

Wilson, Donald L

From: Wilson, Donald L
Sent: Tuesday, September 21, 2004 8:49 PM
To: Gordon, Tracy J.
Subject: Origin of the name "Bacon Race"

Tracy – I'm not sure if I was the one who mentioned the race at the CLI class. Maybe it was Dick Murphy (who lives on that road). I had sent him a memo on 25 June 1986 about BACON RACE (THE NAME).

"Attached is what I have been able to find (with Katherine Conner's help) regarding the history of Bacon Race Church. The name is still a mystery.

I found Samuel Jackson's deed to the Baptist Society, 12 May 1798 (Deed Book Z, p. 295) in which he conveyed three acres. The measurements of the boundaries are given, but they include such landmarks as "south side of the road by the meeting house," and "the road to Occoquan Mills." From this deed it appears a church was on or near the site before this date. Jack Ratclife (the late local historian) estimated the church at 1797 on his map. Frances Jones' study of local tax records showed the property had been for a church since 1794, although she judges the present building dates (on architectural clues) to ca. 1880. She says the source of the name Bacon Race is "unknown."

The earliest document I have found that gives the church its present name is John Wood's 1820 map of Prince William County, which calls it Bacon Race Meeting House. ... there are a lot of discrepancies in the history of the church. Ren Conner says the present church was built in the early 19th century; Jack Ratcliffe says the first church was built about 1845. The article by Betty Calvin says the original church was built in 1782 which is probably too early for this congregation although there was a Baptist Society in the Occoquan area as early as 1776. No one has done a thorough job of sifting all the evidence, including Baptist records at other locations."

I am now of the opinion that the 1776 congregation was the forerunner of the Bacon Race congregation, perhaps at or near the same location.

The following appears in "*Folk Lore of Early Settlers of America ...* by W. R. Morris (Carroll County, Va.), vol. 3 (1958), p. 178:

"Hammond Morris Sr., left Richmond County, Va., according to the records about the year 1760, and settled in Prince William County, Va. He bought two hundred acres of land bordering on the Occoquan River and extending to Beachams or Bacons Run – an old horse racing track. So named because the bettors often put up bacon as a bet on horse racing. ... In 1778 he sold this same parcel of land ... to Bladen Blanseth (Blansett and Blanchet)"

Page 180: "Hammond Morris took an active part in church work in that community. He was one of the organizers of Occoquan (first spelled Oconaquan) Baptist church. The first meeting house being built in 1774. His name appears on the following petition. Petition of Prince William Co. Baptist[s], May 11, 1776: To the Honorable Speaker and Members of the Honorable Convention of Va. The petition of a Baptist Church at Oconaquan, Prince William Co., hereby showeth, that whereas, this colony with others is now contending for the civil rights and liberties against the enslaving schemes of a powerful enemy." [They asked for equal rights for their denomination] [Hammond Morris moved to Surry County, N.C. in 1778/9.]

The above quote from a family that later moved to Carroll County, Virginia, supports the notion that there was a racetrack in the area, although they call it Bacon's Run instead of Bacon Race. As for the name "Bacon" – the author contradicts himself by suggesting that the name is both for a person (named Beacham or Bacon) and for a bacon prize. No explanation as to the source of this information, so it should be suspect.

I do find the following deed, dated 2 Feb. 1779: William Veale of Loudoun County and Lydia his wife sold to Alexander Henderson of Fairfax County 248 acres in Prince William County, which mentions as a boundary "a white oak standing at the head of Bakon Race being a corner tree of Capt. Burdit Ashton." William Veale was the heir of Morris Veale. [Prince William Deed Book T, p. 520-525]

6/7 Sept. 1764. John Ashton of Westmoreland County, gent., to Hector Ross of Fairfax County. Whereas Burditt

Ashton of Westmoreland County obtained a deed from the Proprietor dated 3 May 1728/9 [sic] for all that parcel of waste land being in Stafford County, now Prince William on the south side of main Branch of Occoquan ... (adjacent to) land of Morrise Veale and extending thence southeast to a white oak at the head of a raceground commonly called Boxing race [sic] thence east to hickory ... [Prince William County Deed Book Q, p. 164-168]

It appears that the race track was in existence at least as early as 1764. Have looked at the handwritten recorded copy and it does look like "Boxing race". I don't know the significance of the name.

Sorry for the delay in getting back to you. I've been searching for some time for additional information. Hope this helps.

Don Wilson

Donald L. Wilson, Virginia Librarian

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703-792-4540 www.pwcgov.org/library

-----Original Message-----

From: Gordon, Tracy J.

