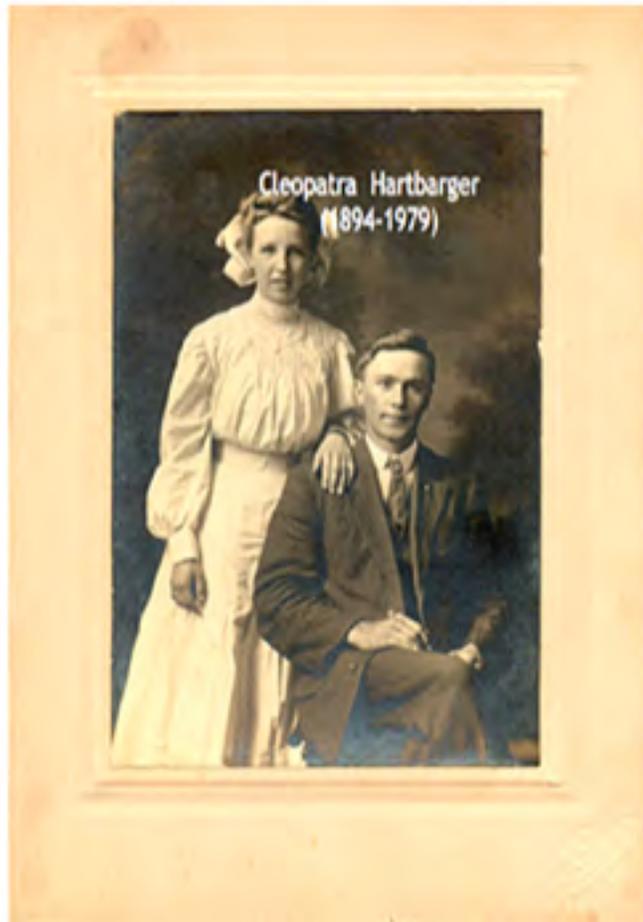




Denmark Presentation 3.28.16

By Reed Belden

Early in the last century Cleopatra Hughes Hartbarger and her daughter Seatta Hartbarger Teaford undertook a project to record the history of the Denmark area beginning with its first settlement in the early 1800's. This effort resulted in a document known as the "Teaford Papers". As these papers record life in the 19th century and the papers were written in the early to mid 20th century it is clear some of their information handed down from folks living at an earlier time, probably mostly by word of mouth.





For the last several years Barbara Bennington Nunley and her brother Stewart Bennington and to a lesser extent I have endeavored to document the work of Cleopatra and Seatta. This presentation is based on the work of all these folks.



The photographs in the presentation are the work of Stewart who is a professional photographer

When you travel west from Lexington on Midland Trail you encounter this sign indicating you are in Denmark Virginia.



Today all that remains of commercial activity is the closed Ayres Store.



Between 1845, when the Teaford Inn provided housing for travelers going west, and 1986, there was commercial activity of some sort in the village.



As Denmark was never an incorporated village or town there are no formal boundaries to the village.

For purposes of this presentation Denmark centers at the intersection of Big Hill Road and Midland Trail. On the east is the flatland of Kerr's Creek. On the west is North Mountain. South is the apex of Big Hill. On the North by White Rock Mountain

This Isometric shows the suburbs of Denmark; Waterloo, Big Hill, Egypt, Taylor Hollow and the area on Midland Trail above the intersection of Waterloo Road. The distance from Midland Trail to North Mountain is between 2 and 2 1/2 miles.

