and coves of Beaverdam Valley, and in the stained glass windows of the church.

Bishop Asbury seemed to have enjoyed his visits to Beaverdam Valley in spite of the comments of a contemporary writer who described Beaverdam Road as "standing in a land of filth, fleas, rattlesnakes, mountains, rocks and rivers."

Key Residents During the 1800s-- The Bairds, Swains, Lanes and Rices

An array of names not only contributed to the history of this valley, but also to the state and nation: Zebulon Baird Vance, David Lowrey Swain, Joseph Lane, Joseph M. Rice, and the Bairds, just to name a few.

The Bairds, Some of the oldest families in Buncombe County take their origins from the Baird brothers who settled along the French Broad and Beaverdam Creek in 1793. Bedent Baird settled in this valley in an area called Baird Bottoms where present day Beaver Lake is. Zebulon Baird, his brother, settled near the present-day town of Woodfin. These brothers were grandsons of John Baird who sailed from Aberdeenshire in 1683 and settled

in New Jersey. In 1775 his descendants moved to the vicinity of present-day Morganton.

Then, in 1793, Zebulon and Bedent crossed the Blue Ridge mountains into Buncombe County, which had just been incorporated. The brothers brought with them the first four-wheel wagon seen in Western North Carolina. Zebulon married Hannah Burke of Burke County and Bedent married Mary Ann Welsh of Buncombe County. The Bairds became wealthy merchants and traders. They opened the first store in Morristown, later Asheville, and Bedent owned a grist mill in Beaverdam Valley.

Zebulon Baird died in 1827 and was buried on Church Street. Bedent died in 1839 and is buried in the Weaverville cemetery. Zebulon Baird Vance, later Governor and Civil War General, was the grandson of Zebulon Baird. Vance's father had married a Baird.

Zeb Vance's grandfather settled in Reems Creek in the 1780s and was one of the founders of Buncombe County. Born in 1830, Zeb Vance became a lawyer in Asheville. He served with distinction in the Civil War, and served as governor of the state in 1862-65 and 1876-78. He was elected to the U.S. Senate and served there 15 years.

The Swains and Lanes. The two names most associated with this valley are David L. Swain and General Joseph Lane. David's father, George Swain (sometimes spelled Swayne), was born in Roxboro, Massachusetts in 1763. He was a hatter by trade. Later he moved to Charleston, South Carolina and then "walked" to Augusta, Georgia. There he served for five years in the State Legislature.

In 1795 he married a widow whose husband had been killed by the Indians, Caroline Lane Lowry. She had two brothers, Joel Lane who was a founder of Raleigh, and John Lane who was living in a "double log cabin" in Beaverdam Valley. George Swain and Caroline moved to Beaverdam Valley to join their in-laws and resided in what is our present Log Cabin. So, the two boys, David and Joseph, were born within a few months of each other in 1801 and were, in fact, first cousins. In 1805 George Swain was made postmaster of Asheville. This was a responsible position, as it was the distribution center for all mail to the Carolinas, Tennessee and Georgia.

Supposedly, George Swain had an incredible memory, a trait his son inherited to his advantage. It was said that George, on one occasion, to an astonished audience, recited the whole book of *Genesis*.

David Lowry Swain, their son, received his early education at the hands of his mother at the log cabin. When he was 15 he went to Newton Academy at Asheville and later attended the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. In his early 20s he became the first native-born lawyer of Buncombe County, and at age 31, in 1832, he became North Carolina's youngest governor. While studying law in Raleigh he married Eleanor White, whose father was then Secretary of State.

A contemporary states that David Swain achieved these distinctions "in spite of his outward appearance. His ungraceful carriage, a malformation in person, out of proportion in physical conformation, apparently thrown together in haste and manufactured from the scattered debris of material that had been used in others' work . . . gawky, lanky and a peddle propulsion that often awakened derision."

However, having said all this in one sentence, the writer admits that "he was endowed with some amiability of temperament, intellectual ability, and nobility of character, that he attained a universal popularity." (Author's note: No doubt these latter traits were inherited from his mother.)

→
David Lowery Swain
(1801-1868)

While serving as governor, Swain became president of the University of North Carolina 1835 and held that post until he died in 1868.

The aforementioned writer, obviously trying to make amends for his earlier comments, says of Governor Swain, "He had no superior in the U.S. in the departments in which he lectured--constitutional and international law, moral science and political economy. His knowledge was encyclopedic in its range, especially in English Literature. He had inherited from his father an exceedingly strong, tenacious and amazing memory."

Historical research names three Swains coming to America in the middle-1600s. The one we are concerned with is Jeremiah who came to Charleston, Massachusetts in 1638. Later he was elected mayor of Reading, Massachusetts.

He and his wife Mary had six children. Their son, John, who married a lady called "Freelove," is probably the grandfather of David Swain.



Because of these northern connections, Governor Swain had a hard time courting Eleanor White, a southern belle. Eleanor's father strongly advised her against the marriage. And when the ceremony did take place, very few attended and church bells tolled in mourning. This was August 23, 1865.

Two Lane brothers, John and Charles, were early arrivals in this area around 1795. John, the father of General Lane, had been given a "forge land grant" in the Reems Creek area. These grants were given by the state to anyone "who would live on the land, smelt the ore, and work it into useful implements." Some of the ore for the smelting operations was obtained from Beaverdam Valley on the ridge separating the valleys of Webb Cove and Lynn Cove Roads. This became known as Iron Ore Ridge.

Charles Lane, who lived in Reems Creek, was issued 1,800 acres on the French Broad River and Beaverdam Creek. John probably leased the Beaverdam property to his brother, who built the two-family log cabin where he was joined by his brother-in-law, George Swain.

In 1798, John married Elizabeth Street, and their son, Joseph, was born in 1801 in the log cabin. In 1804 they moved from the log cabin and settled in Kentucky and that was where Joseph Lane grew up. Joseph married and raised ten children, six boys and four girls. One son graduated from West Point and fought with the Confederate Army in the Civil War. All the children later followed their father to Oregon and settled there.

Joseph, at some point, took his family to Indiana because from 1822 to 1829 he served in the Indiana Legislature and in the Senate from 1844 to 1846. When the Mexican War broke out 1846-1848 he enlisted as a private and ended up as a Brigadier General, one of the heroes of the war. In 1847 he was brevetted Major General, the highest rank in the Army at that time. Two of his fellow officers in this war were Robert E. Lee and Jefferson Davis.

→
Joseph Lane
(1801-1881)



The next year President Polk commissioned him Governor of the Oregon Territories. He served from March 1849 to June 1850 when he resigned. He was elected a delegate in Congress from Oregon, serving from 1851 to 1859. When Oregon became a state in 1859 he became its first senator. In 1860 he ran for Vice President on

the Democratic ticket as a running mate to John Breckenridge. Abraham Lincoln won the election. He lived out his life in Oregon, dying there in 1881.

In 1879 he wrote a letter to a cousin, Mrs. A. E. Stikeleather, who lived in Olin in Iredell County near Statesville. Mrs. Stikeleather was so impressed with the letter that she sent it to the *Charlotte Observer* and they printed it in full. This lady and her namesakes are descended from Johan Jerg Steigleder who landed in Philadelphia in 1749 from Germany and died in Cabarrus County, North Carolina in 1780.

