

The life and death of John Counts of Page and Russell Counties, Virginia

By Sharon Lemkuil, November 2018

This account is based on the few facts that have been gathered in the last 290 years regarding the man now commonly known as **“John Counts of Glade Hollow”**. This name with the descriptor was given to him by his descendant Elihu Jasper Sutherland who researched and wrote a biographical sketch of “John Counts of Glade Hollow” which is contained in the book, “Some Descendants of John Counts of Glade Hollow”, Appendix A. Sutherland used this name because it is the first version of the name he found in the 09 Feb 1764 civil suit of John Counts against John Stacey, as well as the name used in the [Last Will and Testament of John Counts](#) who signed by mark on 03 Apr 1802 in Russell County, Virginia, a county formed on 02 Jan 1786 from Washington County, Virginia. The Will was presented to Court and proved by the oath of John Hargis on 27 Apr 1803, and further proved on 26 Jul 1803 by the oath of Duritee Counts. Sutherland used “of Glade Hollow” to distinguish the father from his son John Counts “of Cleveland”, the locations in which they resided in Russell County, Virginia. Sutherland’s sketch remains as an excellent source of factual information on our ancestor. As Glade Hollow in Russell County, Virginia is the final location in which “John Counts of Glade Hollow” lived, died, and was buried, this identifier has become not only his commonly used name, but the surname Counts is used by many of his descendants down through the generations.

While it is human nature to want to fill in the many blanks in the life of our ancestor John Counts Senior to complete the picture to our satisfaction, we have only a handful of pieces to a jigsaw puzzle with no clear picture as to how to assemble them. In researching this man, the author has found that it is easier to assemble facts on the several other John Counts, Koontz, Coutts, and many other various spellings of this very common name, than it is to find solid factual evidence about our elusive ancestor. However, the picture we have within our grasp is one of a pioneer who built a home and family and who lived successfully into old age in the valleys of Virginia at a time when immigrants carved out a livelihood from the wilderness, encountered hardship and watched the British Colonial government, French Colonials and native American Indian tribes vie for control of the land. The many descendants of John Counts of Glade Hollow are a testament to his well-lived life.

BIRTH NAME OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

The first topic of address is the name of our ancestor. **“John Counts”**, while now commonly used for this man, is not his birth name. The name John is the English version of the German name Johann or Johannes, sometimes shortened to Hans or Hannes. Often German families named several children the same first name and a different second name. Within one family you might find several named Johann and a Johannes, each using either their first or middle name as the name by which they were called. This occurred due to Germanic naming traditions where a sponsor was usually present at the baptism of the child who was given that sponsor’s name, Johann and Johannes being very common given names. The name John is the most common male first name found in the valley of Virginia during this period.

Kuntz is probably the original German spelling of our ancestor’s surname, although there are other similar surnames such as Kantz, Kintz, etc. Kuntz is one of the most common German surnames. Once in America, Kuntz (Cuntz) becomes a multitude of phonetically spelled versions

of this German surname too numerous to mention here. It should be pointed out that those with any variation of the surname Kuntz, like John Counts of Glade Hollow, are not necessarily related to each other. That would be like coming to the erroneous conclusion that everyone with the very common surname Smith or Williams came from the same country and family. This situation makes researching John Counts and his ancestors quite problematic and leaves us with the task of running down every man of a similar name in the general area, examining facts associated with him, and drawing a conclusion as to whether or not this fact refers to our own John Counts Senior.

While the surname Kuntz is likely the original spelling, as pointed out by E. J. Sutherland in his sketch, the author is aware of NO record in which this version of John's surname can yet be confirmed. There is ongoing confusion between the surnames spelled in America as CUNTZ, COUNTZ, COUNTS, COUTS, COUNCE, KUNTZ, KOUNTZ, KOONTZ, COONTZ, COONS, and etc. which are used interchangeably in records for both our ancestors and for others who may or may not be related to John Counts of Glade Hollow.

To date, no record of the signature of John Counts has been found. Thus, our only records of the name of our ancestor are those spelled by others listening to the name being spoken and recording it as best they could. The possible reasons for no record of his signature are that John spoke and wrote only in German and marked his signature with an "X" in the English records, that he was illiterate and did not know how to sign his name – a situation not uncommon at the time, or that we simply no longer have or are unaware of any document or personal record where he did sign his name.

BIRTHPLACE OF "JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW"

So why do we assume our "John Counts" was from Germany, or at least of German ancestry? In his sketch of the life of "John Counts of Glade Hollow", E. J. Sutherland of Clintwood, Virginia states in Appendix A, page 12 and 13, "Family tradition is strong that he was "Black Dutch," which means that he was of Germanic origin. The place of his nativity is likewise unknown. It is possible that he was a descendant of some immigrant from the Rhine Palatinate, who came over to Pennsylvania, and later drifted down with the south-moving tide of immigration into the Valley of Virginia, during the eighteen century."

Family tradition in my own line which descends from John's son Philip, is strong that both the Kountz (Counts) and Kiser (Käyser) families were originally from Germany, a fact confirmed for our ancestor and original immigrant Carl Sebastian Käyser. John's son Philip seems to be the only one to have used the more Germanic spelling of Kountz, also pronounced as "counts", which is how it is spelled in his daughter [Elizabeth Kountz Carter's Bible record](#) of the family, and in the name of Philip Kountz Carter, grandson of Philip Kountz. However, Philip Kountz' surname is also variously spelled in records as Coutz, Counts, and Koontz.