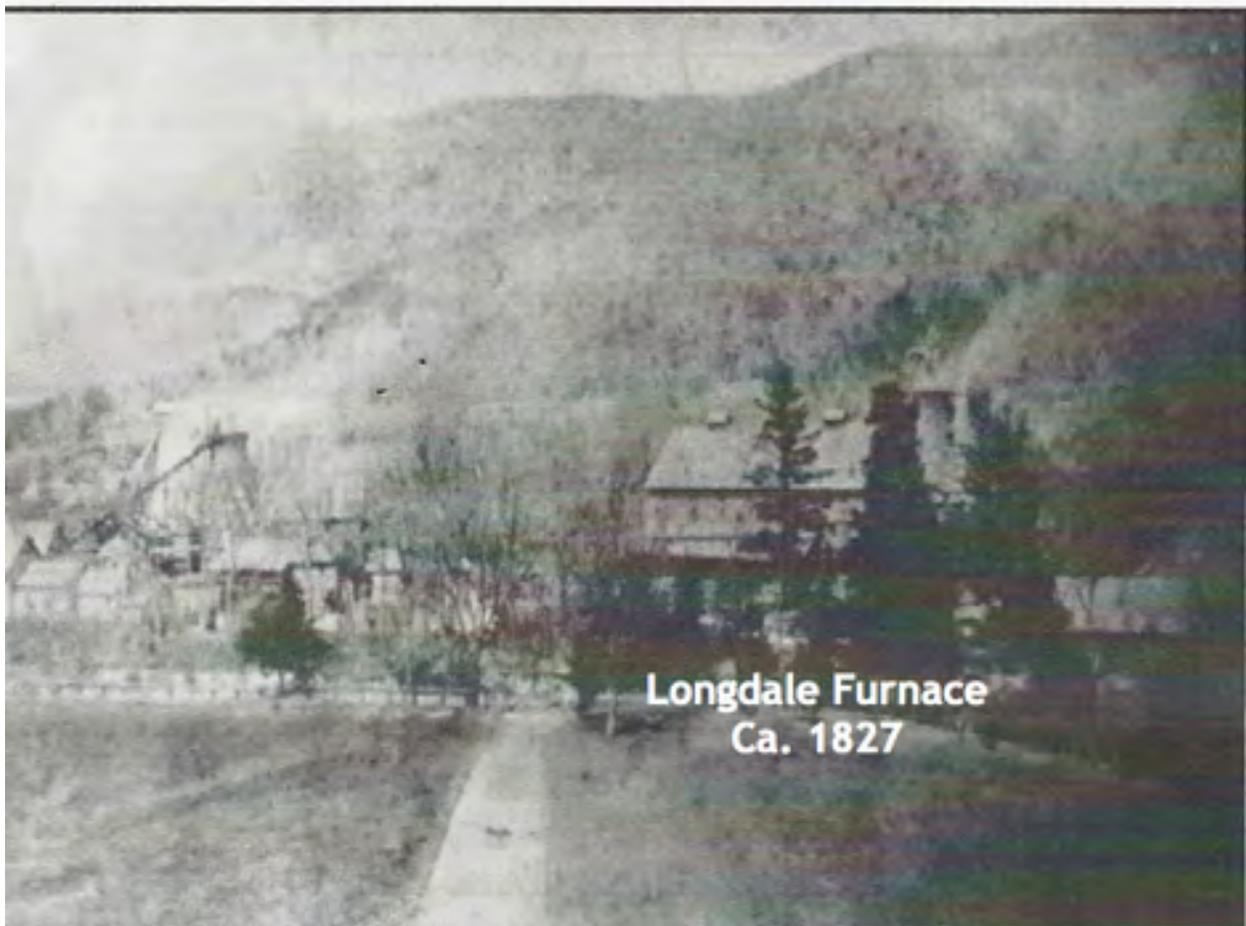


Two commercial activities across North Mountain are the foundation for the growth of the village of Denmark.

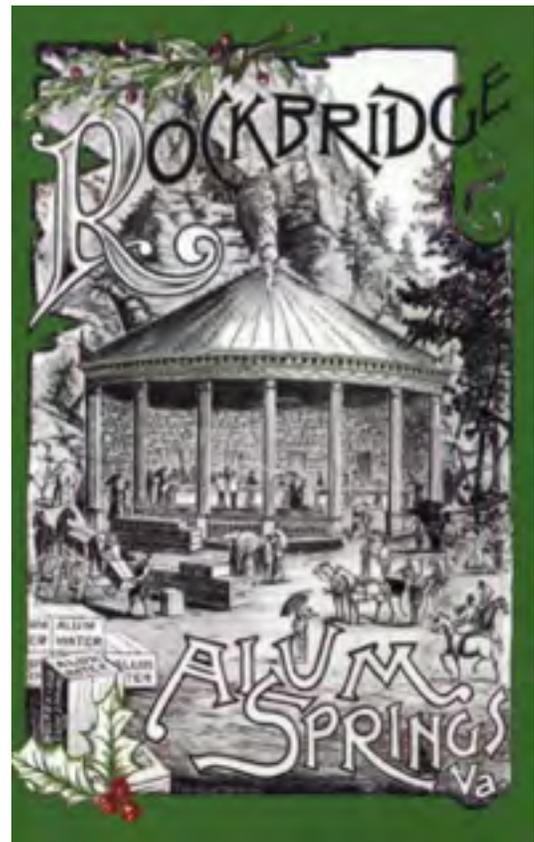
Longdale Furnace was founded by John Jordan and James Irvine in 1829.

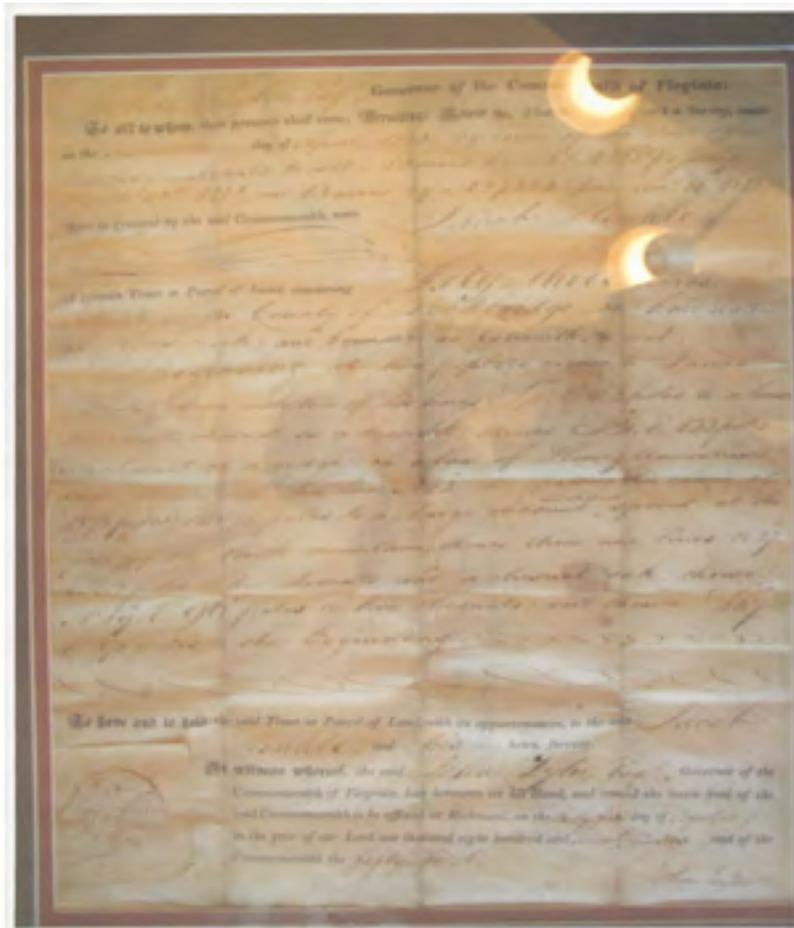
At the time Iron Production began at Longdale, the Rockbridge Alum Springs began operation. This resort catered to folks looking for relaxation and improved health". Because of its remote location customers stayed for a week or more. The resort required not only help to serve the customers and to maintain the facility but also foodstuffs and produce for the customers.

By geography and time Denmark was and to a large extent still is independent and self sufficient...



Longdale Furnace
Ca. 1827





In 1826 governor James Tyler gave Jacob Cunningham this patent to land reaching to the top of North Mountain.