Sent: Monday, September 13, 2004 3:10 PM

To: Wilson, Donald L

Subject: RE: Origin of the name "Coles."

Don,

Several months ago you sent me the email below with the history of the Coles name. We met when I attended the CLI class at the library, and you mentioned that the name Bacon Race came from an actual race that was held by a church in that area, and the prize was a side of bacon.

I told that to Supervisor Nohe, and he was very interested to know any more that you might have to tell us. If you know anything more about the bacon race, it would be great if you could send it along. We may even try to reinstitute the race!

Thanks,

Tracy

Tracy Gordon
Administrative Aide
Martin E. Nohe
Coles District Supervisor
Prince William Board of County Supervisors
703 792 4621

-----Original Message-----

From: Wilson, Donald L

Sent: Tuesday, March 23, 2004 11:25 AM

To: Selmer, Tracy J.

Subject: FW: Origin of the name "Coles."

Ms. Selmer - Per your request, this is the information I have prepared on the history of Coles District.

Don Wilson

Donald L. Wilson, Virginia Librarian
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-----Original Message-----

From: Wilson, Donald L
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2000 12:00 PM
To: Ferguson, Carol J.
Subject: RE: Origin of the name "Coles."

Ms. Ferguson:

This is in response to your request for information about the origin of the name "Coles District." It didn't take me long to find it after all. It was less than 4 years ago that I wrote it, fortunately, so I had a copy on my hard drive. Below is the letter I sent to your predecessor. (I don't have electronic copies of its attachments.)

I can now add a few more facts, gleaned from books published since 1997.

The following people named COLE had business licenses prior to 1869 [from Ronald R. Turner, *Prince William County Virginia Business Licenses, 1806-1899* (1998), p. 29. It appears that many of them may have operated from the same building.

1834: Cole, Fuller H., public show.
 1843: Cole, Elizabeth, merchant, 1843.
 1848: Cole and Milstead, ordinary [=tavern and restaurant]
 1848: Cole, Basil, merchant;
 1849: Cole and Milstead, merchants.
 1849: Cole, B. & Bro., merchants.
 1852-54: Cole, Lawrence [or L.], merchant, ordinary.
 1860-61: Cole, Horace, merchant, ordinary.

From Ronald R. Turner, *Prince William County Virginia 1805-1955 Businesses* (1999), p. 43-44:

1843: Cole, Elizabeth, retail merchant.
 1848: Cole, Basil, merchant business license.
 1848-50: Cole & Milstead Ordinary.
 1855: Cole & Lynn, merchant business license.
 1859-61: Cole, Horace, merchant and ordinary keeper.
 1866: Cole, Lawrence, Cole Ordinary, Brentsville, Va. [Brentsville refers to closest post office, could still be the store in Independent Hill].
 1877-78 and 1884-85: Cole, James, general store, near Bellfair Mills, Va. (Va. business directories)

Cole, James L. - Voy, or Forestburg, Va. In 1888-89 and 1890-91 Va. business directories as a Forrestburg, Va. coach and wagon maker. In the 1884-85, 1888-89 and 1893-94 directories he is also listed as a coach and wagon builder but his address is listed as Independent Hill. He is in the 1897-98 directory as a blacksmith, wheelwright and undertaker.

Cole, James B. Funeral Home - Independent Hill, Va. ... Listed in 1917 Virginia business directory as an undertaker. In 1911 Va. directory he is listed as a blacksmith and wheelwright. The 1920 and 1925 county business licenses list James Cole as an undertaker, but the location was Bristow.

Cole, James B. General Store - Independent Hill, Va. The old store was just north of what is now Samsky's Market. [Date of this store not given in Turner's book, assume it is also of the period

1911-1925.]

I am guessing this latest store is also the site of the original Coles Store, since about 1843./ DLW.

I was wrong when I suggested to a visitor that I may have seen a reference to one of the Coles as being a County Supervisor about the time that the Board was established (1869). We have had two persons named Cole serving as County Supervisor in the 20th century, but relationship to the Independent Hill family is not known.

Please let me know if I can be of further assistance.

Sincerely, Don Wilson

Donald L. Wilson, Virginiana Librarian
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-----Original Message-----

From: Ferguson, Carol J.
Sent: Monday, November 13, 2000 8:26 AM
To: Wilson, Donald L
Subject: Origin of the name "Coles."

Don,

Jane Beyer and Jan Cunard tell me you have a file on Coles history. Will you please send a copy of the background for the name "Coles" for Supervisor Hill's files? Supervisor Hill has had several requests for the history of the name.

Thank you,
Carol Ferguson
Assistant to Supervisor Hill