Today the term "Black Dutch" has several meanings, none of which seem to be supported by fact. Some who have this verbal heritage have been said to possibly have a "swarthy" Dutch or German ancestry denoted by their intermarrying with Spanish or Portuguese soldiers. In the age of DNA testing, this idea is still unverified and for us this is pure speculation until we are able to specifically identify the European origins of John Counts. (See [DNA page for Counts](#).)

However, the surname itself is evidence of Germanic origins. The earliest known mention of "John Countz" is in the Frederick County, Virginia Court-martial of 02 and 03 Sep 1755. (See below.) As we have been able to confirm the Palatinate origins of Carl Sebastian Käyser, and we

know German emigration from that area to Pennsylvania and Virginia was like a mass migration, we can safely assume this Germanic heritage to be correct. Genealogists have stated however, that finding a German record for a “John Counts”, whatever the spelling, is impossible without further information linking him to a ship record or other early immigration document due to the commonness of the both the given name and surname.

BIRTH DATE OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

What we have thus far is “John Counts”, whose surname is variously spelled, of Germanic origin. When was he born? Well, as we have no birth record for our elusive ancestor, we do not know. The best estimate is that he was born in the early to mid- 1720’s. We deduce this from two pieces of information. First, the reading of the gravestone of Mary Counts by E. J. Sutherland, “JUNE 25TH 1814 MARY COUNTS WAS BORN 1722”. As far as we can determine, this Mary, who is stated to be the wife of John Counts of Glade Hollow, is said to be the same woman Magdalen and Magdalene in other records. Second, the author notes that a contemporary of John Counts was Carl Sebastian Käyser, also known as Charles Kyser, born 16 Jan 1726 in Möckmühl, Württemberg, Germany (Möckmühl, Heilbronn, Baden-Württemberg, Germany). Charles’ daughter Anna married John’s son Philip. Both men are seen in the 1755 Court-martial records of Frederick County, Virginia as John Countz and Charles Kyser or Kysar, meaning they would have to be of military age at that time, Charles Kyser being 29 years old. (See below.) The story passed down by his son Andrew was that Charles Kyser was present at Braddock’s defeat in July of 1755 and survived. There is no family story of John Counts being present at that disastrous engagement, but we do know he was conscripted or “levied” as a foot soldier for the British and did not appear for muster twice, for which he was fined 10 shillings and 100 pounds of tobacco. So the author estimates his birth as between about 1720 and 1725. For our purposes here, we will say he was born circa 1722.

BIRTH PARENTS OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

As we have no birth record of John Counts, we also have no known parents for our ancestor. In his biographical sketch, Sutherland states, “It is my present opinion—however not yet thoroughly verified—that John Counts of Glade Hollow was a grandson of Joseph Kuntz (or COUNTS, as he spelled it in his will in 1730), who came to Germanna, Virginia, in 1714.” A more complete discussion of Jost “Joseph” Cuntz, Coons, Cownts who immigrated to Virginia in 1714, can be seen in the document “Property Records of John Counts - all spellings” by this author. Sutherland believed the Will to be written as “Counts”, but that spelling is now viewed as the phonetic “Cownts”. In the map of his home place within the Germanna Colony, the surname of Jost “Joseph” is listed as Coons, and in affidavit records the surname is spelled Cuntz. This same Joseph Cuntz is stated by author Lowell L. Koontz in his book “History of the Descendants of John Koontz”, 1979, to be the probable grandfather of “Elder John Koontz” of the Shenandoah Valley, whose surname was written in a dozen ways over the years. The theory of Jost “Joseph” Cuntz, Coons, Cownts being our ancestor stems from the idea that Joseph’s son John, who was the eldest but is not mentioned in his will, survived him and lived to marry and have sons of his own, an idea discounted by Holtzclaw in “The Genealogy of the Holtzclaw family 1540-1935” page 36, where he states that “His eldest son, John Cuntze, seems to have died before his father.” That this son survived and had offspring has never been proven. In

addition to these issues is the fact that his son John would have been about 16 years old in 1722, our estimated birth year for John Counts of Glade Hollow. An affidavit of their importation to Virginia was signed in 1724 by Joseph Cuntz, at which time son John was listed as having come over on the ship in 1714, but it is not known if he was living at that time. This affidavit was to establish “headrights” for the amount of land to be granted to Joseph Cuntz based on how many persons he had imported to the colonies. If son John were living, he would have been 18 years of age in 1724, and as he is not mentioned in the 1730 Will of Joseph Cownts, it is assumed he died between those dates. The other sons were born after 1714. There is no documentary evidence linking Jost Cuntz also known as Joseph Coons and Cownts to any verifiable descendants other than those of his younger sons Henry and Tillman and his daughters.

DNA evidence indicates that Jost “Joseph” Cuntz, Coons, Cownts is NOT an ancestor of John Counts of Glade Hollow, nor is there a clear DNA relationship between John Counts Senior and Elder John Koontz.