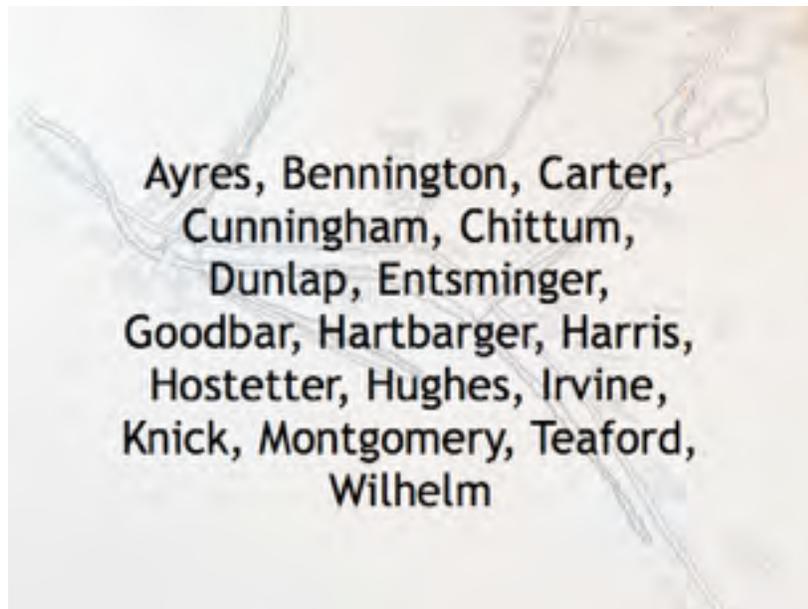


At the top of the Mountain Thomas Hardbarger (later Hartbarger) purchased 150 acres from Major McDowell and began farming.

After the opening of the iron mines and of Alum Springs many new families came to settle the area we know as Denmark

Many of these early settlers came from Collierstown and have descendents living in the area today.

Ayres, Bennington, Carter, Cunningham, Chittum, Dunlap, Entsminger, Goodbar, Hartbarger, Harris, Hostetter, Hughes, Irvine, Knick, Montgomery, Teaford, Wilhelm (on a slide)



The first homes for these folks were log houses made from the abundant forests in the area. This is the remains of a house on Big Hill Road built by the Carter family.

This house, built by John G Bennington, is said to have been constructed in 1845. It was occupied by Mary Bennington until her death in 1981. The house is still in the Bennington family. It is occupied today as a rental property.



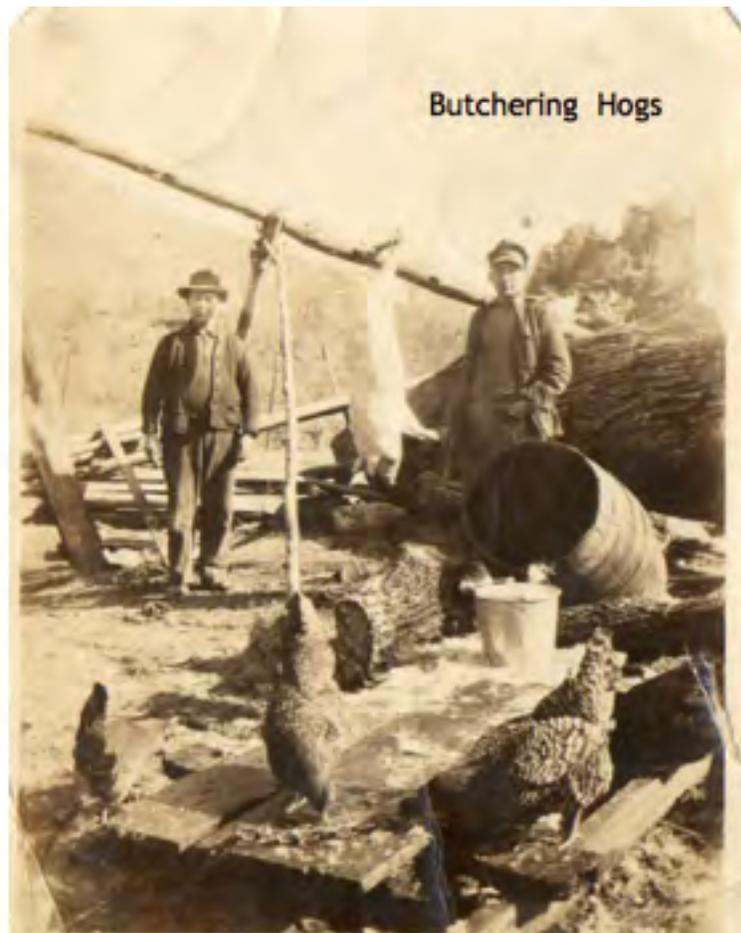
Just up the road from Mary Bennington James Gaylor built this log house in 1867. The Gaylors occupied the house until 1902 when the Downeys bought it. Thelma, youngest of the 17 Downey children, lived in the house until her death in 1986.

