INTRODUCTION

The investigation of historic sites in the Bluestone Reservation is in its infancy. While published references have been researched, there is still a great deal of archival material left unexplored. U. S. Army Corps of Engineers aerial photography, Real Estate records and topographic mapping have been used along with traditional source materials to prepare this preliminary history of some of the historic sites in the Crumps Bottom area. This information will be used to locate and evaluate historic sites for the National Register of Historic Places and to develop pertinent research topics for future investigations in the fields of history and historic archeology.

The Crumps Bottom area consists of approximately six miles of flood plain on the left descending bank of the New River between river miles 9.1 and 14.5 upriver from Bluestone Dam, Summers County, West Virginia (Figure 1). The Bottom had been sporadically occupied by Indians from 10,500 B.C. (Maslowski 1982:186) and was the site of the earliest European settlement in the Bluestone Reservation (U. S. Army Corps of Engineers 1983). Crumps Bottom lay at the intersection of several important Indian trails, and an important ford was located between the Bottom and the Mouth of Indian Creek (Solecki 1949:344).

COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY WAR PERIOD

The first documented settlement in the area was by Andrew Culbertson in 1753 or 1754. Andrew Culbertson settled at the mouth of Joshua Run in an area to become known as Culbertson's Bottom, Reid's Bottom and then Crump's Bottom (Miller 1908:171). He left the land for fear of Indians, selling it to Samuel Culbertson who moved there in 1755. Samuel Culbertson also left because of hostile Indians (Wythe's Chancery Reports 1794:43). Little is known about the earliest settlers on Culbertson's Bottom, but at the outbreak of Dunmore's War in 1774, Colonel William Preston in his 22 July 1774 letter ordered James Robertson "to construct a small Stockade Fort for the Protection of the Inhabitants and the Reception of a Company" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:95).

Drafting men to construct and man the fort was a problem. Major Robertson wrote from Fort Dunmore, a local blockhouse on the New River, on 26 July 1774 "I have met at this Place Six or Seven men that Left Culbertson's and has Perswaded them all Back but one (William Atkins)." In the same letter he says "Onless you Send Some men down the Case will be Bad So that I must stay with not more than Six men unless I kill part and tye the Other I Expect we will have a war amongst our Selves without that of the Indians" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:99). On 28 July 1774, Major Robertson wrote from Fort Byrd, which is the name given to the fort at Culbertson's, "we will have our Fort Gentelly finished the week. We have 25 private at this Place. I have Ten at Old Billey Wood's" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:100).
On 1 August 1774 he wrote "we have finished our fort and I think not a dispisable one. I have been about Raiseing a House for to hold Provisions and Amunition but I am Afraid the Place wont be Over Stocked with Either" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:105). In the same letter Robertson indicated he now had 33 men. The fort at Culbertson's was constructed in approximately 10 days and must have been relatively small for a stockaded fort.

Robertson's men were concerned with scouting the Indian trails because Indian raiding parties were frequently in the area. On 11 August 1774, Robertson wrote "There has been three or four Indians Visiting the Waste Plantations Above us on the River they Burnt a House About five miles above the fort Last Sunday. They Left a War Club at one of the wasted Plantations well made and mark'd with two Letters IG" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:138-139). The war club was probably an Iron tomahawk and the letters may have represented the maker's mark.

In the same letter Robertson offered a reward "I have Offered $5 for the first Indians hand that will be brought in to the fort by any of the Company."

The primary Indian trail used by the Shawnee and other Ohio Indians in their raids on the New River settlements was the Paint Creek Trail (Olafson 1958:5). Paint Creek Trail crossed the Bluestone River at its mouth, traveled through the Glades and down Paint Creek, crossed over to the Coal River and followed the Coal River to its mouth on the Kanawha at St. Albans. Robertson's scouts patrolled this trail even before the construction of Culbertson's Fort. This caused the Indians to use the Big Sandy Trail. On 11 August 1774, Major Robertson wrote "I keep the Scouts out as far as the Glades they Cannot See any Signs of the Indians that Road I suppose these Indians came up Sandy River and In by the Head of Blue Stone" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:139).