Through research and the newer, well-documented articles on the subject, this author is convinced that neither “John Counts of Glade Hollow” nor “Elder John Koontz” are descendants of Jost “Joseph” Cuntz of the Germanna Colony of 1714.

Elder John Koontz, too young to be our John Counts, is said by author Lowell L. Koontz to be the John Cuntz baptized as a son of John Cuntz in the 29 Apr 1739 record of Reverend Johann Casper Stoever, Junior. The following is from the transcribed record:

Page 13:

29 Apr 1739: **JOHN CUNTZ**, (Opequon.)

Cuntz—John, b. March 26, 1739; bap. April 29, 1739. Sponsors, Caspar Stoever, Jacob Neuschwanger and Maria Baumann.

Note: No other child of this father is listed in these records.

Note: Caspar Stoever in this record is Reverend Johann Casper Stoever, Junior, brother of **Anna Elizabetha Catharina/Catherine Stoever**, after whom **John Cuntz**, the child, is named.

Note: The next record “proves” that this **John Cuntz**, the father, is the same as **Johannes Kuntz** who married **Anna Elizabetha Catharina/Catherine Stoever**, and that she is the mother of this child **John Cuntz**.

29 Apr 1740: JOHANN BROBAND, (Opequon.)

Broband—John, b. March 1, 1740; bap. April 29, 1740. Sponsors, **John Cuntz** and wife **Anna Elizabetha Catharina**.

Page 56:

Number 174 in the original script

Marriages 1738:

June 25, 1738. **Johannes Kuntz** and **Anna Elizabetha Catherine Stoever**, Earl Town.”

Note: They were married by her brother Reverend Johann Casper Stoever, Junior at his residence.

If it is the case that Elder John Koontz is the same as John Cuntz who was born 26 Mar 1739, then we can also conclude that our “John Counts of Glade Hollow” is not a descendant of Jost “Joseph” Cuntz (Coons) of the First Germanna Colony, his son John Cuntze, the Johannes Kuntz also known as John Cuntz in the Stoever records, or his wife Anna Elizabetha Catherine Stoever.

So who were the parents of John Counts of Glade Hollow? The problems faced in searching for this piece of the puzzle are numerous. We do not know his father’s given name, his

mother's name, his wife's surname, or whether or not he arrived to the shores of the American Colonies by ship or was born there as a native.

That John Counts was born in the British American Colonies, although speculated by Sutherland, seems to have several inherent issues. The first being that there is nothing to connect this John Counts to Jost Cuntz, 1714 immigrant to Germanna, except for the surname. A man born in early to mid-1720 would have to be a son of very early immigrants, and there seems to be no obvious possible parents with this surname in known records.

A man surnamed Kuntz or a variant who is old enough to be the parent of our John Counts, if we are correct in estimating his birth year, leaves us with the task of finding out ages for all such immigrants which is often not a possibility. Needless to say, a painstaking process at best, needing the confirmation of each man named Kuntz or a variant and the birth of his children, not necessarily in Virginia. As Virginia records themselves are particularly scarce, it is doubtful that this mystery will be solved. To date we have no attributable record of baptism for John Counts of Glade Hollow.

Sometimes the family's given names are a clue to piecing them together, but this is not the case with John Counts of Glade Hollow. In his Last Will and Testament, John Counts names his sons John, Philip, and George. These very common German male given names are no clue to the names of his parents, grandparents or wife's parents. There are multiple men of these given names with the same or similar surnames. Many have called some of these men siblings of John Counts due to the similarity of the names, but as we do not know John's parents, again, this a purely speculative leap on their part and in many cases has been proven to be false. John's daughters, named in the Will, are "Eve Maticks my eldest daughter", Mary Rarsnake, Lissey (Elizabeth) Willard, Catherine (Peters, Gray) and Christian. Again, all common female given names of the era. His wife is not mentioned in the Will, but we know she was still living on 27 Jul 1802 because she is named as Magdalene Counts in a deed of property to their son Philip. It was not unusual to leave bequests to the children and not name the wife at this time, as she was not to inherit. The implication is that she would have a life estate with "my son George with whom I live [on] the plantation on which we live". This is confirmed by her gravestone in Glade Hollow, and by the cabin called the "Granny Counts" house on the farm. So while we have the given names of the family, the names are not particularly helpful in linking us to extended family members because of the commonness of the names at that time, particularly in the German community of the Shenandoah Valley.

Did John Counts arrive by ship from Germany to the shores of America? Until we can "nail down" a particular ship record for this John Countz, Coutz, Counts we cannot be sure, but it seems to be our only logical choice. The tedious process of researching every immigrant with the surname "Kuntz" or variant for which we do have a record, eliminating all those who do not fit the facts as we know them regarding our ancestor John, in the hope of someday finding the correct ship record for "John Counts of Glade Hollow" is an ongoing project.

After much study, the author's personal opinion is that John Counts was most likely born in Germany and arrived either as a young man or boy by ship, probably with his parents. There are several possibilities which present themselves, but until we have clarified each option, no conclusion can yet be drawn. So this very large "chunk" of the puzzle is still missing.