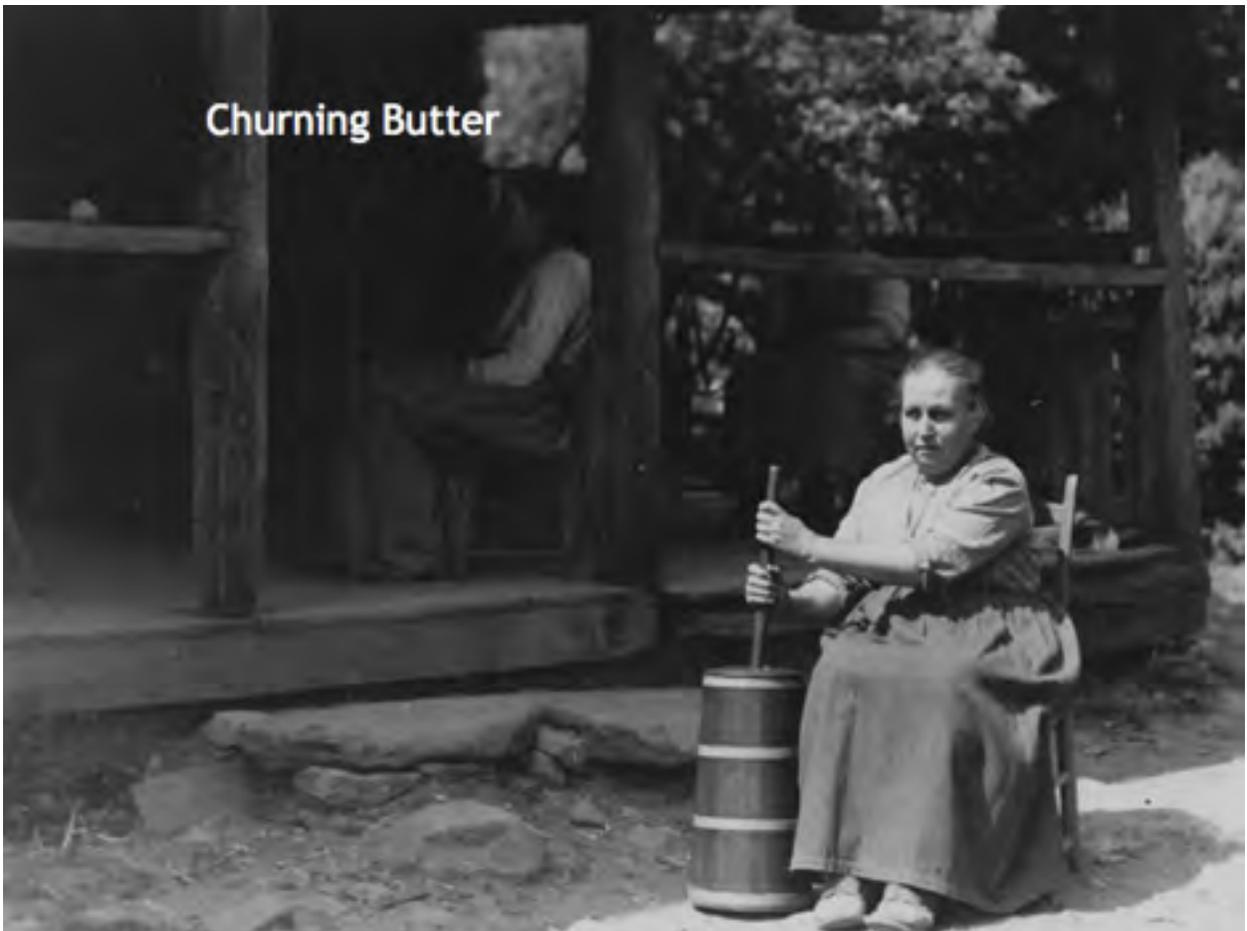
The house has recently been dismantled and will be repurposed as a part of a modern building. Note the logs which form the walls and sides of the house have been hewn flat.



Life in Denmark

In the beginning Life in Denmark was a time of complete self sufficiency. There was little choice but to build your own house, grow your own food, raise your own meat, raise your own grain, churn your own butter, weave your own cloth, make your own soap, make your own candles, and make your own whiskey and brandy.







Making Soap



This passage from Cleopatra and Seatta's papers gives a flavor of life in those days.

"These hills were good grazing farms, up on the mountain had about 200 acres of the best grazing land around ,most of the farmers raised cattle and grain. They built fences to protect the grain fields against the cattle and horses. They had trouble with bears in the cornfield, a bear would damage a lot of corn , they raised wheat and rye and some flax. Flax was cultivated to some extent, potatoes began as an important crop, fruit trees were set out, late peach orchards was set, money was made on the peach crop. Mrs. Hartbarger wove the flax and wool on a hand loom, she made suits and dresses and counterpanes blankets and all her bed linen out of flax.

While life was hard there was some time for relaxation, especially in the hard winters. Many of the residents of Denmark played musical instruments. Here Aaron Reynolds, Henry Hughes, and Valou Knick are with their instruments. In addition to playing several instruments folks listened to music on the newly developed Victrola. This Victrola belonged to Henry Clay Hughes . It was restored by Todd Bennington and sits in the back of the room today.



On Big Hill road there were 14 families

In the early days large families were common in Denmark as they were in many parts of the country. Rebecca Jane Knick for instance was one of 10 children in that Knick family in 1866. Her sister Mary Francis married John Entsminger and they had 10 children. Not to be outdone you will remember Thelma Downey had 16 brothers and sisters.

To provide for the education of these children by 1875 Denmark had five schools. Each school had one room and provided schooling through the 7th grade.

Waterloo School was at the head of Waterloo Road on a half acre lot donated jointly by Job Bennington and James Cunningham.



At the foot of Waterloo road at the intersection of Midland trail sat Oak Nole School.



Up Midland Trail was Stonewall school.



Over On Big Hill in an area with numerous Walnut trees was Walnut Flats' school.



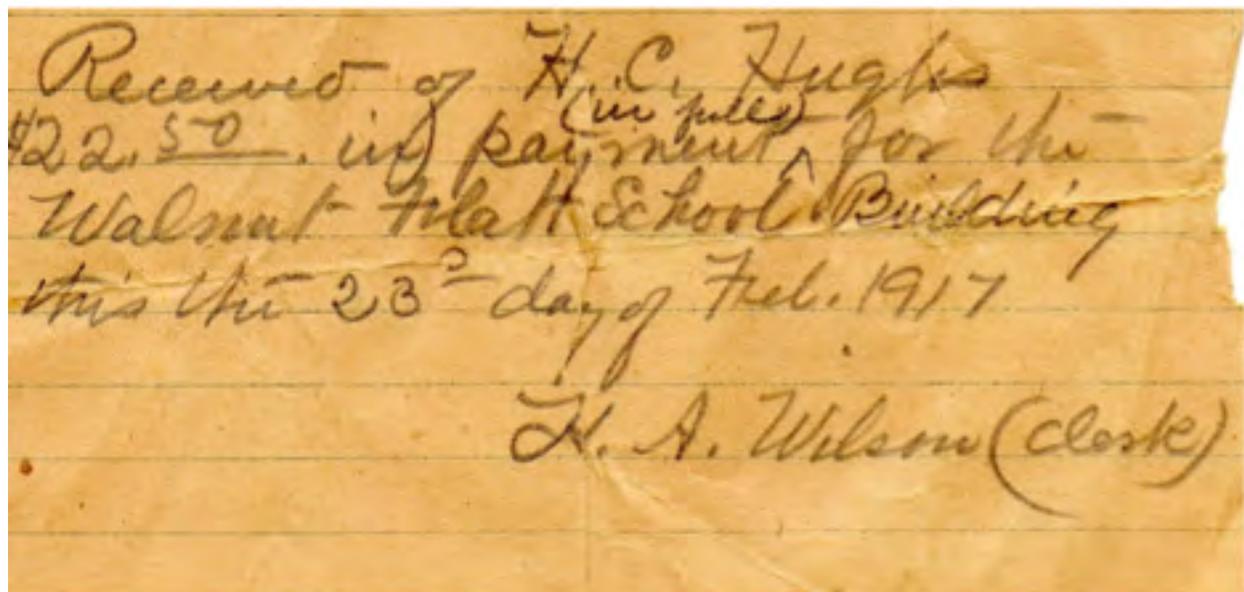
At Midland Trail near the intersection of Big Hill Road sat the one room Denmark school

These five schools operated until 1911 when they were consolidated as Denmark school on Big Hill road just up from Midland trail. This consolidated school, no longer there, operated until 1943 when the first Highland Bell School opened.