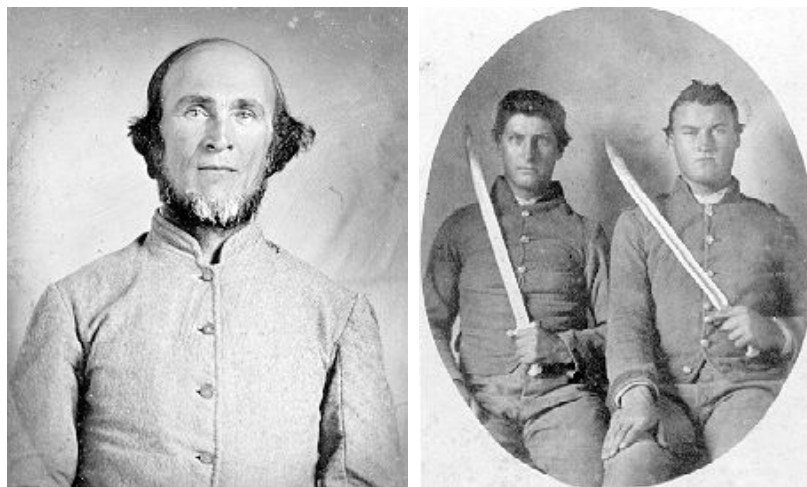
In the letter, General Lane talks about his life, his wife's death in 1870, and President Polk sending him to Oregon. "The trip to reach my post," he writes, "was made across the plains in winter. A feat that not before had been accomplished. We left Ft. Leavenworth on September 10, 1848 and, after a struggle, arrived in Oregon on March 2, 1849." He continues, "In 1860 I visited North Carolina and spent several days with my cousin, David Swain, at Chapel Hill. I intended to visit old Buncombe, but did not."

The Rices. Another family from this valley who played a prominent part in local history were the Rices. Joseph M. Rice settled in the Bull Creek area in 1792 on a 200-acre land grant. There he operated a stand for drovers. By 1844 he owned over 1,700 acres in Buncombe County. Apparently he never resided in Beaverdam Valley, but his grandson, James Overly Rice, did. The latter obtained 410 acres on Beaverdam Creek in the 1830s. He built a two-story log cabin beside the creek which became known as Rice Branch. He lived and farmed there with his wife, Mary Elvira Wolfe, the daughter of William Wolfe, of Wolfe's Cove. They had 11 children. James Overly died at the age of 44 from diseases contracted in army camps. He is buried in Ringold, Georgia, together with Thomas Pittman, another Beaverdam resident and with 137 other Confederate soldiers in an unmarked grave.

His sons, William and John, were born in 1841 and 1842. They fought at Chickamauga, where William died. John, who fought in the same battle, became so ill from living in disease-ridden camps that he was furloughed home. He died in 1864. His gravesite is located at Asbury Memorial United Methodist Church Cemetery and his grave is marked by a Confederate grave marker.

The original log home built by James Overly Rice is still standing, although some alterations have been made since. It is the first house on the right side of Rice Branch Road.

I am indebted to much of this information about the Rice family to Mrs. Mary Jane Pearson, the great-granddaughter of James O. Rice. She lives on Rice Branch Road near the original Rice log cabin with her daughter, Mrs. Laura Stephens. She said that Joseph M. Rice first came to the Bull Creek area and lived there with the Shawnee. He built a cabin and returned to what is now the Tennessee border to bring his wife and child back.



Left--James Overly Rice (1819-1863). Right--James Rice's two sons: At left, John Marin Rice (1842-1864); at right, William

She continued, "James Overly Rice and his two sons died in the Civil War. James' wife was left with six daughters. These girls had to do all the work the boys would have done. On one occasion salt was unattainable and they boiled the dirt on the smoke house floor and drained off the salt that had settled there."

"On one occasion," Mrs. Pearson continued, "The girls' mother rode across the mountain to visit her relatives in Bull Creek. She carried home with her some meat. A panther, smelling the meat, stalked her. Luckily the house dogs heard her coming and chased off the panther." Mrs. Pearson has in her possession the Bible the two boys carried with them during the Civil War battles. The family patriarch, Joseph M. Rice, shot the last buffalo in this area. A plaque on the Blue Ridge Parkway marks the spot.

Mrs. Pearson added, "before the Wolfsons bought the Beaverdam property, the Miami Dolphins football organization were considering it for a summer training camp."

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The Rice cabin as it exists today
is the first house (second building)
on the right on Rice Branch Road.
COURTESY MARY JANE PEARSON



Mrs. Pearson pointed out that many Western North Carolina residents owed their existence to the Young family. In the 1690s John Young and his wife, Lady Martha Stuart, outfitted a ship and with family and attendants set sail from England for the New World. They settled in the present District of Columbia area. One of the attendants was a man named Gudger. He married Young's daughter, and their son and his family moved into this area in the middle 1800s.

James Overly Rice's grandmother was a Young and his father married the daughter of a Gudger. The last Young in this area was the poetess Charlotte Young who died in the early 1980s.

A Diversity of Religious Denominations

We have devoted a lot of space to the Methodists and especially Bishop Asbury. However other denominations moved quickly into this area.

The Baptists. Baptist missionaries came early to Buncombe County. By 1790 the Baptists had 94 churches throughout North Carolina, the largest number of any denomination. In the early 1800s a church was built near present Canton called The Locust Old Field Baptist Church.

The first Baptists to settle in Beaverdam Valley were the Reverend Thomas Stradley family, who purchased 50 acres in 1841 from William Bassett. This was probably up on the present Webb Cove Road. He later bought the property from the Swains on which the present Log Cabin is located. The Reverend Stradley founded the First Baptist Church in Asheville and continued to make the five-mile horse-drawn-wagon trip to Asheville from Beaverdam until the end of his pastorate in 1875.

Thomas Stradley was born in 1798. He and his brother, Peter, fought under the Duke of Wellington in the Battle Of Waterloo in 1815. He married Mary Dibblin in 1819 in St. Luke's Church, London, England. Both Thomas's and Mary's grandparents had been managers in the King's armory. In the early 1820s, Thomas and Peter came to America. After a spell in South Carolina, the brothers came to present Western North Carolina. Peter settled in Henderson County and Thomas in Beaverdam Valley. Thomas Stradley

was officially licensed to preach as a Baptist minister in 1829. Thomas, who had 13 children, lived in this valley until his death. As well as his pastoral duties, he farmed and ran a blacksmith shop. After 29 years as a pastor, the church minutes record that "this year the pastor received \$21 in gifts."

In 1853, Berea Baptist Church in Riceville was founded. Beaverdam Valley Baptists used to go there to worship. They traveled some six miles across the mountain from the end of today's Rice Branch Road, then down through Bull Creek.

In 1884 a nucleus of Beaverdam Valley Baptists got together for the purpose of establishing a church in the Valley. Three benefactors--Reverend T. Stradley, his son Joseph, and son-in-law Reverend Washington Haynes--donated \$100 each for the construction of what was to become Beaverdam Baptist Church. This one-room clapboard structure seated 70 people. The church had strict rules. "A member could be 'churched' for profanity, lying, dancing, immoral conduct, bigamy and failure to attend services." On June 9, 1893 an additional plot of land was purchased for \$14.30. Breaking ground for the present church on Beaverdam Road was held April 1, 1950. Les Stradley, the golf pro at the Country Club of Asheville, is a direct descendant of the Reverend Thomas Stradley. Les has the powder horn and ammunition pouch that Thomas's son, Joseph, had with him during the Civil War.

The Presbyterians. The first Presbyterian gatherings in this area were held on the banks of the Bee Tree Stream, under the shade of the beech trees that grew there. Meetings were conducted by two ministers from Iredell County. This was around 1793.

Later a small log church was built. This was the first church building west of the Blue Ridge. The land for this was given by Robert Patton. This Robert Patton meeting house later became the first Asheville Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church got an early start in North America because many of the early immigrants were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The first synod was held in Philadelphia in 1706. One of the early organizers was the Reverend William Tennett, who opened a seminary at Neshaminy, Pennsylvania for the training of ministers. It was the forerunner for the College of New Jersey later to become Princeton University. Descendants of Reverend Tennett were instrumental in organizing the first church of Asheville around 1794. Many "Tennetts" appear in today's Asheville phone book.

Ora Blackman, in her history of the Presbyterian Church in Western North Carolina, rather poignantly points out that in the very early days Presbyterian expansion did not proceed as quickly as the Methodists or the Baptists. She writes, "The factor most responsible for weakening the Presbyterian Church of Asheville was the lack of resident ministers. Both the Methodists and the Baptists allowed men without seminary training to hold pastorates. The Presbyterian church required high educational standards for its ministers. This ensured qualified men but meant many ministers had to look after many different congregations."