FIRST RECORD OF "JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW"

So what *do* we know about “John Counts of Glade Hollow”? He was probably born circa 1722 in Germany, and immigrated to the British American Colonies at a young age. His parentage is unknown at this time, but we do have the names of his wife and children from records. At some point by about 1753, he arrived in Frederick County, Virginia, which then encompassed what is now Frederick, Shenandoah and Page Counties.

The first record we have of John Counts of Glade Hollow is as **John Countz** on 02 and 03 Sep 1755 in Frederick County, Virginia.

In the book “[MEAD RELATIONS, MEAD – BROWN – POWELL – KEYSER, KELLY – TRUMBO – AUSTIN, TOLER – PRICHARD, Virginia – Kentucky](#)”, compiled by A. M. Prichard, Staunton, Virginia, 1933, [page 181](#), in reference to the military service of Carl Sebastian Kayser, known in this book as Charles Keyser, and in the following records as Charles Kyser or Kysar, is the statement:

“The only doubtful statement in the letter of Adam Strickler appears to be that Charles Keyser came to America “as a hired soldier in the service of Great Britain to fight against the French and Indians.” That war began in 1754 when [Col. George] Washington was sent with Col. Fry to the west of the Alleghenies with a small army. On July 3, 1754 they encountered the French and surrendered Fort Necessity. Thereupon, in order to repell [sic] the French, England sent over General Braddock, with two regiments of British regulars, who landed in Virginia on 19 Feb. 1755. There is no record of any hired soldiers being imported for this war before that time. If, therefore, the oldest son of Charles Keyser was born in 1752, as seems to appear from the indistinct and well worn [sic] inscription on his gravestone, then the marriage of Charles Keyser must have occurred some three or four years before the French and Indian war began.

The doubt suggested in the preceding paragraph does not, in any way, impeach Adam Strickler’s statement about Charles Keyser’s connection with Braddock’s army. Mr. Waddell, in his *Annals of Augusta County*, said that Braddock’s “command consisted of two regiments of regulars, augmented by some Virginia levies selected for the purpose; two companies of ‘hatchet men’; six of rangers, from different provinces, and one troop of light horse. The whole composed an army of nearly twenty-five hundred men.” The six companies of “rangers, from different provinces” may have included one from Pennsylvania with Charles Keyser in it; or he may have settled in Virginia before that time, and gone with the “Virginia levies selected for the purpose.””

[Bracketed words added by the author.]

As we can see from the records below, “Charles Keyser”, whom we now know to be Carl Sebastian Kayser, and who is seen in the following as **Charles Kyser** or **Kysar**, was most certainly NOT a part of ‘The ‘six companies of “rangers, from different provinces”’ which ‘may have included one from Pennsylvania with Charles Keyser in it’. From the records below we see that he was most definitely ‘with the “Virginia levies selected for the purpose.”’ in 1754 and 1755. It should be pointed out that Prichard’s book, which was published in 1933, post-dates the March 1928 “discovery” and pre-dates the 1939 publication of Mrs. Anna (Strickler) Milbourne. However, as she points out, Kercheval had used the same documents in his own work earlier.

This quotation is presented for two reasons: first, to place both **John Countz** and **Charles Kyser** properly in their location of Frederick County, Virginia. As pointed to in the above quote, the first defeat and loss of Fort Necessity on 03 Jul 1754, and the arrival of Braddock and his troops 19 Feb 1755, along with the court-martial fines for the Virginia levies who were conscripted from Virginia’s able-bodied men to fight, leads us to conclude with some confidence that both men were in Virginia by about 1753. The second reason to confirm this is, while John Countz missed both the 1754 and 1755 musters and was fined for such offense,

Charles Kyser missed only one muster and went in 1755 with Braddock to fight, and the story of his survival of that engagement and safe arrival back to Virginia became an oft-told family story. As indicated by the mention of Charles' son Charles' birth in 1752, they were both able-bodied men who knew how to use a weapon and had wives and families in Sep 1755. John Countz refusal to show up for the musters may or may not have been due to his "conscientious objection" to bearing arms. However, we know that he chose to stay at home with the many others on the list who chose to do the same, instead of fighting for the British.

In the records below, his name is written as **John Countz** (use of bold added) and we also see the name of **Charles Kyser/Kysar**, as well as many other familiar names from Page County, Virginia. Certain discrepancies can be seen in the interpretation of the handwritten names in the two records. Other men of interest in this record are John Hite, Thomas Bryan Martin, John Hardin, Lewis Stephan (Stephens) and the Rutherfords. (See later comments.)

[Source 1](#): National Genealogical Society Quarterly, VOL. XXVII, MARCH, 1939, No. 1, [pages 56, 57, and 58](#):

"RECORDS OF FREDERICK COUNTY, VIRGINIA, MILITIA IN THE FRENCH AND INDIAN WAR PERIOD. By MRS. ANNA (STRICKLER) MILBOURNE, Charles Town, W. Va.

These records unexpectedly came to light in March, 1928, when Col. Bryan Conrad, of Winchester, discovered that Frederick County Deed Book 18 contained in its back portion records of Courts-martial held in all the years between 1755 and 1761, excepting 1759. They contain the names of hundreds of men and officers and cover fifty-nine folios of the old record book.

Kercheval was no doubt acquainted with these records, for he published entire the account of the Court-martial for 1756.

