

I've created the following set of maps to illustrate the layout of the tracts of the original settlers of the Calfpasture Valley, the lower (southern) end of which comprises NW RockbridgeCoVA, and the northern expanse of which constitutes the SE of AugustaCo:

[Overview of the two large original Calfpasture land grants](#)

[Overview of the original tracts in the Calfpasture Valley](#)

[Tracts of the original settlers of the lower \(southernmost\) Calfpasture, with owners names](#)

[Tracts of the original settlers of the lower Calfpasture, w/o names showing post 1749 grants,](#)

and with full topo background. A [MapKey](#), following, provides full details on these tracts.

[The Preston Plat, 1744](#) (the original map of the 1742 Patton & Lewis grant to the Big River)

[The Preston Plat Map Annotations, Transcribed](#)

And for the wider context of greater AugustaCo (pre-1770), additional maps showing the local watercourses that mark neighborhoods

[from Back Creek & Jacksons River west of the CP east to Middle River in the main Valley of VA](#)

and just from the Calfpasture east over the North Mountain chain into the main Valley of Virginia

[to the Middle River area and the heart of Beverley Manor in AugustaCo proper, in the north](#)

[to the Hays & Moffett's Creek area and the Rockbridge/AugustaCo border, in the south](#)

## The Calfpasture Valley and its Bifurcated River System: the Big and Little Calfpasture Rivers

The Calfpasture Valley, like the great Valley of Virginia that lies to its east on the other side of North Mountain, runs roughly North-South and is technically the easternmost valley in SW Virginia of the Appalachian range. The Calfpasture originally lay wholly in AugustaCoVA, but it was bisected in 1778 when RockbridgeCo was hived off of the southern portion of Augusta. Thus, the lower Calfpasture, which is the focus of this report, largely comprises the NW Corner of RockbridgeCo, with Bath County and the Cowpasture, the next Appalachian valley to its west.

The Calfpasture Valley is watered by the Big and Little Calfpasture Rivers, which rise in the northernmost portion of the valley and run roughly parallel to each other SSW from there to their confluence at the base of the valley. They thus constitute a single river system, which, after their confluence, goes today by the name of the Maury River, which runs south through the Lexington, the county seat of RockbridgeCo, and is actually the major northernmost branch of the James River that disgorge into the Atlantic hundreds of miles to the west near Virginia's capital, Richmond.

Like the best arable land in the main Valley of Virginia to the east, the choicest river bottom land in the Calfpasture Valley was granted by the colonial authorities to favored proprietors in two large blocks of about 10,000 acres, one astride each river. The Big River tract was granted on 27Apr1742 to Col. James Patton and John Lewis, while the Little River grant went to William Beverley, Gent., on 30Aug1743. Beverley, was the absentee landlord better known as the proprietor of the 120,000a grant known as "Beverley Manor" in the main Valley of Virginia, which comprises much of the southern portion of present day Augusta County. The Manor is joined along its southern boundaries to the Borden Grant of 92,100a which lies just to the east of Little North Mountain from lower part of Beverley's Little River tract, and since 1778, like the lower Calfpasture, the Borden Grant falls mostly into Rockbridge County.

For most of the year these rivers aren't wide: one can practically throw a stone across either of them even at their widest points—except that Little River was dammed in the mid-20th century to

make Lake Merriweather just before it's confluence with Big River. Prior to that time both rivers must have been rushing torrents in spring time, and even today at their widest points near the confluence, they continue to nurture lush marsh meadows along their banks even when they are not in flood. There is one small town in the Calfpasture: the village of Goshen, with its 500 or so people. Goshen has been devastated by floods a number of times, and one can see the high water marks on some of the buildings. The two Calfpasture Rivers are divided by a ridge called at its southern end, "the Knob". Due to this feature and the overall narrowness of the Calfpasture Valley, there is comparatively little arable flat land, and much of what there is, is better suited to cattle grazing than farming: hence the valley's name.

### **The Big Calfpasture and the Preston Plat**

The Big Calfpasture proprietors were better organized than Beverley, and they had their agent, John Preston, draw up a plat of the whole grant, once the land had been laid out and largely subscribed. The Preston Plat is dated 1744, and it shows the Big Calfpasture land divided into 22 lots averaging about 450 acres each. The 625a Lot 1 (labeled "1" on this map, but also including "1a"), was designated for Alex[ander] Dunlap, and it was, in a sense, the "anchor" tract of the whole grant. You can see on the detailed map that Lot 1 embraced the river just beyond a gap in the mountains where it makes a 90 degree turn, and that it comprises most of the present town of Goshen. Alexander Dunlap, who died just months after this plat was made, left in his estate some 25 "horse beasts", and was evidently planning to set up a large scale horse breeding operation on his property.