In September 1774 Major Robertson and Michael Woods were busy recruiting men for the expedition to Point Pleasant. On 15 September Major Robertson wrote "Capt. Woods and his Party is Joynd me Which makes our number of the Whole 55" (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:199-200). Recruiting and maintaining a company was still a problem, as Capt. Michael Woods adds to Robertson's letter "Sir-I Draughted Philip Cavanough John farley Richard Blankingship John Humphres francis farley & george pack who all refused; and I understand there is some of them going over to you to try and get off But Major Robertson and I has consulted and we desire that you may not Countenance any of them."

In October 1774 Captain Joseph Martin took command of Culbertson's Fort (Thwaites & Kellogg 1905:247-248) and a month later the detachment of scouts was disbanded. However, the Fort must have been maintained because in 1777 Captain John Lucas was in command of the Fort which was by then referred to as Fort Field (Johnston 1906:62).

Because the Culbertsons had left the land and the land appeared deserted, other people began to assert claims on the Culbertson land. In 1773, Thomas Farley acquired the settlement rights of Butcher and Gatcliff for 335 acres at Tom's Run on the lower end of Crump's Bottom. The land was actually settled in 1772 (Wythe's Chancery Reports 1794:43).

In 1775, Thomas Farley built a blockhouse or settler's fort (Johnston 1906:14) at the mouth of Tom's Run approximately 5 miles below Culbertson's. Later in the year, Farley assigned his claim for the land to James Burnsides
and a long period of litigation involving Andrew Reid, Samuel Culbertson, Thomas Walker and James Burnsides over the right of ownership followed.

It was finally decided that 400 acres of land be surveyed and laid down for the Culbertsons, that Burnsides' claim should also be surveyed and laid down and that Burnsides would convey to Reid, as representative of the Culbertsons, whatever portion of the 400 acre patent lay within his surveyed claim. Both parties appealed this decree (Wythe's Chancery Reports 1794).

James Caldwell, in his Revolutionary War Pension Declaration, stated that Farley's (Farlow's) Fort on Culbertson's Bottom was burned by the Indians in the spring of 1778 (Dorman 1968:47). Caldwell stated that during this time he had served under the command of Captain Archibald Woods and they had spent fifteen days pursuing the hostile Indians who burned the fort.

The remains of Culbertson's Fort and Farley's Fort have not been located. Solecki (1949:342) assigned archeological site number 46SU23 to an area 400 feet from the mouth of Joshua's Run which he thought may have been the location of Culbertson's Fort. European artifacts were found in the area but no test excavations were ever undertaken.

Solecki assigned site number 46SU19 to an area of Crump's Bottom opposite the mouth of Buffalo Creek, one mile east of Warford, which he thought may have been the location of Farley's Fort. Again European artifacts were collected but no test excavations were undertaken.

If these Forts and other early cabin sites could be located, they would undoubtedly qualify for the National Register of Historic Places. They would also provide valuable information on the early European settlements in the area.

EARLY SETTLEMENT PERIOD (1795-1848)

Peace was established with the warring Indian tribes west of the Ohio River in 1795 after the Battle of Fallen Timbers. This assured the peaceful settlement of the Ohio and Big Sandy Valleys and increased the influx of settlers throughout the New River Valley. Culbertson's Bottom was probably occupied by several families engaging in subsistence farming with a heavy reliance on hunting and fishing to provide sources of protein. Surplus produce was first sold or bartered locally, but, gradually, farms grew large enough to ship grain and livestock to eastern markets.

AGRICULTURAL AND COMMERCIAL PERIOD (1848-1948)

By 1848 the Giles, Fayette and Kanawha Turnpike was completed through the New River Valley. The turnpike proceeded from Peterstown, Virginia, crossed the Bluestone River near its mouth and traveled up the Little Bluestone River to Jumping Branch and then to Beckley (Richardson 1949:215). This provided ready access to eastern markets for local goods and produce.

