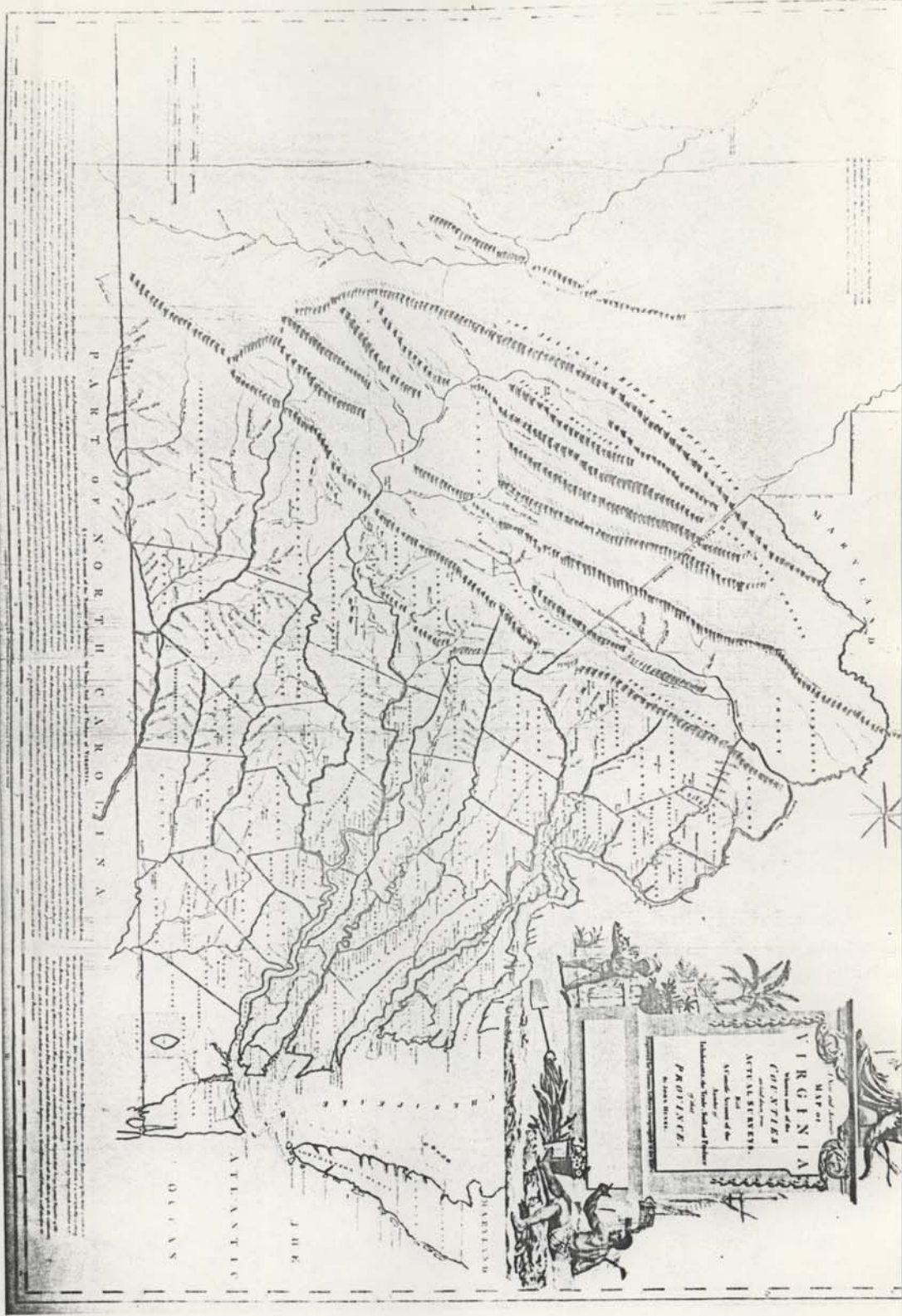