These itinerant pastors of all denominations in the very early days held their meetings out of doors. Thus the camp meeting came into existence. Ministers would often remain in an area for a few days or a week. Settlers from near and far packed food and overnight belongings into a wagon if they had one and headed for the camp meeting. All camped out for the duration of the preacher's visit. It was a happy social occasion as well as food for the soul. The more wealthy members would set aside a portion of their land for these gatherings providing some sort of rough shelters as well as water, hay and food for the horses and people.

The Episcopalians. This denomination got started in our area somewhat later than the others. Trinity Episcopal Church was founded around 1847 when Asheville had some 800 citizens. The Reverend Jarvis Buxton came here from Rutherfordton to start a parish. His congregation at that time consisted of two people, Mrs. Henrietta Patton and Mrs. William Coleman.

A church was built on the present site, on Church Street, and consecrated by Bishop Ives

on July 6, 1851. The Reverend Buxton started the Ravenscroft Boys School on Ravenscroft Avenue. In the early days, the present Grace Church, just down the road on Merrimon Avenue, was a mission of Trinity parish. Grace Church was then a log structure in its present location that had been built in 1867 on land donated by Professor John Kimberly. The rector was Reverend M. Rice, a descendant of Joseph M. Rice. In 1896 there were 51 communicants and 45 in the Sunday School. The present building was first used on Sunday, May 31, 1908. The architect was an Englishman named R. S. Smith who had considerable knowledge of the rural English churches after which Grace was patterned. Grace was then still a mission of Trinity.

The Catholics. Unquestionably, the French Jesuits were in Western North Carolina in the 1600s. Their work was mainly with the Indian population.

Probably the first mass that was said in this area was conducted in 1866 by Reverend J. J. O'Connell. On August 30 he erected an altar at the top of Mt. Mitchell and a small group received the sacraments. Two years later Bishop James Gibbons, later a famous Cardinal, made his way by horseback and stagecoach to Asheville. Land was acquired by Colonel N. A. Woodfin and a small brick building was built. This mountain mission was served irregularly by whatever priest could be spared from elsewhere. In 1887 Reverend J. B. White became the first resident pastor of Asheville. He set about acquiring land that was more accessible to parishioners, and the property of the present site was acquired. A small church was built.

In 1905 a summer visitor who was a distinguished architect offered his services to build a new church. This was Rafael Guastavino. As one writer puts it, "The story of the building of the present Basilica, opposite the present Civic Center, is one of faith, zeal, industry, perseverance and generosity such as might be told of the building of those Old World cathedrals where all worked together, each after his own talent, for the raising of a structure worthy of the worship of God." In October 1909 this church was dedicated. At a later date a parish church, St. Eugene's, was built on Beaverdam Road.

Buncombe County Grows, Attracting Interesting People

As was mentioned earlier ,after the Revolutionary War the Cherokee-held lands from the Cinch River to the Blue Ridge were turned over to the new U. S. Government. As most of those fighting in this war were not paid, they were given land grants in various parts of the new country, and many moved into Western North Carolina.

For instance, John Burton, generally described as the founder of Asheville, got a grant of 400 acres. His acreage comprised most of present downtown Asheville. He surveyed some 42 one-half-acre lots which he sold, in some cases, for \$5 and in other cases for as much as \$25. His best day according to *Citizen-Times* columnist, Bob Terrell, was April 22, 1795 when he sold 11 lots.

Most of those who got grants farmed their lands, built their homes there, and raised their families. Western North Carolina began to grow. Haywood County was incorporated in 1808, Cherokee County in 1829, Yancy County in 1833, Henderson County in 1838, Jackson and Transylvania Counties in 1851, Clay and Mitchell Counties in 1860.

As the population grew, businesses, stores, mills and so on began to replace the self-sufficient farms. Speaking in Asheville just before the Civil War, Nicholas Woodfin deplored the fact that "looms had disappeared from the homes, and homespun was no longer seen on the village street." Forges and tan yards moved into the area as well as saw mills and steam engines. The Industrial Revolution that was changing the face of Europe was inching into Western North Carolina.

Stagecoaches, newspapers, and luxury imports now became part of the life of Buncombe County. Gold mining was still going on, but the mines were drying out. When the California Gold Rush of 1849 developed, Western North Carolina miners were some of the

first to go.

By 1830 Asheville had a population of 800 and by 1860 there were 1,100. The cattle and hog drives through this area continued until the Civil War when the railroads took over.

By the early 1800s wealthy "low landers" from Charleston and the South Carolina plantations were bringing their families into these mountains for the summer. In some cases huge estates were built. The early social leader of these "low landers" was Charles Baring from Charleston, who summered here with his family. He was part of the Baring Brothers banking family. This British bank had provided the loan with which Thomas Jefferson made the Louisiana Purchase, doubling the size of the young United States.

To accommodate all of these travelers hotels sprung up. In 1830 James Patton bought the Hot Springs located on the French Broad. He built a hotel that could accommodate 225 people. Around 1848 another hotel, handling some 200 people, was built at Sulphur Springs. It was always full.

Asheville--A Health Resort. By 1820 Buncombe County had become a recognized health resort for people from South Carolina, Georgia and, by later in the century, for people from all over the United States.

The local hot springs had medicinal benefits, and the mountain air and climate were very good for pulmonary problems such as tuberculosis.

In 1871 a sanitarium was opened at Forest Hill for tuberculosis. It was probably the first such hospital operating in the United States. In 1876 another sanitarium opened. These hospitals brought the nation's most outstanding physicians to Asheville, as well as excellent medical care--a tradition that continues today. Patients flocked here to benefit from the climate, clean mountain air and the "pure water." Many bought property and remained.

Roads, Railroads and Streetcars. In 1824 the North Carolina Legislature incorporated the Buncombe Turnpike to be built from Saluda to the Tennessee border. George Swain of Beaverdam Valley, James Patton, and Samuel Chunn were commissioned to raise the money for this. It was completed in 1827.

The traffic, especially hogs, cattle, mules and turkeys, became so heavy that an alternate route was built which went through Beaverdam Valley, probably along the present Beaverdam Road. Because this section of the Turnpike was poorly constructed and badly maintained it was not used for hogs--just mules and cattle.

By the 1840s stagecoaches were crossing the Blue Ridge. The trip was hazardous and not very comfortable. Francine Fisher of Salisbury describes her ten-hour trip across the mountains to Asheville. She was an entertainer en route to Pattons' Hot Springs Hotel. She writes, "No one knows what stones really are until she had traveled from Old Fort to the top of the Blue Ridge. A ship at sea in a stiff gale is steady compared to the rattling coach. As the vehicle careened along the narrow, unprotected, spiraling road her companion became so thoroughly frightened that she grew pious and kept on repeating 'we can only trust in Providence.'"

These stagecoaches were drawn by four horses, with the body of the coach slung on strong bands of leather. There were eight passengers inside and four more on top, beside and behind the driver. "Stands" were situated about every eight to ten miles along the route where horses were changed. These coaches traveled about 60 miles per day.

By the middle of the century these rough roads, literally hacked out of the woods, were replaced with "plank roads." This was simply a method whereby wooden planks were laid down on the original road bed and connected together. This made for easier travel and brought the first sawmill to Western North Carolina.

On September 15, 1830 the Duke of Wellington, then Prime Minister of England, together

with his Cabinet, boarded a train for its maiden run from Manchester to Liverpool traveling at a speed of 24 mph. The age of railroads had begun.

By the 1840s the U.S. was not only building railroads, but she was also building her own locomotives. The first through train from New York to Sacramento ran in 1869. The trip took 6-1/2 days. By the 1870s rail lines were being laid in the U.S. at the rate of 10,000 miles a year.

In 1856 a 223-mile railroad was completed linking Charlotte with the Piedmont area. A few years later, the Western North Carolina Railroad was incorporated with a stock value of \$6,000,000. It was to start at Salisbury to go to Morganton across the Blue Ridge into Western North Carolina and Tennessee. The Civil War, however, halted construction. The first contractor was killed at the Battle of Manassas.