Lord Fairfax, the County Lieutenant, presided over the earlier courts; John Hite, Colonel of the County Militia, over those of 1760 and 1761.

The business of the Court was to impose fines upon those who failed to attend the general muster and the several private or company musters held each year. Men who had reached sixty years of age, upon petition, were discharged from further duty.

The captains commanding companies drawn from the Page and Warren area were Samuel Odell, William Bethall, Henry Spear and John Schene. Their lists are given below, and a few names excerpted from other lists. All were directly from D. B. 18.

At a Court-martial held for the County of Frederick on Friday the 2d. day of September, 1755.

Present: The Right Honble. Thomas Lord Fairfax County Lieutenant. George William Fairfax Colonel; Thomas Bryan Martin, Lieutenant Colonel; Meredith Helm Major

Captains: Richard Morgan John Funk, Jun. Jeremiah Smith Samuel Odell Jacob Funk William Bethel Isaac Parkin Edward Rodgers John Hardin John Linsey Cornelious Ruddell William Vance Lewis Stephan & John Denton

Robert Rutherford appointed Clerk of Court Martial."

...and following...

"William Bethel Captain of Foot returned his List of Delinquents:

John Crum, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo. [Tobacco]

Edward Price, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.

Jacob Lommon, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.

John Linebarger, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.

John Taylor, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
Michael Comer, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Michael Porough (Buracker?), 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
David Coffman, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Samuel Beam, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Conrad Rich, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Joseph Campbell, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Christian Harnis, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Henry Huston, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Tann (Tanner) (?), 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Bastion Frederick, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Wood, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Casper Brainn, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Philip Grubb, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Benjamin Grigsby, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
Adam Voltz (Foltz ?), 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Christian Maggard, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Halberman (Haldiman), 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Philip Baker, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
David Maggard, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
[John Countz, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.](#)
Joseph Summers, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
Philip Kiplinger, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Henry Piper, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Michael Mire, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Jacob Pontz, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Peter Painter, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Low, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Henry Prosser, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Lewis Stones, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Jacob Strickler, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Joseph Strickler, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Berry, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Daniel Kiplinger, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Jacob Shaver, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Charles Thompson, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
John Smith, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
Archart Burner, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.
John Goslip, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
Frederick Stober, 10 s. & 100 lb. Tobo.
[Charles Kyser, 5 s. & 50 lb. Tobo.](#)

Then the Court Martial adjourned until tomorrow morning 8 o'clock.

D. B. 18, M. 12-16)

(Captain Bethel's district, with 45 delinquents, covered most of Page below the Fairfax Line. Many were conscientious objectors to bearing arms.)"

[Source 2](#): Virginia's Colonial Soldiers, by Lloyd Dewitt Bockstruck, Genealogical Publishing Co., Inc., 1988, [page 346](#):

“Delinquents of William Bethel, Captain of Foot: Fined for missing 1 muster: John Crume, Edward Price, John Smith, John Limebarger, John Taylor, Michael Porough, Benjamin Grigsby, Joseph Summers, Michael Achart Burner, and **Charles Kyzar**; for missing 2 musters: Jacob Lommonah, Michael Comer, David Coffman, Samuel Beam, Conrad Rich, Joseph Cambel, Henry Hustond, Christian Harris, John Tann, Bastion Frederick, John Wood, Casper Braier, Phillip Grubb, Adam Voltz, Christian Maggard, John Halterman, Phillip Baker, David Maggard, **John Countz**, Phillip Kiplinger, John Henry Piper, Michael Mier, Jacob Pentz, Peter Painter, John Low, Henry Prosser, Lewis Stones, Jacob Strickler, Joseph Strickler, John Berry, Daniel Keplinger, Jacob Shaver, Charles Thompson, John Gotlip, and Frederick Shober (also Shover). AT A COURT MARTIAL HELD ON 3 SEPT. 1755. The following were present: The Right Honorable Thomas, Lord Fairfax, County Lieutenant, George William Fairfax, Col.; Thomas Bryan Martin, Lt. Co.; and Captains John Hardin, William Vance, William Bethel, Cornilious Ruddell, John Funk, Jr., Samuel Odell, and Thomas Swaringen. Capt. Isaac Parkin treasurer.”

These records inform us of several facts about John Counts of Glade Hollow. First, he is of military age, probably in his 30's here, and has been expected to appear for at least two yearly musters prior to September 1755, putting his date of residence in Frederick County to about 1753. Second, he lived in what was then Frederick County, Virginia the part of which later became Page County, Virginia “below the Fairfax Line”. Third, he is listed with a large group of men also known to have been living there at that time. Fourth, he *may* have been a “conscientious objector” or at least not willing to fight for the British. The pioneers of Frederick County had to be ready to defend themselves against attack, and while we know some were of the Quaker or Mennonite faith and did not believe in bearing arms, there is no indication this was true for John Countz who was most likely a Lutheran. Fifth, that he was a man of means. The fine of 10 shillings and 100 pounds of tobacco, used as currency by the British, is quite large and meant to discourage such lack of participation at muster by the Virginia conscripts. One can conclude that these men had to have been expected to pay the fines and produce tobacco or goods which could be traded for tobacco, to fulfill their obligation, meaning they were all productive members of the community. Whether or not the fine was actually paid is an interesting question to which we have no answer. The British General Braddock had been soundly defeated and killed near Fort Duquesne a few months before in July of 1755 and the losses for the British had been disastrous. Charles Kyser, fined for only missing one yearly muster, had participated in that engagement and survived to return to his home in Frederick County, Virginia.