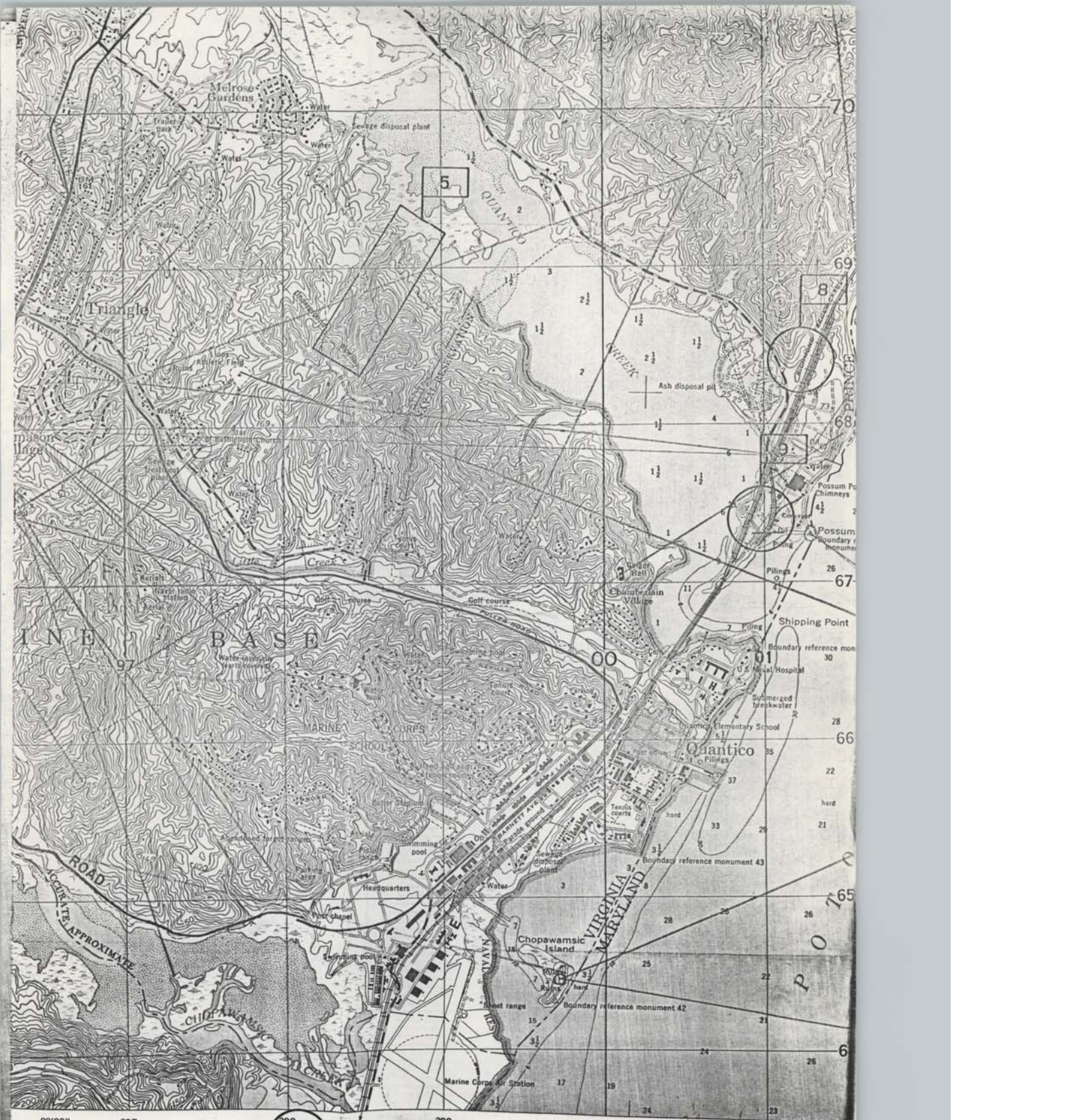