In 1868 plans were revived and contracts were let for the section from Morganton to Old Fort. The following year contracts were let to continue over the Blue Ridge into Asheville. By 1869 the section to Old Fort was completed, and the Asheville section was completed on October 3, 1880. On this occasion, Asheville's 2,610 citizens turned out to welcome the first train.

The building of the railroad across the Blue Ridge was quite an achievement. James Wilson, the engineer in charge, with the help of 500 convicts, laid a curving track that doubled and redoubled itself to make eight complete circles. This looping required nine miles of track to cover 3.4 miles as the crow flies. The laborers worked with picks and shovels and oxen and mule teams. Boulders and debris were carted away in wheelbarrows. The blueprints called for seven tunnels. Holes for blasting had to be hand drilled. These holes were filled with paste, nitroglycerin, sawdust and corn meal. When Wilson completed the task he telegraphed Governor Vance in Raleigh, "Today daylight enters Buncombe County." Trains were called "the cars" and people talked about taking the cars to Morganton. These trains carried first- and second-class compartments.

1881 the North Carolina Legislature chartered the Asheville Streetcar Company. The bill stated that these cars "were to be propelled by steam, animal or other power." Actually they were propelled by electricity. In fact, electric streetcars in Asheville and Richmond, Virginia were the first such operations anywhere in the world. Electric streetcars were not developed in London England until 1884.

Asheville's first electric streetcar ran from the center of the town, down a rather steep hill (Biltmore Avenue) to the railroad station. Sometimes the cars failed to make the turn at the bottom and ran off the tracks. On one occasion the efforts of men with crowbars wasn't getting the car back on track. An onlooker stepped up, ordered everyone to step aside, and proceeded to lift the rear of the car back on track. His name was White and he was somewhat sensitive about his prodigious strength. But among the streetcar fraternity this story was repeatedly told.

And so, Buncombe County grew.

In 1804 the present Country Club of Asheville was chartered. The first newspaper in Asheville was the *Highland Messenger* founded in 1840. The first editor was the Reverend David Rice McAnally.

By 1895 the first bicycles began appearing on city streets, followed shortly by the first automobile. By 1888 George Vanderbilt was acquiring land, and he finished building Biltmore House in 1895. In that year Arden was incorporated.

By 1888 Asheville streets were being lit by electricity. Telephones came in about the same time, and water works, supplying water to homes, replaced the private and public wells in use before. By 1912 Asheville had five banks, three hospitals, fourteen hotels, and a phone system with 2,500 subscribers.

In 1927 a Dutch company made a large purchase of land on Hominy Creek and erected a

large manufacturing plant at an outlay of millions of dollars. This place became called Enka.

J. Haskew Shook, in a letter to the *Citizen*, January 10, 1954, complained about a sewer line that had backed up into the Beaverdam Valley, "injuring everything including the lowly cabbage so the residents can no longer strum the banjo and sing 'Bake the Corn Bread Brown and Boil the Cabbage Down.'" The writer goes on, "This valley was the cradle of politics as well as religion, for it furnished Governor David L. Swain to the state. Thomas Stradley founded here the first Baptist Church, and the first Methodist congregation met to worship at the Trinity campground in the Valley.

"And a most exciting event [occurred] when a Mr. Howland built the first and only inter--urban car line down this Valley into Weaverville. No automobiles then. But the most thrilling thing is that it was in this valley that the first airplane took off. Well do I remember when our own famous aviator, Henry Westall, put on an exhibition here." This flight took place on the flat surface that is today Beaver Lake. The parts for the plane were brought in and assembled here.

Besides the usual names we associate with the early years of Asheville--Wolf, O. Henry, Vanderbilt, Sandberg, Charleton Heston and Billy Graham--other very interesting people considered this area home for part of their lives.

In 1904 Asheville's first bacteriologist arrived here. He was Lewis M. McCormick. Today's McCormick Field, home of the baseball team the Tourists, is named after him.

Dr. McCormick was appalled by all the flies he encountered in Asheville. This no doubt was a result of the hogs, horses and cattle that passed through Asheville for a hundred years.

He initiated a plan called "swat that fly." He enlisted scores of small boys, gave them fly swatters, and sent them out on the streets of Asheville. Home owners were offered their services at a price of ten cents per house. The fly population dropped dramatically within a few weeks and Dr. McCormick quickly gained national attention. Delegations came to Asheville from various parts of the country to see how he had achieved this success.

At one point, John Philip Sousa, led his band up and down Patton Avenue. William S. Hart, the first silent movie cowboy star, directed a production in Asheville's first Little Theater. Arthur Murray gave dancing lessons at the Battery Park Hotel. Sarah Bernhardt performed at Asheville's Grand Opera House. And Colonel Sanders of Kentucky Fried Chicken fame ran a boarding house in Weaverville for a couple of years. He was a member of Asheville's Kiwanis Club.

Asheville's biggest benefactor was George W. Pack. He came from Cleveland in 1884 because of his wife's ill health. He had made a fortune in lumber in Michigan. Pack Square and Pack Memorial Library remind us of his generosity. Walt Disney also came by this way in the 1920s during the real estate boom but never settled here.

William Jennings Bryan campaigned here often, bought a house on Evelyn and Kimberly Streets, and moved here in 1917. He taught Sunday School at the First Presbyterian Church.

The United States' first female doctor, Dr. Elizabeth Blackwell, called Asheville home for two years. British-born in 1821, her family moved to the U.S. when she was very young. Seventeen medical schools turned her down, but Geneva College in New York finally accepted her. Her Asheville experience occurred between 1845 and 1847 when she taught school here to raise money for her medical school tuition. Later she founded the New York Infirmary for Women and Children and created quite a furor by staffing it with women. In 1875 she helped set up the first school of medicine in England. She died there in 1910.

An Asheville lawyer, Lillian Exum Clement, was the first woman in the South to be elected to a state legislature. This was in 1921 when she took her seat in Raleigh. She later

married the telegraph editor of the *Asheville Citizen*, Eller Stafford.

Other personalities who made Asheville home include, E. W. Grove, who made a fortune in pharmaceuticals. He came here at the turn of the 20th century. The Grove Park Inn, the new Battery Park Hotel, and the Grove Arcade are all his handiworks.

The story is told (true or not) that one of his creations was a quinine tonic drink good for ailments like malaria and mosquito infections. Apparently the British army tested it, found it effective and shipped quantities to their troops in India. One officer, disliking the bitter taste, added some gin and thoroughly enjoyed the result. So, apparently, gin-and-tonic was invented.

The Historic Log Cabin and the Wolfsons

At this point it might be helpful to clarify the history of the famous Log Cabin ("Governors Lodge") on the Beaverdam Run property.

A "two family" log cabin was built at or near the present building by George Swain. He probably built it sometime at the end of the 18th century and, as mentioned earlier, he invited his sister and her new husband, Joseph Lane, to join him and his wife. David Lowry Swain, the future governor grew up in the log cabin and lived there until his late teens. So, the Swains owned and lived in the log cabin into the early 1800s. The Lanes left in 1804, and no one apparently moved into their side of the log cabin.

Now we come to two divergent views: 1) The original Swain log cabin fell apart and a log cabin was built on the same site by the Reverend Thomas Stradley in the middle 1800s. 2) The original Swain home may have been upgraded by Reverend Stradley, but the log cabin where the two boys had been born is basically the present log cabin.

An unsigned article in the *Asheville Citizen* dated May 16, 1937 reports that the State Federal Writers Organization was urging the state to preserve the original Vance and Swain homes. Describing these homes the article states, "David Swain, three times governor of North Carolina and many years President of the University of North Carolina, was born in the old Swain house in upper Beaverdam Valley about five miles from Asheville, as was his cousin, later General Joseph Lane.

"The building was torn down some time ago but a two-story log structure, practically on the same site, is said to have been constructed in part from timbers of the original home. The first home was built by George Swain. Later it was the home for many years of the Reverend Thomas Stradley."