In the early 1800's, part of Culbertson's Bottom was owned by T. S. Campbell. His estate consisted of 800 acres which included 550 acres of flat bottomland and 200 acres of virgin timber. Campbell raised 200 head of hogs and 100 head of cattle a year. Each year the stock was driven overland to markets in Philadelphia, Baltimore and Richmond (Donnelly 1960).
L. P. Campbell, the son of T. S. Campbell, indicated that in his boyhood, which would be the 1850's, game was plentiful in the area. The New River was full of fish and there were plenty of deer, raccoon, squirrel, wild turkey, wild ducks and other water fowl to feed the family. At this time there were “millions of pigeons” and flocks of wild geese passed over the bottom each year. During this period, the bottom was too rich for raising wheat. The wheat would grow up in a hurry and then fall over, making it difficult to harvest (Donnelly 1960).

In 1855, Major William Crump, a native of Franklin County, Virginia, moved, with his family and several slaves, to what is now Crump's Bottom. Major Crump, a Primitive Baptist, had married a Miss Gillie Law in 1816. His son, William G. Crump, was born a short time later. Crump, an entrepreneur and an extremely rich man described as “a gentleman by birth and a nobleman by nature”, (Miller 1908:171) proceeded to build the only brick house in the area that was later, in 1871, to become the Pipestem District of Summers County. The only other house of reknown in the Pipestem District at that time was a
1) Crump/Harmon farmhouse
2) Kitchen/original slave quarters
3) meathouse
4,5) granaries
6) outhouse
7) horse/carriage barn
8) original orchard
9) cow/sheep barn
10) springhouse
11) cemetery
12) cattle scales
two-story, frame house belonging to Anderson Shumate, on the property of the Mercer Salt Works on Lick Creek (Miller 1908:58).

The Crump estate was one of the grand estates in what is now southern West Virginia. Crump property extended along the New River and covered approximately 1,744 acres (Browning 1953:12).

The Crump Mansion (Figure 2), quite a site in a region where a man's wealth and standing were measured by whether his home was built of round logs or the more pretentious hewn logs, was built above the flood plain of the New River, overlooking the river and a good portion of the fertile bottomlands (Figure 3).

Of Major Crump's many business interests in the area of Summers County, one was the ownership of a buhrstone mill, known later as the mill of Mr. Levi McNelly, on the Bluestone River (Miller 1908:74). The Crump family also had an interest in the Mercer Salt Works on Lick Creek. Upon Major Crump's death at age 83 in January of 1877, the Crump estate passed to the hands of his son, William G. Crump (Summers County Records: Deaths 1871-1906).

Both Major Crump and his wife, Gillie, who died after him, were purported to be buried in glass coffins (Wilbur Farley, personal communication 1984). This has never been proven; however, a common practice was to have a pane of glass set in the coffin lids over the face of the deceased. Although many coffins of this type were homemade, more elaborate coffins with larger panes of glass could be purchased. When the graves in the family cemetery were exhumed in 1948 because of the construction of the Bluestone Dam project, two unmarked graves, which contained remnants of glass, were found lying end to end (Bluestone Reservoir Cemetery Removal Field Notes CR-2). These are presumed to be the graves of Major Crump and his wife.

Upon the death of William G. Crump, Major Crump's son, on May 22, 1890, (Summers County Records: Deaths 1871-1906), the estate passed to William Crump's daughters and their husbands. Ella Crump married Colonel John G. Crockett in November 1872 and Mary Crump married Colonel W. C. Crockett on December 1, 1875 (Summers County Records: Marriages 1871-1899). W. C. Crockett was a preacher in the Methodist Church South and Colonel John Crockett, a Confederate officer, represented Summers County for two terms in the West Virginia Legislature (Miller 1908:171).

Around the year 1900, J. T. Shumate purchased the lower portion of Crump's Bottom from W. C. Crockett (Miller 1908:459). In 1902, G. W. Harman bought the upper part of the Crump estate, including the Crump mansion, from John Crockett (Miller 1908:709).