Map of Historic Site



2. A New and Accurate Map of Virginia. Wherein most of the Counties are laid down from Actual Surveys . . . by John Henry, engraved by Thomas Jefferys, London, 1770. (Courtesy of The Colonial Williamsburg Foundation)



12 CONTOUR INTERVAL 10 FEET
VERTICAL DATUM: SEA LEVEL DATUM OF 1929

13 TRANSVERSE MERCATOR PROJECTION
HORIZONTAL DATUM: 1927 NORTH AMERICAN DATUM

Contour interval
Projection Type
Soundings in ft.

HYDROGRAPHIC DATUM: SOUNDINGS IN FEET REFERRED TO MEAN LOW WATER

BLACK NUMBERED LINES INDICATE THE 1,000 METER UNIVERSAL TRANSVERSE MERCATOR GRID, ZONE 18

THE LAST THREE DIGITS OF THE GRID NUMBERS ARE OMITTED

16 USERS NOTING ERRORS OR OMISSIONS ON THIS MAP ARE URGED TO MARK HEREON AND FORWARD DIRECTLY TO COMMANDING OFFICER, ARMY MAP SERVICE, WASHINGTON, D. C. MAPS SO FORWARDED WILL BE RETURNED OR REPLACED IF DESIRED.

15 grid note
Declination Diagram

GN

1380
2-23
108-4-13
4.3
1609
4/16/57

John England built for the Principio Company the 'Accokeek furnace.'" This plant began to melt Washington's ore in 1727.

Stimulated by the early success of this operation, the first John Tayloe, of Richmond County, opened also the ore beds on Neapsco and before 1738 had in operation his Neapsco furnace. He soon found, however, that his ore required a mixture in order to secure a satisfactory flux, and to that end procured from the Council a permit for the importation, duty free, of Maryland ore intended for fluxing purposes. Thus from the start the operations of the Accokeek and Neapsco furnaces were united in a common interest."

Governor Gooch's reports throughout his administration show that all the early Virginia furnaces had built up a profitable intercolonial trade in 'fire backs, potts, boxes for cart wheels' and such small furniture, and in doing so had supplied also an expanding local market. Though their operations were modest, it was generally recognised that the maintenance of these furnaces was important to the entire colony. It came, then, as something of a shock to Virginia when, in 1753, the Principio Company decided to abandon the Accokeek furnace and confine their operations to Maryland. They gave as a reason that the local supply of ore had failed, and thus early defined the limitation of the iron industry in Virginia." In this situation the Neapsco furnace was left in possession of a market in the Northern Neck which invited competition. As early as September, 1749, Charles Ewell had planned to establish another iron works in the vicinity of the Occoquan. Backed by Ralph Falkner, Edward Neale and John Triplett, he had bodied up 1,520 acres of ore lands on Hooe's Run, but apparently was unable to exploit them; for the property remained undeveloped until February, 1755, when it was acquired by Ewell's kinsman, John Ballendine." This picturesque figure was of a Lancaster family which had been planted in Virginia by a Liverpool shipmaster. He, himself, started life operating, as a common carrier, a packet on the Potomac." His contracts of 1755 with the Ewells and Peytons declared his purpose to erect and operate a forge and a grist mill on the Occoquan." With shrewd appreciation of what this might mean as affecting their own in-

terest, the second John Tayloe and Presley Thornton, who were then operating Neabsco, immediately offered Ballendine what he most needed, namely financial backing; and duly entered into a partnership agreement with him 'to erect and carry on an Iron Work' on the Occoquan. In March, 1755, the new partnership added to Ballendine's previous holdings by acquiring Valentine Peyton's Occoquan warehouses;²⁵ whereupon Ballendine there established his residence, and proceeded to erect 'certain forges, water grist mills, bolting mills, bake houses, saw mills, store houses and dwellings,' and to provide the new plant with 'slaves, livestock and other equipment.'

By October, 1759, the 'Occoquan works' were in full operation. Archdeacon Burnaby then visited the plant and left a description of it:

'About two miles above Colchester,' he said,²⁶ 'there is an iron furnace, a forge, two saw mills and a bolting mill. At our return we had an opportunity of visiting them. They have every convenience of wood and water that can be wished for. The ore wrought here is brought from Maryland: not that there is any doubt of there being plenty enough in the adjacent hills, but the inhabitants are discouraged from trying for it by the proprietor's (viz: Lord Fairfax) having reserved to himself a third of all ore that may be discovered in the Northern Neck.'