The lower tracts of the Little Calfpasture were mostly taken up by a set of brothers surnamed Gay. The earliest record for these Gays were the appointment of John Gay as constable in 1742 (in the parent OrangeCo records), the record of John and Robert Gay as inventory takers in 1745 for the widow of Alexander Dunlap, and the appointment of William Gay as constable in the Calfpasture in 1746. James Gay's deed was dated 1747 ("B" on the map), but the deed for John's land ("A" on the map) has never been found, nor has the deed for William Elliott, who owned the land in the midst of John, James, and Samuel Gay, and for whom I have reserved the symbol "C". Brother William Gay's land was "D".

### **A Key to the map showing post-1749 grants to the lower Calfpasture but w/o owners names**

#### **The Lower Big Calfpasture Tracts**

- Lot 1 Alex[ander] DUNLAP (Preston Plat, 625 acres), but purchased by son John (1745), who sold half to brother Robert (1762). Although the original deed closes, and matches the acreage, and meets Mill Creek at the top, the initial bound reads "crossing the river and Dunlap's Creek", and is shown doing this on the Preston Plat. Consequently, I believe the survey was in error, and I have drawn an additional base line on some versions of this map.
- Lot 2 William JAMISON (Preston, 170a), who died c.1751.
- Lot 3 Tho[ma]s Gilliam [GILLHAM] (Preston, 165a); sold to James LOCKRIDGE (1752).
- Lot 4 Robart C[r]ocket [CROCKETT] (Preston, 370a), who died c.1751, sold by his heirs to William THOMPSON (1766).
- Lot 5 David Davis (Preston, 290a), but purchased by James POAGE (1749).
- Lot 6 Tho[mas] WEEMS (Preston, 552a); sold to William GIVENS (1763).

**The Lower Little Calfpasture Tracts**

- Lot A John GAY (approx 400a, no deed, but probably there by 1742); His only son, John<sup>3</sup> Gay, Esq. added A-a, originally part of William Elliott's tract (in 1795 (mortgage), and 1797), A-b by patent (50a, 1787), and A-c by patent (200a, 1802), and sold all (803a) to Joseph BELL (1816) and removed to Indiana.
  
- Lot B James GAY (150a, by deed, 1747); passed by will to son Robert on James's death (1776), who added X2 by patent (1796), and sold both tracts to Thomas WILLSON (c.1801), after which it passed to a John BEAVER who never paid in full and was sued by Gay and by John D. Poage to whom Gay had sold his residual rights. Gay and Poage were plaintiffs vs. Beaver over this land in an 1809 Staunton Chancery suit.
  
- Lot C Evidently taken up early by William ELLIOTT (including C-a), but no deed has been found.
  
- Lot D Samuel GAY (354a, by deed, 1762); sold to brother James GAY (1762), who sold it to David MARTIN (1763).
  
- Lot E William GAY (490a, by deed, 1749); William died (1755), and the land passed to his daughter Mary (Dunlap) Coursey, who sold it to Samuel McCUTCHEM(1817).
  
- Lot F William GAY (400a, a second tract acquired by William from the owner of Lot E, by deed, 1754).
  
- Lot G John Hindman (by deed, 1745), 552a; Hindman was appointed the Anglican minister of Augusta, but hadn't the stomach for dwelling amongst the Scotch-Irish, and soon fled and/or died; the land descended to his nephews Christian and Robert FLETCHER, and the latter sold his 200a portion to James STEVENSON.
  
- Lot X-1 Robert<sup>2</sup> (Alexander<sup>1</sup>) DUNLAP (66a, patent, 1774), adjacent to Lot E which his wife inherited from her father, William Gay; you can see on the detailed map that there was a private cemetery on this land.
  
- Lot-X-2 Robert<sup>3</sup> (James<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>) GAY (172a, grant, 25Mar1796, on a survey of 14May1789), adjacent to his father James's Lot B, and his first cousin John<sup>3</sup> Esq.(John<sup>2</sup>, John<sup>1</sup>) GAY. Delivered to John Gay 6Dec1797—meaning that Robert<sup>3</sup> conveyed it to his cousin John<sup>3</sup> informally, simply by signing it over to him.