Left--The Reverend Thomas Stradley (1798-1891). Right--Pictured at their home in Beaverdam Valley is the family of Joseph Stradley (1833-1922), tenth child of the Rev. Thomas Stradley. The small boy in the front row, second from right, is Les Stradley, Sr. COURTESY LES STRADLEY, JR.

Another article in the *Citizen*, date unknown, but probably around the 1950s, authored by "The Captain of the Crew," states, "Out on Beaverdam Road to the left as you travel to Webb's apple orchard is a two-story log house that housed two of the most distinguished men North Carolina has produced, Governor Joseph Lane of Oregon and Governor David L. Swain of North Carolina.

"Tradition, backed up by the indefatigable researches of the untiring octogenarian Owen Gudger, says that the present log cabin, known far and wide as the Stradley House, was the actual house in which the two illustrious cousins were born." The article continues, "Charles A. Webb, who owned property on Beaverdam Valley and after whom Webb Cove is named, says that Thomas Stradley built the present house and the Lane/Swain house adjoined it and has given way to time. No mere reporter can settle this dispute, but this reporter rules Mr. Webb out of court. Mr. Gudger has so many facts to sustain his contention and the Buncombe County Historical Society presided over by the famous scholar Dr. F. A. Sondley has accepted as fact the case presented by Mr. Gudger."

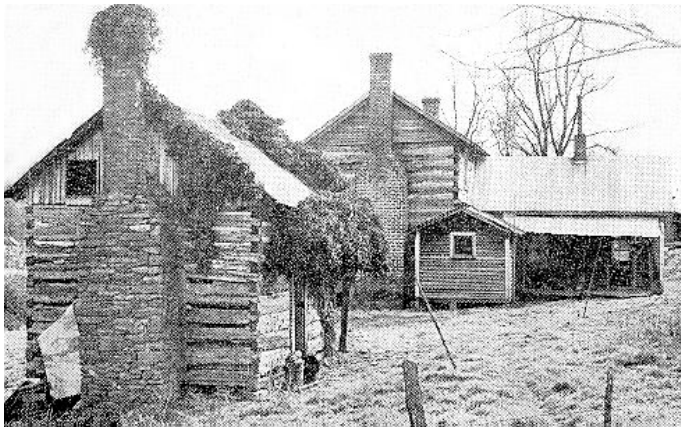
Rodger Warshauer, a resident of Beaverdam Run, writing in an early edition of *Beaver Tales*, takes the story a step further. He interviewed Carl Thorpe a valley resident who worked for Mitchell Wolfson in the 1960s and 1970s. According to Thorpe, the log cabin standing at that time consisted of the front portion of the original building. The stairway on the inside today actually came off the old back porch.

Thorpe said that the rear part of the present building was never part of the original log cabin. This rear section, where the pool table is today, was at one time the Post Office at Cashiers. When Mrs. Wolfson heard this log post office was going to be torn down, she bought it. She had it disassembled, numbered and reassembled at its present site. Thorpe helped to do this. Thorpe said the entire structure was reroofed with specially treated shingles that would last 100 years. Again, according to Thorpe, adjacent to the cabin were two slave cabins, one for females the other for males. The female cabin was equipped with a fireplace and all the cooking for the families in the log cabin was presumably done there. Wolfson ordered Thorpe to tear down these two cabins. Thorpe says he remembers taking out some "very old beds and tables." Thorpe said that the bricks from the fireplace looked as if they had been made on the property. Thorpe said he buried these bricks from the fireplace "between the black walnut tree to the right of the croquet lawn and the former putting green."



Early 1900s view of the Log Cabin (left), slave cabin (right), and Tilson farm buildings (far right background).
CITIZEN-TIMES PHOTO

Log Cabin (at rear) at Beaverdam Run is shown about 1950. Slave cabin is in foreground. CITIZEN-TIMES PHOTO



These slave cabins would seem to have been part of the original Swain property. I doubt that the Reverend Stradley, if he built a new cabin, would have added slave quarters. Or, if, according to Mr. Webb, the Swain house was in such a rundown condition that the Reverend Stradley built a new one, surely the slave cabins would also be falling apart. The fact that these slave cabins were still standing in the 1960s seems to support the Buncombe County Historical Society that the present log cabin or part of it was the original building. The Vance Home in Reems Creek, built around the same time as the Swain house around the 1790s, also had slave cabins attached to it. In September 1997 I talked with Carl Thorpe. He verified what he had said to Rodger Warshauer some years earlier. He said that the two slave cabins he tore down at Wolfson's request were unquestionably the original ones built by Swain. They were about 18 by 20 feet. They had an earth floor and a loft and were made out of chestnut wood.

He said the fireplace bricks were made on the property from red clay. These bricks were thrown into a small ravine about ten feet deep near the walnut tree by the croquet court. This was later covered up and a culvert was run there to drain off water.

Thorpe said, "There is absolutely no doubt in my mind that the front portion of the present log house is part of the original Swain-Lane home."

Thorpe said that he worked for Wolfson for 19 years and that Mr. Wolfson combined three farms to form his horse farm. The largest was the Collins dairy farm. This comprised some 75 acres and had been in the Collins family for two generations. The farm had approximately 75 cows. The farmyard, silos and milking barn were in the area where the present gazebo is located.

Another farm of some 15 acres belonged to Mr. Tilson and was located where the office used to be (1-3 Ridgeview Drive) and stretched to the east. The third farm was in the area of the present Pond Lane condos.

Thorpe spoke of the Saturday night gatherings that used to take place at the Country Store, which was located at the corner of Pinecroft Road and Beaverdam Valley Road. "All the valley folks gossiped there," he said. "On a Saturday night you could see teams of horses tied up all around the place."

Thorpe also spoke of a hidden spring near the present service entrance. Apparently in 1923 when there was severe drought in the county, this spring provided the only drinking water for Asheville. According to the locals it was "the sweetest water around."

The development of Beaverdam Valley cannot be discussed without a mention of Beaver Lake and what is today the Country Club of Asheville.

The original Club located by the Grove Park Inn was in the early post-war years host to many distinguished personalities. Annie Oakley, when she wasn't with Buffalo Bill, spent some time playing golf at this course. In 1925, records show, the Club was host to 7,000 non-resident golfers, among them Bobby Jones and Francis Ouimet. Bill Tilden was one of

the tennis greats who played there.

Mr. and Mrs. Vanderbilt were members of the Club. Some years after her husband died, Mrs. Vanderbilt resigned from the club and hired Donald Ross, the preeminent golf architect of the time to build a course in Biltmore Forest for her. This was completed in 1922.

Meanwhile a golf course had been built opposite what is today Beaver Lake, the Beaver Lake Golf Course. This was another of Donald Ross' courses. It was one of the first courses in the South with "grass greens" as against the usual clay/sand ones.

In 1931 the Asheville Country Club (as it was known then) joined forces with the Beaver Lake Golf Course. So Asheville Country Club members had a choice of the use of two golf courses. This partnership went on until 1976 when Mitchell Wolfson entered the picture. At that time Wolfson had real estate interests involving Beaver Lake and the housing development across the lake, the Lakeview Estates, of which Beaver Lake Golf Course was a part.

Acting as an intermediary, Wolfson made it possible for the Asheville Country Club to sell their Grove Park course to Jack Tarr Hotels, who owned the Grove Park Inn, and acquire the Beaver Lake Golf Course. Thus came into being the new site for the Asheville Country Club. This transfer took place in 1978 and officially located the Country Club of Asheville in Beaverdam Valley.

Mitchell Wolfson was an interesting and forward-looking individual. One reason for his encouraging the above transfer was his desire to maintain the beauty of the Valley at a time when it was being eyed by shopping centers and mobile-home builders.

He was born in Key West, Florida, the son of a clothing store owner. He made his fortune in the movie theater business, and then moved into television, owning stations throughout Florida. In 1958 he bought WLOS in Asheville, and owned it into the 1980s.

Wolfson loved the Asheville area. He bought a large home on Beaverdam Road. The entrance is right next to present Belvedere. Some of his property was later sold to the developers of the Timbers. Wolfson's relatives still live in this original home.