The Ballendine-Tayloe-Thornton partnership expired by limitation in 1760, when the two last named withdrew. Ballendine was now hard pressed.²⁷ He borrowed money from John Semple of Charles County, Maryland, and by April, 1762, was compelled to transfer to him all his interest in the 'Occoquan works,' reserving only the superintendence and a share in the profits.²⁸ The contract then made contemplated that this arrangement should continue for twelve years; but by February, 1765, Ballendine was forced out, and removed his residence to Seneca Falls, where his restless imagination turned to plans for improving the navigation of the Potomac. Thenceforth the 'Occoquan works' were carried on by Semple alone; but it seems that he soon abandoned the forge and devoted himself

1755-1760

Occoquan
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soon after 1765.

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to the operation and development of the trade of the two merchant flouring mills which Ballendine had built.

The failure of Ballendine did not, however, end the manufacturing of iron in the Occoquan community. In 1764 Bertram Ewell renewed his family interest in the industry and reported to the Assembly that he was engaged in erecting iron works on Neapsco.²⁸ It does not appear from the record that he ever carried out his plans; but the Tayloe works were still in full operation after the Revolution, consistently using raw material from Maryland. Mr. Jefferson mentions 'Tayloe's forge on Neapsco' which he says was making, in 1781, 'bar iron from pigs imported from Maryland.'²⁹

No record has come to light of the volume of the operations of any of these iron works, but there seems no doubt that for at least fifteen years before the Revolution they stimulated a vigorous industrial life on the Occoquan. ✓

The development of wheat farming in the back country, which had induced Ballendine to harness the falls of the Occoquan for the power of his flouring mills and Semple to devote the 'Occoquan works' to that activity, was the basis of the trade which succeeded the iron industry on the Occoquan and ultimately gave rise to a new town. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the ownership of those mills had passed from Semple to Nathaniel Ellicott, the Quaker who brought the English novelist John Davis to the Occoquan, to serve the neighbourhood as a schoolmaster. This 'chiel amang ye takin' notes' recorded a doubtful but characteristically lyrical impression of his employer's ambitions and environment:

'The richness of the adjacent country and the healthfulness of the climate,' he said in 1801,³⁰ 'induced the Proprietor to project the plan of a city and invite strangers to build in it; but his visions were never realized and *Occoquan* consists only of a house built on a rock, three others on the river side and half a dozen log huts scattered at some distance. Yet no place can be more romantic than the view of *Occoquan* to a stranger, after crossing the rustic bridge which has been constructed by

on the organization of Fairfax and the transfer thither of Catesby Cocke as clerk, was, by the interest of his wife's family, preferred to be clerk of Prince William. (The approximate date of his arrival on the Potomac is fixed by a speculative land grant dated April 27, 1742, N. N., E: 460, in the 'back country' which became Loudoun.) Ten years later (1752) he exchanged posts with John Graham, son-in-law of Catesby Cocke (See *ante*, p. 155) and became clerk of Fairfax. It was then that he established himself on the north shore of Occoquan, and a year later (1753) emulated the example of John Graham in founding a town. As 'Major Wagener' he appears in Washington's diaries, attending Truro vestry meetings and generally taking part in county business. His will, if any, is missing, but the Truro vestry book (Goodwin, p. 36) incidentally records his death in 1774.

III. *Peter Wagener* (1742-1798), son of the clerk of Prince William and Fairfax, grew up on the Occoquan and was bred in the clerk's office. He married a daughter of Daniel McCarty of Pohick (Hayden) and appears frequently in Washington's diaries in the group of fox-hunting McCarty kinsmen who frequented Mt. Vernon after 1760. On the death of his father he succeeded as clerk of Fairfax, serving that office from 1774 until his death in 1798. During the Revolution he was County Lieutenant of Fairfax. His will, proved October 15, 1798 (*Fairfax W. B.*, G: 404) names a son, the fourth successive Peter.

"John Davis boasted of Colchester in 1801: 'Beside the bridge stands a tavern where . . . ice cools the Madeira that has been thrice across the ocean.'

"Hening, iv, 298. This act exempted from all 'public, county and parish levies' for five years all persons employed in an iron works, provided that meanwhile they should not make any tobacco. It was the operation of this act in Stafford in relation to the Accokeek furnace which moved John Mercer and Peter Hedgman to perpetrate a libel on the Assembly in which they played upon all the old prejudices against Spotswood. See *Journals H. B.*, 1727-40, pp. 66, 71.