You were likely surprised when I showed the Stonewall gas station as one of the five schools. In fact it is an example of the frugality and ingenuity of the residents. The school originally stood some 200-300 feet west of its present location. It was repurposed as a Gas station retaining its name after the school closed.

The Walnut Flats School was purchased by Henry Clay Hughes and became a residence as did the Oak Nole School which was purchased by the Teaford family.

The school from Waterloo was purchased by Herman Knick and became a shed on his property. David Buckner, the current owner of that property restored the building and now uses it as a workshop. North Mountain from the mines, and reconstructed on Big Hill Road. These schools were not the only buildings that were repurposed. This house owned by H. C. Hughes in 1910, was purchased for \$90 from the Victoria Mines, moved over



Received of H. C. Hughes
(in full)
\$22.50 in payment for the
Walnut Flats School Building
this the 23rd day of Feb. 1917
H. A. Wilson (clerk)

Churches

Religion was as important as education to the folks of Denmark. Before construction of the two churches in town the Schools were used for prayer services and Sunday school for the children

In 1874 Robert Montgomery donated the land for a Presbyterian Church, now known as the Little Brick Church. The Baptists, organized in 1868, also met in this church until the Kerr's Creek Baptist Church was constructed. In 1906. There was a Gospel Hill ARP Church on Midland Trail.





Cemeteries

As we all know death is a part of life. As there was no central cemetery, many families had cemeteries on their own property.

This map identifies many of the family cemeteries in Denmark.

In this regard I have a personal story to tell.

We bought our property in Waterloo in 1988. On the property is this chimney. Clearly the chimney is old as it is constructed without mortar. After some research into the deeds for the property, we discovered it is remains of a house built in 1869 by John (Jackie) Bennington when he married Rebecca Jane Hughes. Jackie Bennington bought the property from the estate of Jacob Teaford. At their deaths they left the property to their daughter, Joetta, who sold the property in 1939 to Elmer Harris, her sister's husband.

On this ridge on the property is a cemetery. The cemetery is marked by these boxwood plants. The original settlers of this land are buried there as are their immediate descendents.

Down the ridge sits the Irvine Cemetery. Only the remains of a fence are visible

Across Waterloo Road, behind Mary's Bennington's house, is the Bennington-Gaylor cemetery.

The Hartbarger cemetery at the entrance to Waterloo is the most formal family cemetery in Denmark.





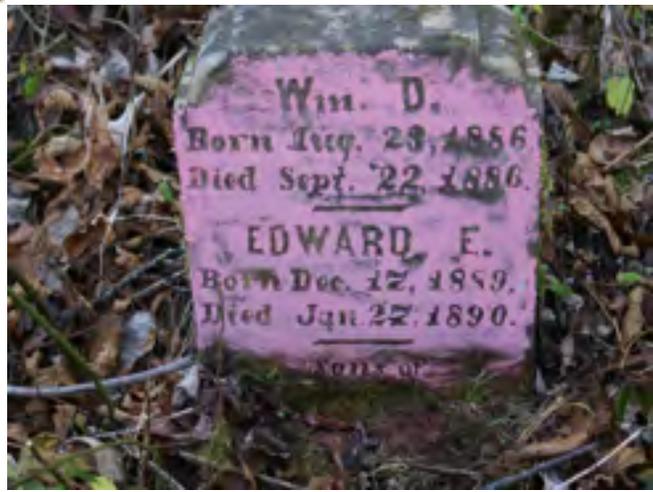


Bennington Cemetery

Located Rt 629, Waterloo, Joette Bennington place.

1. Bennington, Becky
2. Bennington, "Jackie" John M. d. Apr 1898, aged 80y, h/o
Rebecca Jane Hughes, member of Dunkard Church
3. Harris, baby
4. Harris, Elmer
5. Harris, Victoria "Vicky" Bennington 1st w/o William Taylor
Harris
6. Harris, William Taylor b. c1851 h/o-1- Vicky, h/o -2-
Melissa Harriett Cunningham

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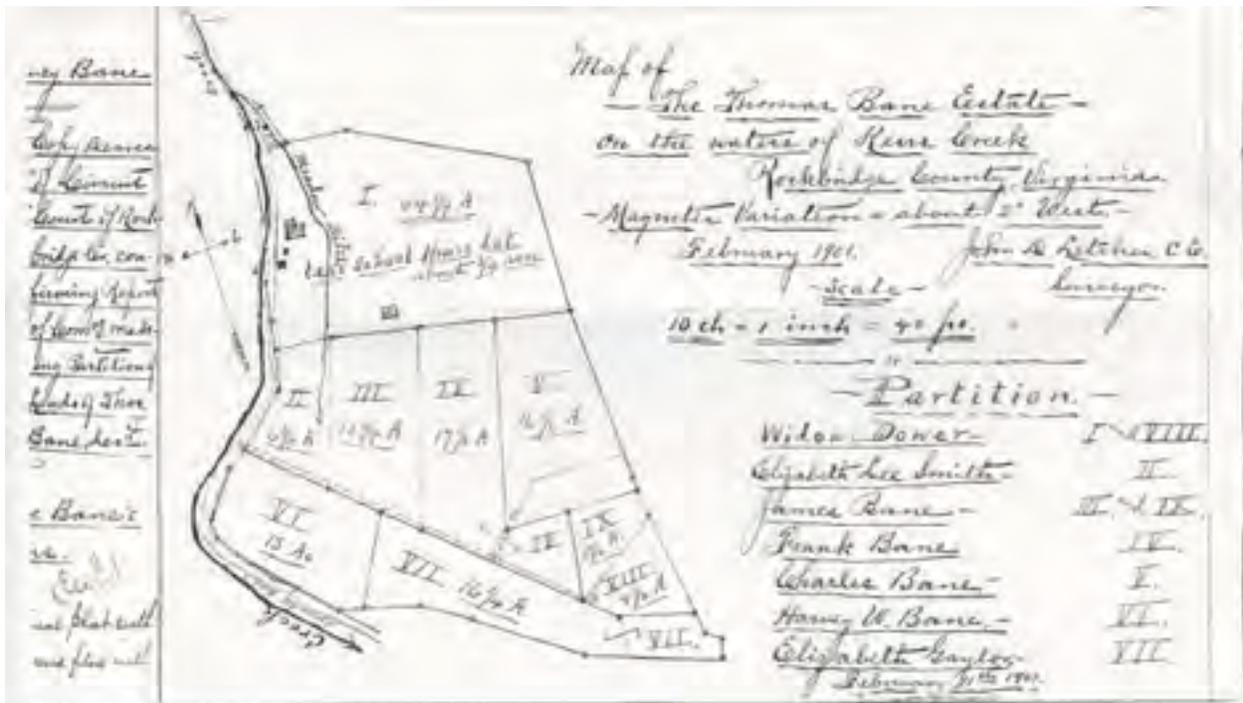