Wolfson was also into horse racing and he had a stud farm in Florida. He bought the present Beaverdam Run property from a Mr. and Mrs. Collins in 1967. The Collins' had operated the property for many years as a dairy farm. Wolfson called it the Fran-Lynn Farm, Fran after his wife Frances, and Lynn after his daughter. He used it as a stud farm for some of his best race horses. One such was "Two-Street" who had won over \$100,000 at Saratoga and Aqueduct. Another of the horses stabled here had come in fifth at the Kentucky Derby.

Wolfson put up a guest house on this property and invited many of his friends here. A frequent visitor was Jackie Gleason who enjoyed the nearby golf course. In fact, Gleason used the pool table in the present Log Cabin to sharpen his skills for his upcoming movie "The Hustler," starring Paul Newman. Another visitor was J. Paul Getty, who locals say could be seen "being pushed around in his wheelchair by his 22-year-old wife."

The horse barn that housed Wolfson's horses was still standing when early condo residents moved in here. A small building housing stable employees stood where the present Community Garden is located.

Wolfson died in 1984 and his estate sold the property to a South American from Bogota, called Alberto Duque. He was into coffee futures, based in Miami and working for the Chase & Sanborn Company. Duque failed to make the payments on the property and apparently totally disappeared. The property then reverted back to the Wolfson estate. The grandchildren who were involved had no interest in the property and were eager to sell it.

The Duque name is well-known in Panama, and rumor has it that while in Colombia he was involved in the drug business. He left his name on two gate posts on the condo entrance, since replaced by Beaverdam Run insignia, but had little to do with the development of the property.

Beaverdam Run Is Started

Now the evolution called Beaverdam Run begins. This is where Ed Newmark and his NWS. Associates entered the picture in the late 1980s. Newmark was a music publisher in New York with connections there and in Miami. His brother, Marvin, was living at that time in Chunn's Cove. Ed loved these mountains and on one visit to his brother talked about buying some development property.

About this time the Wolfson property came on the market. The very day it was listed, a local real estate agent, Ellen Goldstein, phoned Ed who was staying with his brother and took him around to see it. Marvin said, "My brother fell in love with it. He said 'I don't know what I can do with it, but I must have it.'" Newmark made an offer and in a week or so the deal was closed at around \$750,000. The property was roughly 115 acres.

Ed returned to New York to put together some investors who would join him in developing the property. The first investor who flew down to see this Valley told Ed, "This is it. We don't need anyone else, just you, me and my accountant." With the help of Miami friends in the building business, plans were drawn up for 120 units. Marvin told me, "Ed felt that at that time Asheville had no really upscale condo developments and he wanted to make this one."

First Ed had to deal with the Beaverdam Valley Home Owner's Association. Apparently what he outlined in terms of architecture, fitting into the landscape, convinced them that the countryside would not be dotted with small homes and bungalows. So permission was given to proceed. Local banks, notably the First Federal of Hendersonville, put up the early capital.

Fifty units were built and sold. Ed was determined to make them of superior quality. At this point the Hendersonville bank stepped in and said they felt that he was over reaching and building too fast. Apparently quite a number of newly built units remained unsold. Ed refused to back down and the bank withdrew its loans. Ed was forced to file for bankruptcy on May 20, 1989. Ed returned to the music publishing business in New York, and according to his brother hasn't returned here since.

The property was put up for auction by the bankruptcy court and the First Federal of Hendersonville acquired it for \$4,540,000. It hired Action Properties, Gerald Candler, President, as its sales agent and developer. This arrangement remained for two years after which Candler acquired the property.

To complete the history of this Valley it may be helpful to carry the story forward to the completion of the Beaverdam Run Condo property. The final completion and turnover to the Condo Association didn't occur until January 1997. At that time, Action Properties, Gerald Candler, President, completed the final unit and the Condominium Association took over full control.

A review of Board Minutes during these early years, 1989 through 1990, presents a rather confused picture. The volunteer board members were faced with a number of issues which consumed a great deal of their time and energy. Present condo members should be eternally grateful for these early board members for the effort they put into untangling many thorny issues. Much of this involved reorganizing the documents which were originally written for a high-rise Florida-type condominium. Names such as Richard Sampson, Karl Straus, Kemp Roll, Chris McNally, Harold Stikeleather, Marilyn and Rod McLennan, Ward Warren, and Mariza Adamson constantly crop up in these early minutes.

One of the main issues was, after Newmark's pull-out, who is responsible for upgrading

and dealing with deficiencies left by NWS. For instance, for the first building stage NWS. hired a prestigious engineer from McGill Associates to design and build the water system. For the second stage, no such competent engineers were hired and the system had many faults that needed correction. For instance, 10,000 feet of improper underground water pipes installed by NWS. had to be replaced.

Almost weekly, Board Members were involved in meetings with the bank and with Candler ironing out these issues. At the July 22, 1990 Quarterly Meeting, Harold Stikeleather reported that the bank had "agreed to pay \$330,000 towards an estimated \$340,000 for corrections and repairs."

In the meantime, the Board needed to run the day-to-day responsibilities, landscaping, repairs, etc. At the meeting of November 6, 1989 the question of a croquet court was discussed. "It should be near the Lodge and part of our future plans." At the April 13, 1989 meeting it was decided to return the Ford truck owned by the Association to the bank "so that no future payments need to be made."

In February 1990 a letter from the bank to the Board stated that the sale of the property to Candler was now under discussion. In July that same year the Board passed a resolution insisting that when the bank sells to Candler it should remain "contingently responsible for the project until it is completed."

As I mentioned earlier, the early Minutes reflect the time-consuming effort put in by the Board and Committee members. These early years were a tricky transition period, successfully completed by very dedicated people. A plaque expressing the appreciation of the Association members hangs in the Clubhouse today, a fitting thanks for all their work. Talking to some of the early residents on this property, they all admit that times were difficult. However, there was a general determination that issues would be settled. The universal comment was, "everybody pitched in."

Dave and Earlyn Hart were two of the earliest home owners. They moved into 25 Ridge Terrace on June 18, 1986. Lorraine Formato, 17 Ridge Terrace, was already here by then. The units on Ridge Terrace were some of the first that were built. At that time there were no paved roads and no landscaping. Bulldozers and construction equipment were everywhere.



Some of the new-generation "early settlers" at the Clubhouse site. In the back is the Wolfson horse barn, the current site of units on Governors Drive. At upper right are 2-4 Stony Ridge. PHOTO BY DAVE HART

Ed Newmark paid his workers well for long hours and overtime. Dave Hart remembers Ed inviting all his workers, who had worked all day, and the few residents, for a July 4th evening barbecue where the present gazebo parking lot now is. This was 1986. "We sat on the rock wall that is still there and had a great time," said Earlyn Hart.

Just west of the gazebo parking lot was where Wolfson had his horse barns. Ed Newmark used them to store all his equipment.

Dave recalls sitting on his deck in the late afternoon watching "Dusty," the bulldozer

driver, putting in the black drainage pipes that lead down to the pond. Dave remembers when there were no trees or anything around the pond. The upper tennis court was there. It had been part of the Wolfson development, next door to his guest house, later the sales office.

For these early residents, few of the amenities we now enjoy were here. The Wolfson riding ring was where the present Clubhouse is. The Clubhouse was put in by Newmark around 1989 together with the swimming pool. The Clubhouse was later extended and the kitchen enlarged.

There was a putting green where the present croquet court is, but one owner commented, "it was better for pitching than putting."

Kemp Roll picks up the story of those early days. "When Ed Newmark departed, most of the units on the east side were completed or at least the foundations had been set. This included all of Ridgeview Drive, Ridge Terrace, Weeping Willow, Pond Lane, and lower Clubside Drive up to 14. There were no buildings on Clubside where the clubhouse was located. In fact, the plan was to have the road end at the clubhouse so that the residents, in that section, would have to go back to Stony Ridge in order to exit. Fortunately, the new buyers agreed to have the road opened to Governors Circle. On the original plat, lower Clubside Drive exited at the entrance. This presented a security control problem, so the road was closed and the entrance re-landscaped to eliminate the outlet.