"C. O., 5: 1322, p. 119. There were at this time in fact only four furnaces, Spotswood's at Massaponax and Germanna; Chiswell's at Frederickville; and Accokeek. See William Byrd, *A Progress to the Mines*, 1732. Governor Gooch corrected his enumeration in subsequent dispatches.

"H. Whiteley, *History of the Principio Company*, 1878. See also the reference to the Accokeek furnace, John England and Augustine Washington in Col. Byrd's *A Progress to the Mines*, 1732. Washington's grant of 1726 is N. N., A: 219. England himself subsequently took several grants on Accokeek and Austin's runs in 1727 and 1728 (*ibid.*, B: 120, 122, 124; C: 52).

"Before Robert Carter's death, the first John Tayloe had sought to get him to join in an iron mining adventure, but the 'King' declined, averring with good humour that he already had 'too many irons in the fire' (*Carter Letter Book, MS.*). Tayloe accordingly purchased a broad area of ore lands on Neapsco and went ahead by himself. His petition to the Council in December, 1738, to import fluxing ore from Maryland (*Va. Mag.*, xiv, 236) shows that his furnace was then in operation; and we have seen that in November, 1742, the commissioners to select the site of the second Prince William Court

House described their meeting place as 'the iron mines at Njapso.' By his will, dated January 3, 1744/5, and proved 1747 (*Richmond W. B.*, 5: 553) this John Tayloe devised to his son John 'also five thousand acres in Prince Wm. County upon which the Neabsco furnace stands.' The second John Tayloe seems to have abandoned his father's mining operations but, taking into partnership Presley Thornton, to have continued the furnace altogether on the basis of Maryland ore. To that end he enlisted the co-operation of John Augustine Washington after he had inherited his father's interest in the Principio Company; and thus it was that the brother of George Washington made the petition to the Council on November 5, 1757 (*C. O.*, 5: 149, p. 49) for a renewal of the import permit of 1738. Tayloe was still using Principio ore.