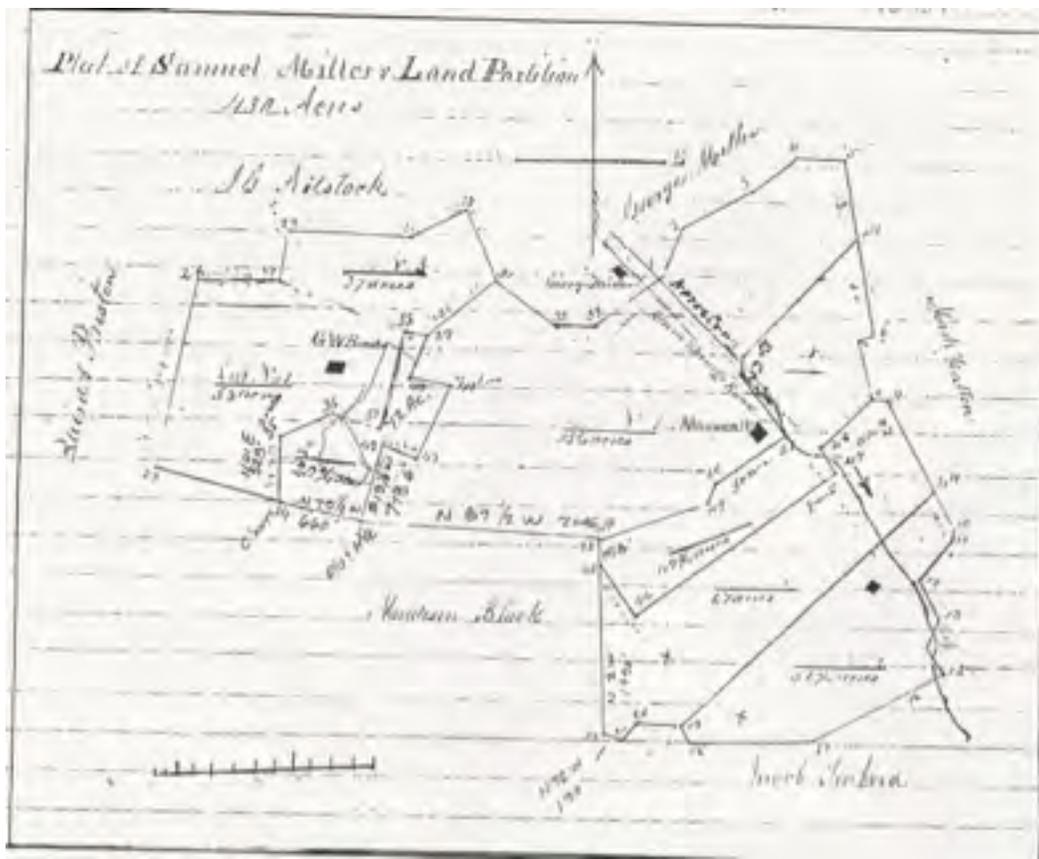
Ownership of land

Over the years there were many changes in the ownership of various parcels of land. In part as people aged the younger folks needed places to live and the older folks passed away leaving land to their children. As a reminder the period 1800 to 1980 represents 9 generations. Some moved on and others moved in.

This deed shows the disposition of the Bane property by will. This property was once owned by the Cunningham's, was repurchased by the Cunningham's and is now owned by the Mays family.



This second deed shows the disposition of 400+ acres of the Miller property when Samuel Miller died intestate.