While we have no known property record for John Countz at this date, evidence is strong that not only was he living in Frederick County, Virginia, but also that he was engaged in farming. The lack of records does not mean he had not purchased or been granted property. The next record supports the probability that he was a property owner prior to 1755, and at the latest, prior to 1759.

It should be noted here that John Hardin and Lewis Stephan, listed above, are the same men found in the deed of John Kountz in 1745. Robert Rutherford, above, may be related to Thomas Rutherford in the deed. The John Kountz in the property record is identified by Lowell L. Koontz as the same man Johannes Kuntz (John Cuntz), husband of Anna Elizabetha Catharina Stoever and father of John Cuntz, Junior. (See above.)

From Augusta County Records, 1745:

“Aug. 5, 6: — John Kountz of Fred. Co. sells to Lewis Stephens for £65 5s. 195 A., in Fred. Co., on the N. side of "Sedar Run." Kountz bought of John Branson, and the land was obtained in 1732 by Branson in a 1000 A. grant. — Witnesses, Thomas Rutherford, W. Russell, John Hardin. — F C D B 1—227.”

According to Lowell L. Koontz, Frederick County Virginia Deed Book, 1, page 229 says that John Kountz's wife “Elizabeth surrender her dower on 6 Aug.”

This property was part of:

“1734, Oct. 3 - Grant by the Colony of Virginia to John Branson a tract of 1000 acres on the “western side of Sherando River on both sides of Cedar Run or Creek” in Orange County being part of 40,000 acres purchased by Jost Hite from Jonas and John Vanmeter who had a deed from the Council of the Colony. The tract was described by metes and bounds which made reference to “four white oaks by the Gap that goes through the mountains”; and “crossing a Branch of Cedar Run”. Signed by William Gooch.”

Lewis Stephens, to whom the property was sold, built “Stephens Fort” in the gap between the mountains. In 1745, Lewis purchased 195 acres on Cedar Creek, 7 miles west of his father's home. He built a house for his family and also a water powered mill. With the outbreak of the French and Indian War, Lewis served as an officer in the Frederick County Militia under George Washington. He built a hexagonal stone powder magazine that reaches deep into the ground near his house and mill on Cedar Creek (Sedar/Cedar Run in the property record) which stands today and established an iron worked on his tract at Cedar Creek which produces pig iron and wrought iron. Lewis sold it to Isaac Zane in 1767. It was used by Isaac Zane when he produced artillery munitions for the Revolutionary War, and as an ice house. In 1754, Lewis received 424 acres from his father. He laid out his plan for the lots and petitioned the government of Virginia in Williamsburg for a town charter. The Virginia Colonel General Assemble established a town by the name of “Stephensburgh” now called Stephens City. On 28 Apr 1757, Lewis Stephens' father Peter made a Will. Lewis received the mansion house and 25 acres. He and his family returned to the family lands in Stephens City which is located near Winchester, Frederick County, Virginia.

Lewis Stephens and John Hardin were well-known men of their era who lived in the Winchester vicinity and interacted with Thomas, Lord Fairfax.

By 1755, the John Kountz of this deed was living in Front Royal and is *not* the same man **John Countz** who is in the records of Captain Bethel.

SECOND RECORD OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

The “Counts” spelling of the surname was used as early as 05 Mar 1759 in Frederick County, Virginia. At that time, Frederick County encompassed what is now Frederick, Shenandoah and Page Counties.

The following is transcribed by, and copy in possession of, researcher Barbara Stacy Matthews who writes: “This is a hand written document, in Simon's own hand, found in the loose papers of Frederick Courthouse”. (Frederick Co., VA Loose Papers).

[Bracketed words added by the author.]

“05 Mar 1759 - I promise to pay or cause to be payd. unto John Counts his eares or a sines [heirs or assigns] the full and just sum of six punds [pounds] current money of vergenea [Virginia] on or before the ----- 25 day of December as witness my hand this 5 day of March 1759
Siman Stacy

test Mason Combs

John X Stacy (his mark)”

It should be noted that the reference to “his heirs or assigns” means John Counts would have been known to have a wife and children at this date.

And the following from Frederick County ([FC-COB9:263](#)):

“3 Mar 1761 John Counts agst John Stacey } on an attachment. John Combs and John Allen came to court and undertook for the defendant.”

It is likely that the 1761 attachment had to do with payment due to John Counts from John Stacy who sent mutual friends to negotiate for him instead of coming himself to face John Counts in court. In the above transcription, we see that the year the payment was due is missing, usually written as due one year after the note, probably 25 Dec 1760 in this case, and brought back into court 03 Mar 1761, two years after it was witnessed by Simon and John Stacy and Mason Combs, for non-payment. Three years later, the unpaid attachment seems to have become a trespass issue, with John Combs now the defendant, once again not appearing in court. This would make John Stacy and John Combs “squatters” on John Counts land. See below.