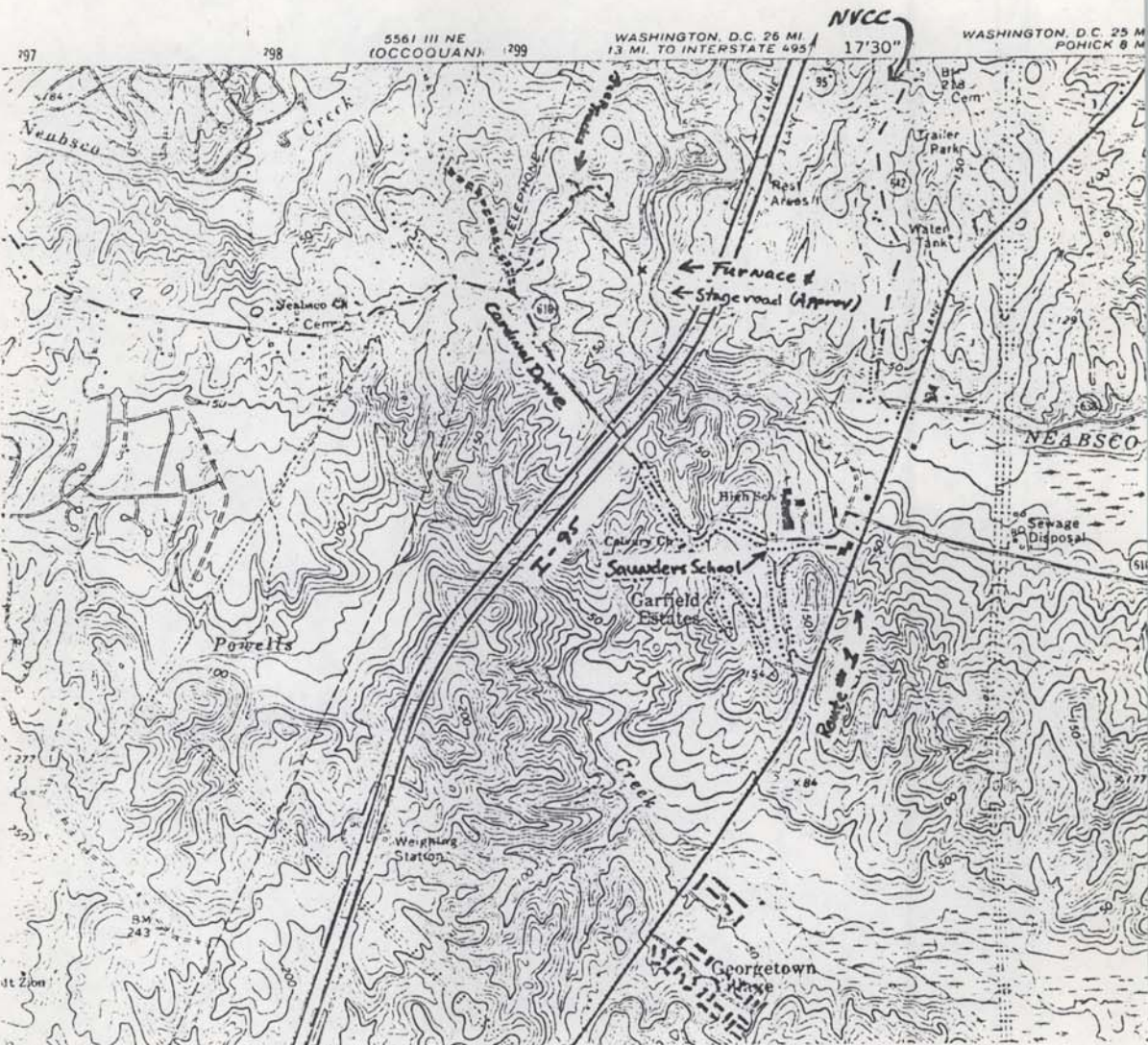
^X *The Accokeek iron mines:* That the ore on Accokeek was not exhausted by the Principio Company appears from the proposal of James Hunter to renew mining operations there in 1777. Hunter was then carrying on Spotswood's furnaces near Fredericksburg; but when they became of prime importance to the revolutionary army he was compelled to advise the Assembly that he drew his 'Pig Iron, the basis of all his manufacture, from Maryland,' a practice which had become 'exceedingly expensive and precarious.' He called attention to the Accokeek iron mines and asked the aid of the government to secure the use of them. In response to Hunter's petition a committee of the Assembly reported that 'The Accokeek Iron Mines in Stafford County, belonging to a company in England whose property they still remain, were worked; but discontinued upwards of twenty years ago because they had larger and richer Banks of ore with greater Conveniencies of Wood & Water, in Maryland; where all their hands, stocks & utensils were removed. The Lands are said to have been offered for sale by the company's agent, and probably from their being very broken, without Timber, and the soil excessively poor, have not been sold.' Hunter was accordingly authorized to expropriate the Principio title, but it does not appear that he made a success of the venture (See the legislative papers in *W. & M. Quar.*, xxvii, 82, and the act in *Hening*, ix, 303).