"It was during the period of bankruptcy, when none of us knew what was going to happen to our community or our investment or our elected lifestyle, that we came together, like the wagons circling in the face of peril. That spirit still persists among many of those who struggled through those times and accounts for the uncommon camaraderie that perhaps puzzles many of the later arrivals. That also was the time when 'volunteerism' was born in Beaverdam Run. We had no Developer to turn to for help or to heap blame upon for performance failures. We did have money, however, thanks to the foresight of people like Pat Patterson. But that was all. Anything else we had to either do ourselves or do without.

"For example, a retired professor of electrical engineering named Ben Coates decided we could equip our street lighting system with photocells to eliminate the need for constant monitoring of timers. He and I did it ourselves primarily to conserve funds. This was the beginning of our 'Nightscaping Committee,' which also took care of replacing burned-out street lights and unit security lights. This is still strictly a 'volunteer' function.

"Early nightscaping was initiated by the original Developer in the form of ground lighting under the willow trees at the entrance, a persimmon tree at the model house (1 Ridge Terrace), and a willow at the corner of Governors Drive and Governors Way. The only problem was that it was mercury vapor lighting which cast a ghastly blue-white light on the trees. When I was asked to take care of 'nightscaping' I learned that high pressure sodium lamps were the latest thing in ground lighting. The existing lamps were changed to the warm glow we now have and an additional light was added for the willow behind the Japanese Garden. Much later we added the lighting under the willow at Sunset Pond.

"It was after Mr. Candler was here that Bob and Betty Frank, the occupants of 68 Stony Ridge, awakened one morning to find the mountain that had been in front of their unit was now resting literally at their front door! It had collapsed overnight and huge sections of it were covering their roadway. They were essentially marooned.

"This calamity became the supreme model of how to get things done around here. For a long time they couldn't drive in or out and had to keep their car at 70 Stony Ridge, yet they did not heap blame on the Board or the Developer. Nor did they threaten anyone with legal action. They simply took the position that it was a natural disaster and that someone who knew what to do, would do it.

"Fortunately for all involved, the Bank was still responsible for maintaining the integrity of the premises; i.e., erosion control. Experts from appropriate State authorities advised the Developer and his Bankers that the mountain above these units had to be 'bolted'

together. Literally bolted. They came in with pneumatic core drills, bored deep holes into the remaining bedrock above the units, inserted steel rods 20 to 30 feet in length into the mountainside, injected the holes with concrete, connected the rods together with large steel I-beams on the surface, and thus succeeded in 'bolting' the mountain back together. (This is the same technique engineers used to stabilize the collapsing mountain along Interstate 40 near the Tennessee/North Carolina border in the summer of 1997.)

"The Franks's problems with avalanches weren't over, however. Sometime later a large section of the slope on the north side of the roadway leading up to their unit slid down onto the roadway below. Just dirt this time. No rocks. Geologically speaking, it 'slumped.' It was an area that had been filled in by Mr. Newmark and the 'angle of repose' was too steep. After a long wet spell, it finally slid down, covering a street light and exposing a water main in the process. It was a mess and the Franks were isolated once again! And once again, they displayed superb patience, living with constant mud while waiting for Mr. Candler's people to try to put things back where they belonged, including relocating the water line. I rescued the street light. Minor adjustments were made to this area over the years and it is now completely stabilized.

"Speaking of natural catastrophes, one summer we had a tremendous downpour that lasted all night. In the morning we discovered our entrance bridge had washed out. What were our ponds was just one huge lake. Most of the fish had been washed downstream, and neighboring residents were gathering on Beaverdam Road to gape at what had happened to 'Beaverdam Ruin.' We were still able to get in and out via a bridge at the construction entrance. Gerald Candler had little choice but to build a completely new entrance bridge which has successfully withstood subsequent storms, but hasn't done too well when a car ran into the fieldstone walls.

"The gulch. The swamp. And probably some other less-than-complimentary epithets were applied to the area separating lower Stony Ridge (units 2-16) from its primary 'eyebrow' (units 15-29). In the early stages of construction this part of the development consisted of a series of silt ponds required of Developers by the EPA to prevent rain-washed soil, silt, etc. from entering Beaverdam Creek. It was a major, albeit temporary, eyesore for everyone. Worse still was the visual aspect of large piles of waste building material heaped high along the length of the road where the units now stand. Only then the road began down below where the maintenance building now stands. (Most of the 'Kemp Roll' bluebird houses were built from scrap siding salvaged from these piles of building debris.) It seems the first Developer was saving money by not having to pay someone to haul away the scrap. Mr. Candler later had no choice but to get rid of this material in order to construct the units scheduled for that section.

"During the bankruptcy period everyone recognized the need for some means of communication. A newsletter had been started by Ward Warren, but it never really got off the ground. Then Bob Frank offered to try again. I worked with him along with Milton Blum and Jack Matthews. I came up with the name 'Beaver Tales' and a masthead based on a picture Bob found of a beaver. Many residents contributed material. Jeanie, my wife, wrote items based on interviews with new residents. Other involvements prevented Bob from continuing so I took over as editor. This was a community publication, independent from the Board. We issued *Beaver Tales* every month or so. Ginny McNally ran them off and she and Jeanie stuffed them in gazebo slots. Copies were also mailed to all absentee residents. We ceased publication when the Board decided against my involvement. Sometime later, Jane Cozier was asked to edit a community newsletter but this soon folded. A few years ago the Board itself, under the direction of Bob and Gwen Higgins, began issuing 'News From Your Board.'

"One of the highlight events of Beaverdam Run was the erection of its flag pole at the entrance. It was one of the projects planned by a 'pioneer' resident, Ward Warren, who played an active role in the struggles of the early settlers. He and I had located an abandoned flag pole in the red barn just before it was razed and had put it aside for eventual erection. Sadly, he died unexpectedly before the project could be initiated. His loss was felt by all, as demonstrated by the small monument at the base of the pole.

"Ward's death made the flag pole project even more urgent. The Board approved the purchase of a new one. The one Ward and I had squirreled away was too short."

Kemp continues: "Putting up a flag pole doesn't sound like a test of mankind's ability to survive. Yet, somehow, this is what it proved to be for me and four other Beaverdam Run residents. We were volunteers in a condominium community which could easily have afforded an expert in flag pole erection. One might correctly presume that it cannot be too difficult to raise a prefabricated 35-foot aluminum flag pole up in the air and then lower it into a hole in the ground.

"It is well, however, not to make such presumptions when volunteers are involved: (1) whose good intentions often tend to outweigh their skills; and (2) when the project requires coordination and some measure of preparation, like reading the directions. We could easily have stood on the sidelines expressing occasional procedural suggestions while awaiting the opportunity to salute the American flag soon to be fluttering from the pinnacle of our new flag pole. Which, looking back on the event about to take place, I'm certain would have been our choice.

"But not so. We were dedicated do-it-yourselfers determined to do it ourselves. Come what may.

"First there was Mike Monteperto, who delivered the pole because he had just purchased a new truck and was looking for an opportunity to show it off. Harold Stikeleather was there because his wife, Vivian, had the keys to his house and he, therefore, had nowhere to go and nothing else to do. He also was strong and willing to help out on any community project, having been a successful short-order cook in an earlier life. Rodger Warshauer had been in the intelligence service during the war, required a crutch to get around (a favorite disguise we were told), and was logically presumed to be the most patriotic of the group. He was also the most dangerous. One whack from that crutch could really get your attention.

"Rudy Greear, the fourth in this quintet, was our consummate volunteer, stepping in where others, angels included, feared to tread. Whenever a community project was created, Rudy was there to do his part. This time his part was one none of us envied and which, I'm sure, Rudy would much prefer to forget. He did, however, had the foresight to bring along a carpenter's level, hopeful that Rodger would be able to explain its use. CIA types are supposed to know all about sophisticated technical devices. Regrettably, Rodger had never seen one before, but did manage to discover a good use for it. "And me. Having been a Bomb Disposal Officer in World War II Navy, I had acquired the unique ability to get curious onlookers to 'stand back' while I attempted to de-fuse a bomb. They always obeyed. So I guess my role in this project was to advise any curious onlookers to 'stand back' in case the flag pole erection process might pose a threat to life and limb. Hardly a likelihood I thought. I was also the one who had arranged to get the hole dug in the ground for supporting the pole. Bomb Disposal Officers were good at this.

