THE FAIRFAX LINE
A HISTORIC LANDMARK

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Including Republication Of
The Fairfax Line
Thomas Lewis's Journal Of 1746

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The Council of the Virginia Colony took their first action on this directive in Nov 1735. The original contentions of the Colony's Lt. Governor Gooch concerning the western limits of each river delayed starting the survey. When details were finally settled and agreed upon by both parties, Fairfax named three Commissioners to represent him. These were William Fairfax, Charles Carter and Col. William Beverley. The Colonies Commissioners were Colonels William Byrd, John Grymes and John Robinson.

The survey team chosen to survey the Potomac from the confluence with the Sherando (Shenandoah) to the head spring of the Potomack, for the Colony, were Mr. William Mayo and Mr. Robert Brooke and, for Lord Fairfax, Benjamin Winslow and John Savage. John Graeme and George Hume were selected by the Colony and James Thomas was selected for Fairfax to survey the South branch of the Rappahannock alias the Rappidan. The North branch of the Rappahannock (Hedgmans River) was to be surveyed by James Wood for the Colony and James Thomas Jr. for Fairfax. The groups departed for the various rivers to be surveyed on or about Sept 27, 1735.

The surveys on the two Branches of the Rappahannock proceeded without problems. However, the Potomac survey team had many difficulties and problems which were mostly from personnel and personalities. Although a description of the survey to the Potomac head spring has not been found, there is evidence that the work was completed and reports prepared by the Commissioners for the Colony and for Lord Fairfax. Additional information of these three surveys such as surveyors' journals and/or field notes would make very interesting reading.

Reference to the Potowmack river survey for the head spring is found in the Journal of Thomas Lewis and the Field Notes under the dates Monday 20 October to Thursday 23 October. The members of the 1746 survey team found several marked trees at the head spring along with a stone marker at the site.

The initials of the 1736 Surveyors and Commissioners which the members of the 1746 surveyors and Commissioners found at the head spring were as follows (more will be said about the 1746 survey in a later section):

RB---Robert Brooks, father of the Robert Brooks who was on the 1746 team
BW---Benjamin Winslow, the only one present on the 1736 and the 1746 expeditions. The Journal entry of 20 October indicate that Winslow was the only member of the 1746 team who was present in 1736 and this is firmly established by the entry in the Field Notes for this date
IF 1736---This could be taken for Joshua Fry, James Field or Isaac Friend. However in view of the statement of October 20, Joshua Fry could not have been present in 1736 because he was present in 1746. Therefore the initials probably were for James Field, a surveyor for the Colony of Virginia in 1736, or possibly for Isaac Friend, a guide.
PG 1736---Phineas Griffith, a chainman for Lord Fairfax.
JS---John Savage, a surveyor for Lord Fairfax
WMAYO---William Mayo, a surveyor for
Virginia
BL---not identified
FF---not identified

The Commissioners for Lord Fairfax, in their report completed in late 1737 on the survey, confirmed Lord Fairfax's understanding of the patent, that the head spring of the Rappidan (south fork of the Rappahannock) was the eastern terminus of the line. On the other hand, Col. Wm Byrd, writing on behalf of the Commissioners for the Colony, in his report to Wm Gooch Esq. Lieutenant Governor, presented their position that the head spring of the Hedgman river (north fork of the Rappahannock) was the eastern terminus. Lord Fairfax realized that Col. Byrd would take this position; therefore, he returned to England that fall to represent his interpretation to the Privy Council of the Kings Court.