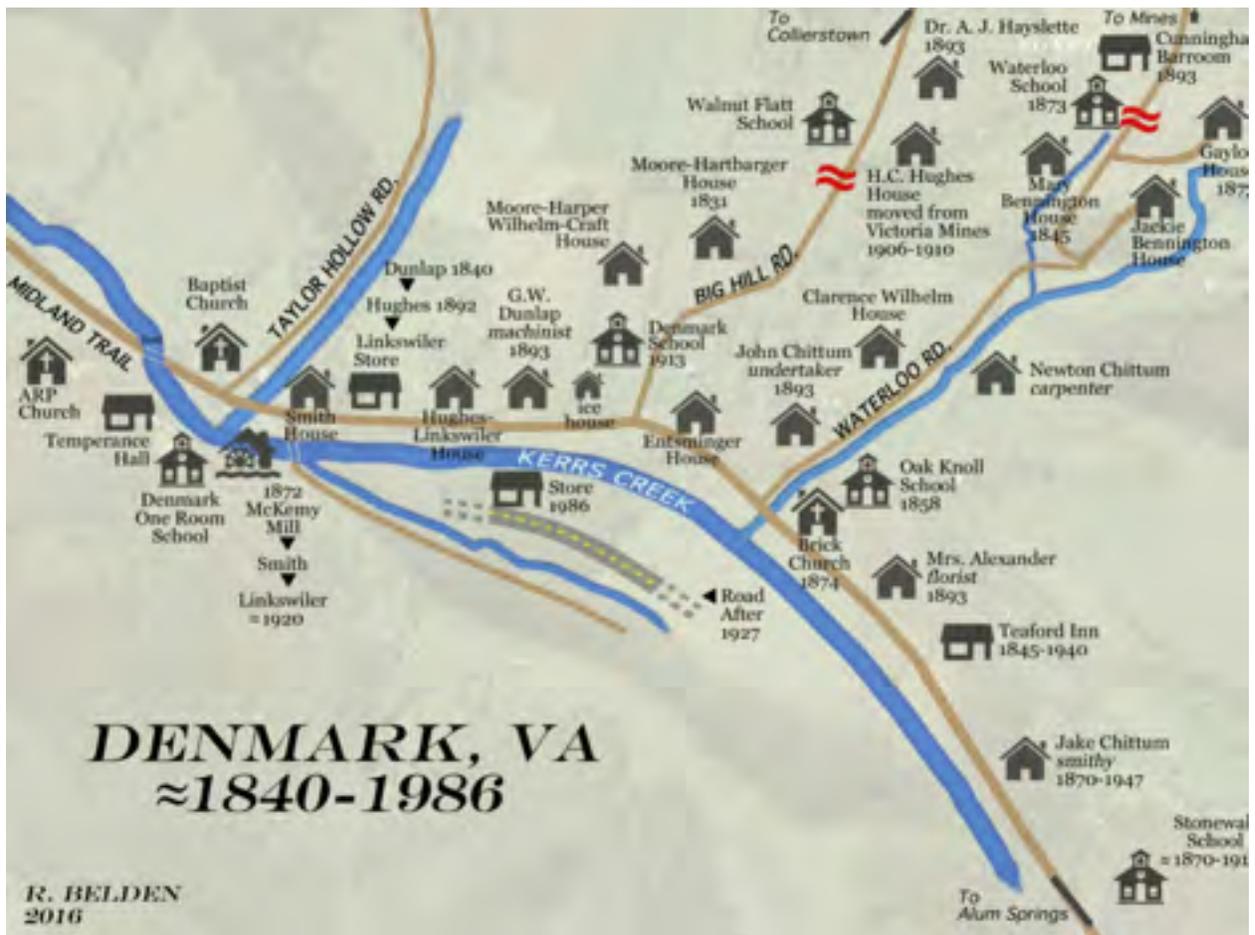


By and Large folks in Denmark got along quite well as they were to a large extent dependent on one another. However from time to time there would be disagreements. This deed shows the disposition of land involved in a dispute between W.C. Hughes and Isaac Wilhelm. It was resolved when the court named three neighbors to referee the dispute. Mr. Wilhelm was given 74 acres, Mr. Hughes 37 acres including two buildings.

Commercial Development of Denmark

As the generations passed commerce became a more important part of their lives.

The following map is my attempt to reconstruct Denmark in the late 1800's early 1900's when the village was at its peak. Note this is prior to the move of the road to the north side of Kerr's Creek.



As a refresher here are some of the places we discussed earlier.

Waterloo Road extended over North Mountain providing a route for men in the Denmark area to find work at the mines and to sell wares and produce at the mines.

Men would walk over the mountain on Sunday night or Monday morning to work in the mines and return on Friday night. On the return home they could stop at the Bar Room operated as a part of the distillery run by the Cunningham brothers.

The Cunningham brothers weren't the only residents who ran a still.

On Big Hill the Ayres ran a still as did Henry C. Hughes . Tom Alphin ran a still on top of North Mountain.

Waterloo road over the mountain was used to take merchandise and foodstuffs for sale at the Mines. Calvin Hughes was said to have taken 100# of potatoes on one side of his horse, 100# on the other and 100# on his back to sell there. Lee Vest who lived in "Egypt" made and sold ax handles for use at the mines.

Midland Trail over North Mountain to Milboro and Alum springs provided means for some to work at the resort and also an opportunity to sell produce there.

The commercial center of Denmark was on Midland Trail from its intersection with Taylor Hollow Road up a few miles west beyond the intersection with Waterloo Road.

This is a list of the businesses in Denmark in 1893. All businesses you would expect to find in a country village at that time. The presence of a florist is most interesting.

Unfortunately we do not have pictures of the businesses in the village at that time. However, we have been able to find other documents which confirm the existence of these businesses.

In 1840 Robert Dunlap built a General Store and Blacksmith shop on Midland Trail near the present location of Kerr's Creek Baptist Church. Here is a copy of a sheet from the stores ledger book. Note the sales to Jack Bennington, Jacob Cunningham, William Chittum, and William Cunningham.

Jake McKemy built a flour mill on Kerr's Creek across from what is now the Kerr's Creek Baptist Church.

In 1870 a post office was opened in Denmark with Joseph C. Lowman as Postmaster. Lowman was a miller and apparently ran the mill built by Jake McKemy

Across the street the citizens of the community constructed a Temperance hall.



In 1875 Annanias Smith purchased the mill from Jake McKemy and became the Post Master of the Denmark Post office.

Annanias ran the mill until his death in 1997. Frank Linkswiler then ran the mill until it finally closed in 1925 when the mill was demolished to make way for the road when the road was moved across the creek.

Virginia Gazetteer Businesses in Virginia 1893	
Carriage, Coach, & Wagons	John P. Chittum
Carpenters & Builders	Newton F. Chittum
Distillers	J. N. Cunningham & Bro.
General Merchants	Wm. C. Hughes & Son
Florist	Mrs. S. V. Alexander
Hotels	Geo. W. Miller
Iron, Foundry & Machinists	G.W. Dunlap
Land Agents	H. H. Teaford
Mills, Sawing & Planing	James E. Gaylor
	Mrs. Silers
	G.W. Miller
	A. J. Hayslette
Mills Corn and Flour	Annanias Smith
Millwrights	Mathew A. Davis
Physicians	A. J. Hayslette
	C.M. Hileman
Saddlers & Harness Makers	S.H. Hall
Tanners & Curriers	Alfred Miller
Undertakers	John P. Chittum & Sons

In 1892 Robert Dunlap closed his Blacksmith shop and sold the store to W.C. Hughes. W.C. Hughes and his son Moreau ran the store until when they sold it to Frank Linkswiler who ran the store until the early 1900's when it closed.

John Pleasant Chittum was the undertaker for the village.

Jake Chittum opened a blacksmith shop at the other end of town after Dunlap's Blacksmith shop closed.