"In addition, there was a non-volunteer involved: Gerald Candler, our omniscient Developer, who had a vested interest in whatever the residents were doing to enhance (or destroy) his development. I'm not counting him as an integral part of this exercise because he, it will be noted, managed to remain in the distance until the very end when his physical strength and mental acumen were to little avail.

"Aside from the foregoing volunteers, the main feature in this upcoming event was the flag pole itself. When Mike arrived with it jutting out the end of his new truck we all gathered around, first to say nice things about the truck, and then to decide how to remove the pole. But we ended up watching Rodger gesticulating with his crutch and muttering some powerful things under his breath that sounded more pungent than cogent. Listening intently, I thought he was offering suggestions about the removal process but, oddly, he was saying some rather unflattering things about people who chew gum! His wife, Barbara, a Berlin lady, had taught him a few choice expressions in German which piqued our curiosity. 'Dumkopf' was one I spotted. It seems he had just discovered a wad of freshly chewed gum stuck to his crutch tip. We all pleaded innocence and offered

sympathy, except Rudy who was seen to swallow hard. Rodger thereupon scraped the gum off with Rudy's carpenter's level.

"Getting the pole off the truck, as it turned out, was the easiest thing we accomplished. No scratches or dents. Everyone managed to be in the right place at the right time.

"Next the lanyard had to be assembled. Here I wish to acknowledge Harold's input: 'Read the directions!' he suggested. After several futile attempts we concluded he was right and started reading. It worked! Rodger still wasn't paying much attention, probably because he was now engrossed in trying to remove the gum wad from Rudy's level. I distinctly heard him say, 'Schweinhund' which had a certain Germanic ring to it and did not strike me as a term of endearment.

"The next task was to get the pole up in the air and positioned over the hole I had so carefully provided. That's when our troubles started.

"Rudy decided to straddle the lower end to keep it down while the rest of us pushed up on the other end, a la Corregidor. Matters began to get a little out of hand at this point because poor Rudy, despite his cries to the contrary, couldn't manage to keep his feet on the ground and had to bear the full pressure of the quivering pole at the juncture of his legs. Even on tippy-toe his squeals kept up, getting higher and higher in frequency, audio logically speaking. Mike and Harold were at the opposite end and hearing Rudy's distress signals immediately lowered their end. Clearly the wrong end to lower as far as Rudy was concerned. I grabbed one of Rudy's legs which caused him to topple over, eyes rolling, no longer squealing. Come to think of it, perhaps he was but the frequency range had to have been way above my level of hearing. Maybe dogs could have heard it.

"Rudy aside, we still faced the challenge of raising this long, heavy metal pole straight up in the air so that it could be lowered carefully and vertically into the base hole. It was a test even for experienced volunteers like us.

"This is what we did. Harold, seeing that Rudy had lost all interest in the process, at least while his eyes were still rolling, stepping forward and held the bottom of the pole down. The rest of us started pushing up again like the Marines on Suribachi but not getting very far. We were short and the pole was long. Mike came to the rescue. Apparently sensing he had some Scottish blood in his heritage, he regaled us with something about 'tossing the caber.' (I personally believe Mike was unduly influenced by a recent visit to some Scottish Games. It seems to me when your parents were born in Rome you can't be Scottish.)

"Ancestry notwithstanding, he stepped up and shouted, 'Loch sloy, a bear hug I'll give it!' Oddly, he had even acquired a Scottish accent for the occasion.

"I exclaimed in my best Naval Officer voice, 'stand back!' but no one budged. We all knew there were no bombs or fuses involved.

"Proceeding to carry out his threat and accompanied by much grunting, Mike succeeded in lifting the pole straight up, and Harold along with it. While Harold drank Scotch, it was obvious he did not speak it. And being southern, Harold also had a problem understanding Mike's new accent. I, on the other hand, had quickly let go because I'd heard Scots shout 'Loch sloy!' on other occasions (I married one and that's her war cry). I definitely did not want to be too close at hand.

"It was this primeval burst of brute strength that finally enabled us to shift the pole into the position it was supposed to be: down in the hole and vertical. More or less.

"Harold, I remember, kept looking at the top of the pole and getting dizzy. We suggested he lie down with Rudy whose eyes, by now, had begun to focus, perhaps because he was busy trying to avoid Rodger's gooey crutch tip. Harold declined the suggestion, having been whacked once before by Rodger's crutch, and instead tried to pry Mike away from the pole which he was still bear-hugging, pleading 'Let me give it one toss!' Harold said something which sounded like #!@%#!, or words to that effect. And with which none of

us could argue, including Mike.

"Rudy, now on his hands and knees, pronounced weakly that he really didn't chew gum very often, and that as far as he was concerned, the flag pole was vertical. Frankly, none of us considered his judgment to be very reliable at this point.

"As good fortune would have it (mostly his because he had timed his arrival just right), along came Gerald Candler, the Developer. Seeing our strange disarray and quickly comprehending our dilemma, he (1) told Mike he didn't look Scottish enough to toss a caber without kilts and pulled him away from the pole; (2) held Harold's hand until Harold declared himself no longer dizzy (which Harold did rather quickly since he was not fond of holding hands with men); (3) scraped the gum off Rudy's level without even asking how it got there; and (4) told me and Rodger, since we were the only two who seemed to be capable of comprehending, that he couldn't wait to see us try to run a flag up the new pole. Which he said with a straight face.

"All's well that ends well. A fine craftsman named Bill Ponder (most good craftsmen are named Bill or Tim) who always managed to be on hand when the Developer made promises to residents, provided the finishing touches. He not only owned his own level but even knew how to use it. Bill managed to get the pole absolutely vertical and hoisted up the flag.

"We just stood there, saluting, tears running down our cheeks, some due to patriotic fervor, except for Rudy who was happy as a clam, not having been fully aware of what was going on which he was incommunicado so to speak. The struggle was over.

"And that's the truth. God bless America, and its volunteers."

And so, this small valley has left its mark on history, perhaps pinpointed in the small log cabin on our Association property.

Throughout history, mankind, conscious of its own shortcomings, has immortalized the heroism of its forefathers; Raj Ghat in New Delhi where Ghandi's ashes survive, the Sistine Chapel, Westminster Abbey, Mt. Vernon and the Liberty Bell, to name a few. And this is rightly so, for civilization and culture rest on the thin thread of those men and women who lived their lives in such a way that they shaped events. To put the Log Cabin and the Vance Home in Reems Creek in the same category might be considered an exaggeration. But is it?

There can be no doubt that the Vances, the Bairds, the Swains, the Lanes, the Rices, the Killians, by the very way they lived, on their insistence on morality and values, shaped the future of this small area of America. When you sit in the Log Cabin in Beaverdam Run, it isn't hard to conjure up visions of these men and women literally carving a civilization out of the wilderness. The sheer guts it involved, the resourcefulness, the patience, the walking six miles over the mountain to go to church, the women running a farm, making everything they needed, raising large families and in many cases educating them.

It emphasizes even more the comment by Dr. Sondley in his book written in the 1930s and quoted earlier, that frontier life "tended to develop in the participants character and general intelligence which daily newspapers and radio sets can never produce."

And, today are we not all still pioneers carving out our own unique lifestyle in this garden spot of the South, Beaverdam Run?



Early view of Beaverdam Run looking north from entrance gate.
(PHOTO BY DAVE HART)



Beaverdam Valley looking southwest from Buzzard Rock. Beaverdam Run is the "village" in the foreground. (PHOTO BY BOB HIGGINS)

For more photos showing some of the early construction, see the [Early Days](#) photo page on this website.

APPENDIX: [Chain of Title for Beaverdam Run, 1934-1985.](#)

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