The Home(Hume) Line

The interval during which the Privy Council of the Kings Court reviewed the reports on the boundary line survey, heard Lord Fairfax present his case, and arrived at its decision, new events were occurring in Virginia. The Colony had formed the Counties of Frederick and Augusta in the Valley of Virginia with a dividing line suggested by Frederick County records to be a straight line from the head spring of the Hedgman River to the head spring of the Pittomack alias Potomac. On February 16, 1743, Frederick County Court issued an order to George Hume to run and mark this dividing line. A description of the survey, as found in Frederick County Deed Book 1 page 310, is copied as follows:

ACCORDING to an ordre of Frederick County Court dated on Friday the 10th day of February 1743 I have run & Marked the Deviding line between the said Frederick County & Augusta County as the sam Directs. Viz. I begun at the Head of Hedgman River at three Blazed Hiccorvy's & run N.72W Crossing the Points of the Mountains & Happy Creek
Crost the South River of Shenadore at the Limestone Rocks below Richard Herrills bottom
Crost Powels fort as I was informed below all the Plantations
Crost the North fork of the Shenadore about halfway between Jonathin Dentons & Henry Johnston's Plantations agst the Mouth of a Goett---
Crost the Road a little above Thomas'es Brook then Crost the said Brook twice at a Narrow Turn, left Charles Huttle about 200 yds in Augusta County left Frederick Covert in Frederick County left John Barret in Augusta and left Augustine Windle in Frederick County and then begun to Rise of North Mountains which I crosed seeing no plantations nor anything remarkable till I came to Lost River which I was informed was a branch of Cape Capon---
Crost the Lost River about half a mile above Barnaby McHentys
Crost the South Branch a little above a fork by Peter Thorns Plantation
Crost the North Fork of the South Branch a little below Henry Sancisens Plantation---
Crost the Head branches of Seneca Creek---
Crost the Alligaini Hill then to Head of Pittomack---
Marked at all Roads, Plain Paths Rivers
Creeks & all Remarkable places, as are used, a Tree or two with the Letters FC next to Fredrick County and AC next to Augusta given under my hand this 6th of August 1744 

(signed) G Home Sur.FC

It is to be noted that the surveyor signed his name G Home Sur.FC. According to George F Black in his book *The Surnames of Scotland* page 362 "Home, Hume" is "of territorial origin from the barony of Home in Berwickshire. 'In early time', says Miss Warrander, 'the name was spelled indifferently Home or Hume. In later days the Polwarth branch adopted the spelling with a u while the head of the family, Lord Home, retained the o; but they all sprang from the same stock.'" There is much more to this description of the family history in Black's book which should be read by interested persons.

Frederick County Order Book 1 page 225 lists the amount owed to George Home, Surveyor, for Running the Dividing line between this County and Augusta as 66.(pounds) 18.(shilling) 6.(pence) 0. This was equivalent to 21,516 pounds of tobacco. No information was found regarding the number of personnel involved or the number of days required to make the survey.10

1746 LINE SURVEY

In 1745, the Privy Council of the Kings Court agreed, that within the words and meaning of the Patent granted, Lord Fairfax's southern boundary was along the Rappahannock to the Southern Branch and then along this Branch to the Conway River, thence to its head spring.

The Council ordered, on 11 April 1745, the Governor of Virginia to select commissioners to work with commissioners representing Lord Fairfax to run and mark out the boundary and dividing line between the Province and Lord Fairfax land.11 A true copy of the Lord Fairfax document prepared after the Court's action is as follows:

WHEREAS at a court held at St James the 11th day of April One thousand seven hundred and forty five present the King's most excellent Majesty in Council His Majesty in Council took the report of the Lords of the committee of his Privy Council in a cause between the Right Honourable Thomas Lord Fairfax petitioner against the Governor and Council of Virginia in light of the Crown defendants concerning the boundaries which are to be drawn from the first head or spring of the River Rappahannack to the first head or spring of the River Pattawomeck alias Potowmack into consideration and was pleased with the advice of his Privy Council to approve there of and to declare and order and did thereby declare and order that within the words and meaning latters Patent granted by King James the Second bearing date the 27th day of September in the 4th year of his reign the boundary of the petitioners land doth begin at the first spring of the South Branch of the River Rappahannack now called Rappidan which first spring is the spring of that part of the said River Rappidan as is called in the plans returned by the name of Conway River and that the said boundary be from thence drawn in a straight line North West to