M. L. E. Jones 5-62
 BILL TO DATE
 Salesman Date 6-2-1913

MOREAU D. HUGHES,
 General Merchandise
 KERR'S CREEK, VA.
 Highest Prices for Country Produce.

Am't Rec'd	Am't For'd \$
1	407 1/2 ac 62
2	
3	
4	
5	58
6	
7	Paed
8	
9	
10	
11	
12	21
13	

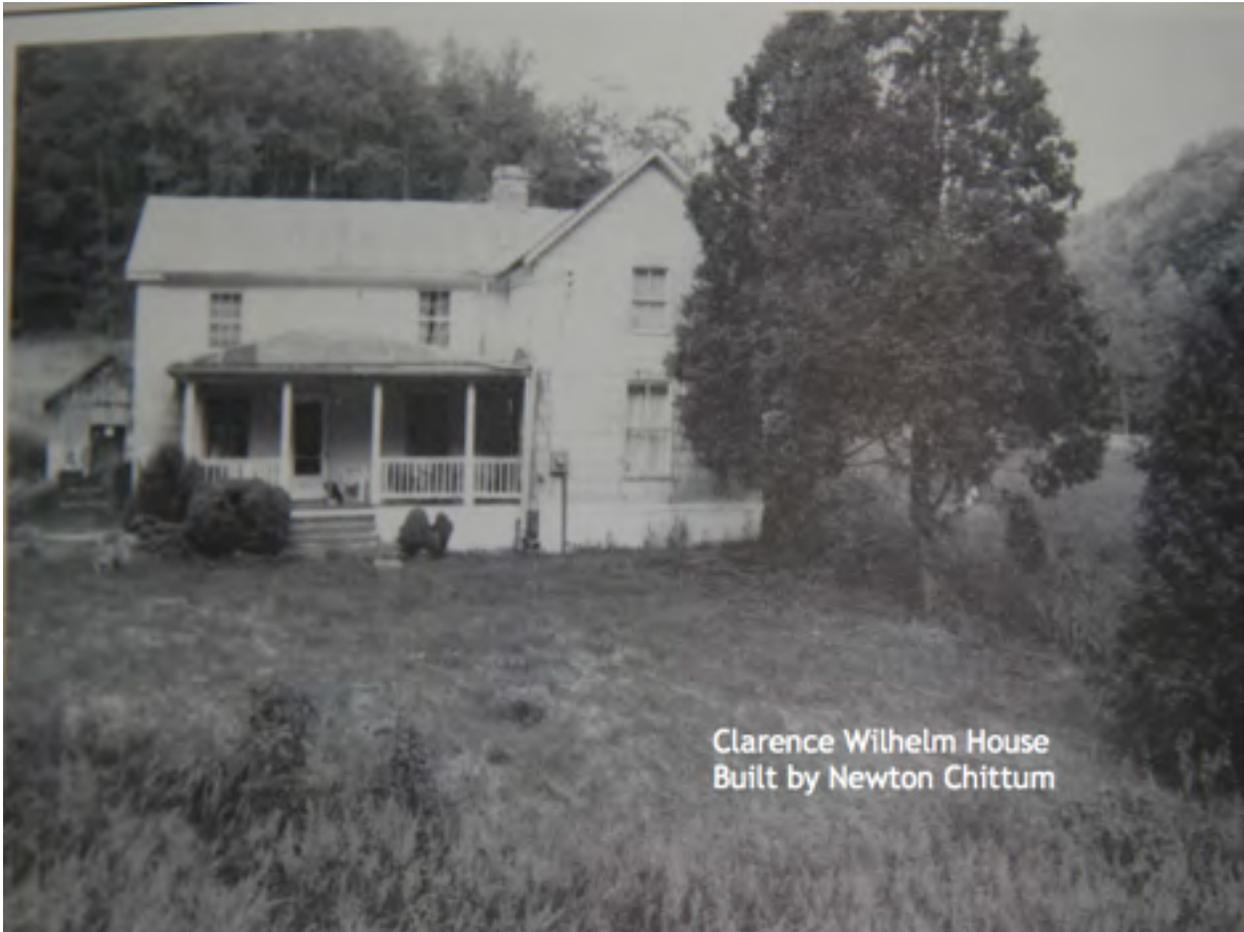
By James P. Co. 1913, Mar 26, '17. Mfg. by James P. Co. 1913, Mar 26, '17.

Received of H. Linkswiler
 fifteen dollars for
 making coffin & Bering
 Betsy molar \$15.00
 April 14th 1893
 J. P. Chittum

Up Waterloo Road Newton Chittum ran a carpenter shop. Today Newton would be called a general contractor as he built houses in Denmark and in Collierstown.

He built his own house, now owned by the McCoy's, he built the house across from him for Clarence Wilhelm and was the lead in building the Kerr's Creek Baptist Church.





Clarence Wilhelm House
Built by Newton Chittum



Newton Chittum(McCoy) House
2016

In the period 1880 to 1910 Denmark was a prosperous, thriving town.
The census in 1900 indicated some 300-400 folks lived in Denmark.

The Decline

A confluence of events in the 1920s led to the decline of Denmark.
The Mines closed.



Shortly thereafter the Alum Springs closed.



The Highway department moved the Road .



Linkswiler's store closed

Jake Chittum's blacksmith closed

Newton Chittum's Carpenter shop closed

The loss of the Mines and Alum Springs meant the residents, especially the young, had to find work elsewhere. Some moved to Clifton Forge to find work with the Railroad, some moved to Lexington, some went west.

There was, however, some commercial activity in Denmark after the road was moved. The Teaford Inn served Sunday Brunch until 1940.



This photograph, taken in 1939 on the first day of hunting season is at the front of the new store, the one that is here today. The store was first operated by by Rector Engleman. That store operated, under various owners, until 1986 when it was closed.



As I finish I would also like to thank many of the other folks who were so kind as to help me with this project.

Harvey Chittum, Dwight Cunningham, Shirley Hartbarger Rexrode, Terrell Teaford, James Harris, Charlie Irvin, Francis Lynn, Jennifer Young, Lisa McCown at the Special Collections section of the W&L Library, and most of all the members of the Kerrs Creek Baptist Church who made the venue available for us today.