Combs researcher Sue Elfving notes: “This entry connects the John Combs in the Frederick Co. VA records with the STACYS, ALLENS, COUNTS and Mason Combs. See 3 Dec 1760 and 4 Mar 1761 re Mason Combs and John ALLEN; and 5 Mar 1759 re Mason Combs, John COUNTS and Simon and John STACY.” (See above.)

The Combs, Counts and Stacy’s of Glade Hollow, Russell County, Virginia, are found together earlier in Shenandoah (Frederick) County, VA.

According to E. J. Sutherland in “Some Descendants of John Counts of Glade Hollow” APPENDIX A, page 13:

“John Counts of Glade Hollow first comes upon the recorded scene of action in Frederick County, Virginia. On February 9, 1764, in a civil suit on an attachment by John Counts against John Stacey, the jury found that “the defendant hath assumed upon himself in manner and form as the plaintiff hath declared and they do assess the plaintiffs damages by occasion of the non-performance thereof to be Six Pound Eleven Shilling & nine pence besides his cost.””

As we can see from the above, this series of court documents begins five years previous to Sutherland’s notation as the “first” recorded mention of John Counts. We also know he was there prior to 1755 and by about 1753, so we can conclude that John Counts was living in and owned land in what was then Frederick County, Virginia *prior* to 05 Mar 1759, at which time he sold an unspecified amount of land to John Stacy for six pounds in the currency of Virginia, and was likely a property owner and farmer in Frederick County *prior* to 1755. John Combs seems to have become entangled in the same suit.

The last mention of John Stacy and John Counts together in a property record is on 28 Apr 1791 in Russell County, Virginia. John Stacey transferred his entry of fifty acres in Glade Hollow to John Counts. It is possible that this is the same John Stacy who owed payment 30 years prior to John Counts, or it could be another John Stacy. Whether or not there was a familial relationship is unknown, but the Counts’ and Stacy’s were neighbors in Shenandoah.

What we do know is that Joseph Kiser, son of Carl Sebastian Kayser (Charles Kyser, Kysar, Kizer, Keyser) married Susannah Stacy and was an early resident of Russell County, Virginia, appearing in the 1788 Tax List of Russell County as Joseph Kyzer along with Henry Hurst who married Joseph’s sister, Elizabeth Kiser. (Joseph Kiser is the ancestor of Mark Kiser, who is referred to in the account of Carl Sebastian Kayser, and of Marie Rasnick Fetzer.) John

Countz appears the next year in the 1789 Tax List of Russell County. Once again, we see the close relationship of the two families of John Countz and Charles Kyser.

And the following from Frederick County (FC-COB12:117):

“-- May 1764 John Counts agst John Combs } In trespass. Defendant not found. Alias capias issued and returnable to next court.” (See above.)

Combs researcher Sue Elfving notes: “Where was John Combs at this time? He *appears* to have possibly been out of the county?”

It appears from this trespass allegation against John Combs, who appeared in court in 1761 for John Stacy, that Combs is now the one being sued for living on land which apparently has still not been properly purchased from John Counts. Again, the person “squatting” on the land does not appear in court and the suit is continued.

MORE PROPERTY RECORDS IN FREDERICK AND DUNMORE COUNTIES OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

Sutherland then notes on pages 13-14:

“In [August, 1765](#), John Bumgarner conveyed to John Counts, both of Frederick County, Virginia, 270 acres more or less on the west side of Hawksbill Creek, which tract Bumgarner received by patent from Lord Fairfax’s office, July 2, 1761, the consideration from Counts being five shillings current money of Virginia paid in hand. The witnesses to this deed were John Hite, Jacob Virtrees, and Fargus Cron. References by John Counts to this tract in later deeds provide the strongest and most conclusive evidence that John Counts of Glade Hollow lived in the Shenandoah Valley as early as 1765.”

This land was part of the same land that was purchased by John Bumgarner at the estate sale on 22 Mar 1741 of Jacob Stover, Senior who died near the end of 1740, or early in 1741. Jacob Stover, Senior owned at least two 5,000 acre tracts by grant of the crown and seemed to be a land speculator. He did however retain a home tract in the area which seems to be the one being disposed of at this estate sale.

Three things are of note.

First, the John Hite mentioned as a witness to this deed is very likely the same man mentioned in the Court-martial record of Mrs. Anna (Strickler) Milbourne as “John Hite, Colonel of the County Militia, over those [Court-martials] of 1760 and 1761.”

Second, that five shillings was *very little* to pay for 270 acres “more or less”. His fine from 1755 for missing two musters was 10 shillings and 100 pounds of tobacco and the payment of John Stacy to John Counts for an unspecified amount of land was six pounds.

Third, the notation “paid in hand” means he gave the money to John Bumgarner in cash. Some believe the relationship of the two men was familial, which may be the case for such a simple transaction to be made for the farm which remained in the family for generations. The Bumgarners were very early residents of Frederick County, Virginia. Further property records reveal that the farm was at one time larger than “270 acres more or less” despite this being the only surviving record of property purchased by John Counts in Frederick County, Virginia aside from the two acres purchased later from Christian Bumgarner. The Stover property covered both sides of Hawksbill Creek, the part south of Counts being purchased by Peter Ruffner, also an early resident and one of the men who appraised the estate of “Charles Kizer, dec’d.”