G. W. Harman, his family and heirs, lived in the Crump Mansion until it was purchased by the Corps of Engineers in 1939. After this, the house began to decay. After standing empty for a number of years, the house was razed because it had been extensively vandalized. The brick house was so sturdy that dynamite had to be used to bring it down. Many bricks from the house were used to improve the nearby road. The four poplar pillars were reportedly used in the construction of a house in Beckley and the shutters were used on a house in Hinton.
Major Crump built his mansion on a terrace point above the flood plain of the upper end of Crump's Bottom (Figure 3). The house itself was built of brick made on the site by slaves. The house had 22 rooms, a full basement with a dirt floor where apples, potatoes and canned goods were kept by the Harman and a plastered attic on the fourth floor. The timber in the house was mostly walnut and cherry and the four 40-foot porch columns were solid poplar (Browning 1953). The kitchen was at the back of the house, separated from the main structure by a breezeway. The remains of the foundation stone and some of the hand made brick can still be identified and plotted. Some "store-bought" brick, once used to build a new flue in the kitchen, is helpful in delineating the position of that structure. According to reports (Hallie Harman, personal communication 1984), there was a basement under the kitchen which served originally as slave quarters. A flagstone path led from the porch down towards the road and the four main rooms on the first and second floors each had a fireplace (Browning 1953).

Immediately upriver and to the rear of the mansion stood a wooden structure, possibly the original slave quarters, which was later used as a meathouse (Hallie Harman, personal communication 1984). The two original granaries stood directly behind the house. They consisted of a double corn crib with a wheat storage bin on top. They and the other outbuildings were constructed of wood (Figure 3). The outhouse was off the back porch of the house as can be noted from the diagram.

A wooden horse barn in which the riding horses and presumably the carriages were kept stood in a pasture upriver of the house. Next to this was the original Crump orchard. In this original orchard grew many different types of fruits, including grapes, berries, apples, plums, peaches and quince (Wilbur Farley, personal communication 1984). Next to it stood an apple orchard planted in the early 1900's.

Downriver of the house was a spring which fed a small, intermittent stream. Beyond this, in a pasture, was a wooden barn in which the sheep and cattle were kept (Hallie Harman, personal communication 1984).

To the river side of what was Secondary State Road 28, in front of the mansion, is a spring. A springhouse, which left a depression still visible today, once stood nearby. The house was without water or electricity and water was carried up from this spring or from one in back of the house. The family cemetery was in an area of tillable pasture nearby. The rest of the bottomland on the Crump estate was either cultivated field, pasture or timber (Figure 3).

To the left of the estate, toward Hinton, are the remnants of an old road, known locally as the Crump Road. Major Crump established this road in order to gain a better view of his fertile bottomland upon entering and leaving his estate (Wilbur Farley, personal communication 1984). This road climbed up the hillside slightly downriver of the mansion and ran toward Hinton, past what was later the Harman school on Horse Ford Creek, and then dropped suddenly down to the river (Figure 1). The Crump Road traveled down to what was later known as Buck Smith's Ferry. Buck Smith was a white man who ran a ferry across New River around 1920. Buck Smith himself lived on the opposite side of the river. Near the ferry, the Crump road joined the old River Road, which ran through the center of the bottom; the River Road then continued down to Hinton.
The old Crump Road is also known locally as "Billy Crump's Corduroy Road." To corduroy a road is to build a road, or sections of it, by placing logs side by side transversely to the road bed. The Crump Road was corduroyed in its low-lying areas, which were subject to erosion or which had a tendency to hold water. For example, the road was corduroyed where it crossed Horse Ford Creek, near the Harman school. Although apparently none of the corduroy remains extant, it is part of the living memory of many local people (Wilbur Farley, personal communication 1984) and a study of the topography of the area can give a good indication of the placement of the original corduroy.

Slightly upriver of the Crump Mansion, along the old state road, one can see the remains of a set of cattle scales on which cattle were weighed before the drive to market.

Although little remains of the house on Crump's Bottom, the farm complex or the community of people supporting it, there is much of historic archeological interest. Fence lines on the estate are still extant, and through real estate records, early maps, aerial photography and local informants one can relocate structures and piece together the lifestyles of past generations.

The Crump/Harman Mansion and outbuildings have been assigned archeological site number 46SU328. The site, along with all other archeological sites in Bluestone Reservoir, are protected by Federal law and are being preserved for future archeological research.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The authors wish to thank Wilbur Farley, Hallie Lee Harman, Dora Toney, Steven Trails and Fred Long for providing their time and information for this report. Ranger David Eskridge and Resource Manager Wayne Rigor of Bluestone Reservoir provided transportation to historic and archeological sites on numerous occasions. Lisa Hatten assisted with the typing, editing and compilation of this report.

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