

RAPPAHANNOCK COUNTY, VIRGINIA

A History

Fact, Fiction, Foolishness and the Fairfax Story



274 Sq. Miles

175,360 Acres

By
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Sketches by Neecee Lane

Sometimes the cloth was "sized" by being filled with a clay-like substance under pressure.

Below this it is said that there was a gun factory, possibly using power from a mill wheel. Next was Kennerley's, later known as Jett's, Calvert's, Baggerly's, and now as Avon Mills, which still stands. This mill was remodeled and renovated some time ago, and summer concerts were held there for a few years. About three-quarters of a mile downstream from Avon Mills was another Jett's, sometimes known as Mrs. Calvert's, Schwartz's, and, lastly Estes'. The last operator of this mill, "Sheep" Estes, was the great-grandfather of Henry Hudson, who lives nearby. Downstream from this last mill Wood's map shows Holland's Mill, later called Slaughter's.

A fork of the Rush west of Washington past Baldwin's Store is known as Big Branch. There were very probably other mills on the Rush before it is joined by the Covington and goes into the Thornton at Rock Mills. Cannons Run comes into the Thornton from the north below Rock Mills near Route 622. Cannon's Ford is nearby.

Battle Run, named for the Battaille family, goes up above Massie's Corner toward the Fodderstack and the old Deatherage lands. In these upper reaches there was supposed to have been a mill. Then, just below where the Run goes under the present Route 211, west of Massie's Corner, there was another. There were said to be three more between this spot and Route 729, or the old Richmond Road. One of these, Jones' Mill, was about a mile below the present Route 211. Battaille's Mill was a short distance above Route 729. The middle mill may have been on the **Anderson-Latham farm**. In this area, Wood's map shows a **Butler Mill about three-quarters of a mile below the present Route 211**, and Robert's Mill between three-quarters of a mile and a mile below Butler's, west of the Richmond Road.

The Run takes in a couple forks east of Massie's Corner and a right long fork draining from east of Ben Venue. It goes under Route 618 near Newby's Cross Roads and goes into the Thornton near there, a short distance below Laurel Mills.

Laurel Mills, reputedly named for the luxurious growth of laurel there, was an important mill site and a busy community. One of the much-talked-of features was a pedestrian suspension bridge high above the River. Baker's, a saw mill, and Robert's, a grain mill, operated there, as did the Rappahannock Woolen Mills Company.

About a mile and a half from Laurel Mills, the Thornton leaves Rappahannock County. Soon it goes into the Hazel, and the Hazel takes over the name. This is known as Gourdvine Fork, and in the old days these streams were called North and South Gourdvine. After the confluence one map gives the stream the name of "Aestham's" (sic).

This calls for a bit of backing up. After going over the first high spot on Route 618 east of Woodville, the road goes downhill and Route 618 turns to the right after crossing a small bridge over Mill Run. A short distance below here there is a pretty waterfall where the stream