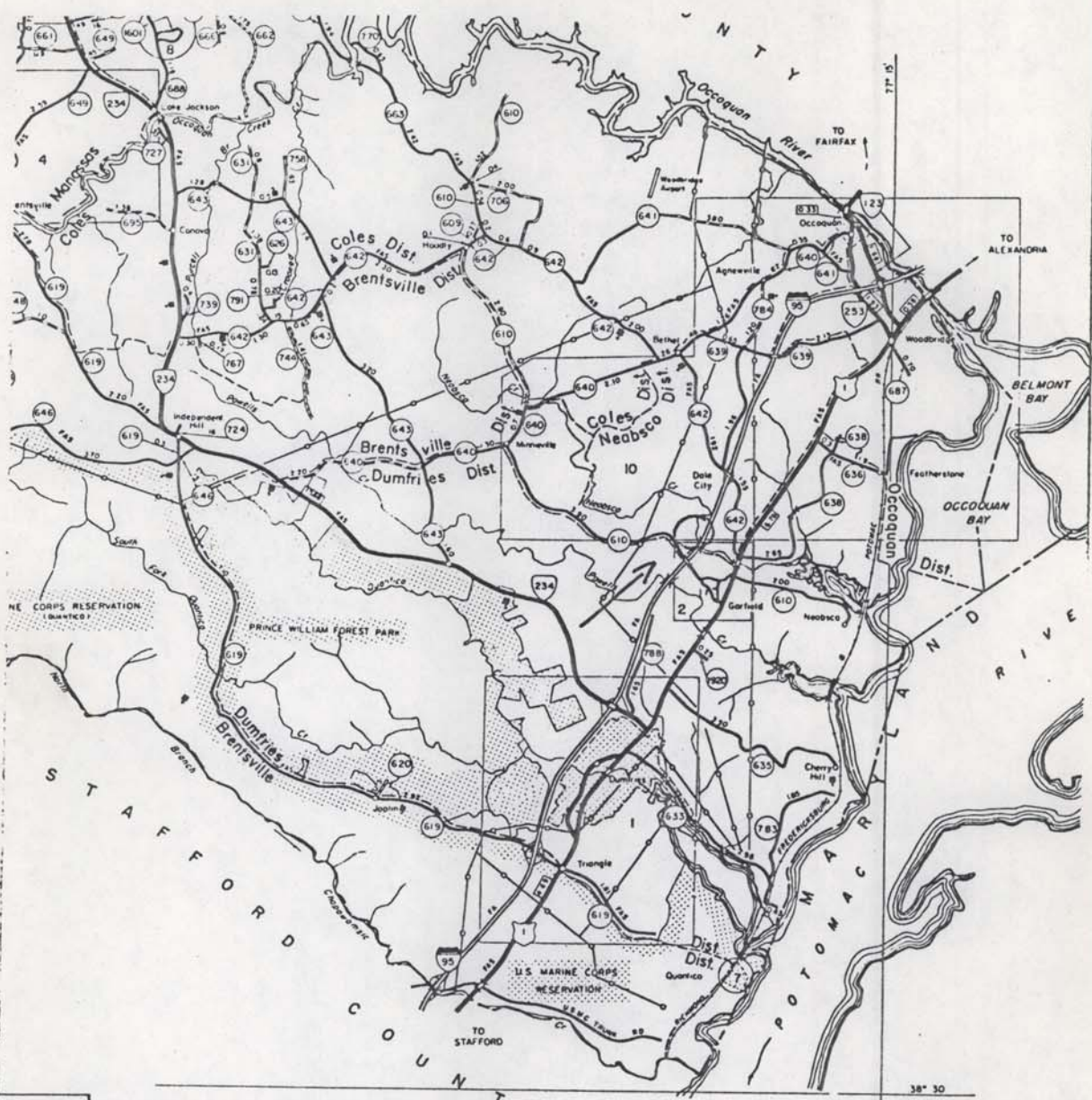
The explanation of this record of consistent failure is that the Accokeek ore never was available in economic quantity, justifying profitable operation. In the *Manufacturers Record*, December 7, 1922, an expert in iron says as much of present day conditions.

No one would start up a great foundry based upon the Virginia iron because he feels that within 15 or 20 or 25 years the supply of Virginia ore would be so depleted that the cost of pig iron must necessarily greatly increase . . . the Virginia furnaces instead of expanding and developing will gradually dry up unless there is a well established movement of outside ores to supplement the Virginia supply.

¹ For Charles Ewell's plans of 1749 see the recitals in *Prince William D. B.*, Q: 523.

² *John Ballentine.* In February, 1773, John Ballentine, being then engaged in promoting the improvement of the navigation of the Potomac above the falls, issued a prospectus in which he stated that he had had 'an experience of fifteen years in transporting merchandise up and down the river Potowmach.' (See *post*, p. 540). This may identify him with the John Ballentine (as the name is recorded) who contracted to transport troops by water to Alexandria at the time of Braddock's expedition (*Journals H. B.*, 1770-72, p. 6). He was of a





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Neabsco Furnace area.

Neabsco Iron Works Site
(Continuation Sheet)

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Harrison, Fairfax, Landmarks of Old Prince William (c192), pp. 427-29; 434-35.

Tilp, Frederick, This Was Potomac (c1978), p. . .

"200 Year Hike: Troop 1392 Marks Site of 'Neapsco Furnace,'" in Potomac News,
5 Jan 1976.