The following may be part of the reason for this property being recorded at this date. It may be surmised that the property may have been “owned” by John Counts before this date, and that the above purchase was simply a legal confirmation of what was already true in fact.

From “Virginia Northern Neck Land Grants, 1742-775, Vol. II”, page 168:

“Northern Neck Grant Book N 1766. Northern Neck Proprietors Office – Whereas Sundry Persons have lately made a Practice of Entering Waste Lands in this Office, with a view of Selling and disposing of the same, to prevent such pernicious Practices for the future, I do hereby give Notice that no Assignment for any Warrant or Survey will be admitted for Warrants Issued after the date hereof. And I do direct and require the Surveyors in the Northern Neck, Appointed by this Office, not to receive any Assignment whatsoever from any Person, but to survey the lands in the Names of the Persons who Obtained the Warrants. And I do hereby give further Notice to All Persons who have Surveys in this Office, dated before the Year 1764, to repair to the Office before the 29th Day of September, in the Year 1766, and pay the Composition and Office fees due on such lands, that Deeds may Issue, and the Publick be no longer defrauded of the Land Tax. All Persons failing to pay the same within the limited time Afores^d shall forfeit all Right and Claim to such Surveys, and the Property shall be deemed Vested in the Proprietor. Given Under my Hand this 26th Day of March 1765. Tho’s Bry: Martin...” This is the same Thomas Bryan Martin named in the 1755 Court-martial record above.

And as seen below, Christian Bumgarner later sold another 2 acres to John Counts “for ten pounds current money of Virginia”, presumably to clear up some boundary issue from the original “more or less” or for some other unspecified reason. Later Philip Kountz bought another 2 and three-quarters acres from “Christley” Bumgarner.

It is very probable that other property purchase records of John Counts have either been lost over time, or that they were of the “cash in hand” type and not recorded at all. (See below reference to property line drawn by John Counts and Thomas Hurst.)

Not only is the Hawksbill Creek farm confirmed in land records, a portion of this same property, on which his son Philip had lived his entire life, was deeded to Philip on 27 Jul 1802 by John and Magdalene Counts which firmly establishes “John Counts of Glade Hollow” as the father of Philip Kountz of Hawksbill Creek, Shenandoah County, Virginia, that part of which became Page County, Virginia. Philip, called Phillip in the Will of John Counts, was given one shilling as his inheritance, but was deeded the property a few months after the Will was written, apparently to clarify that the property Philip lived on was his legally. The “one shilling” bequests simply acknowledged John Counts children in the Will and made certain that they would not contend his giving the farm he lived on with his son George and his personal property to George. His other children were established on their own farms by this time, although there is a lack of information about his daughter Christian (Christina) who is living in 1802.

According to Sutherland, the [Counts farm](#) was on Hawksbill Creek about three miles northwest of the present town of Luray, and about one mile south of the mouth of Hawksbill, where it enters the Shenandoah South Fork, in what is now Page County, Virginia. There is some indication that the farm may have originally encompassed both sides of the Hawksbill Creek, but it is certain that it lay between the fork made on the west by Hawksbill Creek, from its mouth which meets the Shenandoah River, and southwestward as it meanders toward the town of Luray, Page County, Virginia and on the east by the South Branch of the Shenandoah River where it winds below the Massanutten Mountains. The farm of Charles Kyser, purchased from the Reinhardt’s in 1765, was on the north side of the South Branch of the Shenandoah River where it

winds below the Massanutten Mountains near the mouth of the Hawksbill Creek, opposite the Counts farm. ([See map.](#))

The Counts farm on Hawksbill Creek was first located in Frederick County, Virginia which was created from Orange County in 1738, and officially organized in 1743. In 1772, the part which contained Hawksbill Creek became Dunmore County, Virginia, which was renamed Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1778. The same location became Page County, Virginia in 1831 when it was formed from Shenandoah County, Virginia.

It should be pointed out that the farm on Hawksbill Creek, first owned by Jacob Stover and later by John Bumgarner, is *not* the same property entangled in the court records of Counts, Combs, Stacy and Allen, which means John Counts had previously owned and farmed land whose location is unspecified except as being in Frederick County, Virginia. Once again, this highlights the lack of records for John Counts Senior.

On pages 14 and 15 Sutherland notes:

“The records of Dunmore County show that on April 27, 1773, Matthew Maddux and his wife, Eve Maddux, (who was the eldest daughter of John Counts of Glade Hollow), executed a deed to Abraham Strickler for 200 acres, a part of the description of this tract being in these words: “thence running with a line that Thomas Hurst and John Counts made.” John Counts and Magdalen were recorded as the parents of Christine, 5 months old, baptized August 22, 1773.

Unfortunately most of the County Court records of Shenandoah County are missing, thereby removing the best source of information about the early court proceedings in that section. However the deed books and other records contain some valuable data on John Counts.”

The above Eve Maddux is the same as “Eve Maticks my eldest daughter” as named in the 1802 Will of John Counts. Eve Counts, daughter of John Counts of Glade Hollow, was born about 1755 in Frederick County (now Page County), Virginia and was probably newly married in 1773. Matthew Maddox or Maddux appears on the Dunmore County “Rent Rolls” of 1774 and 1776 and the Tax Lists of Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1782, 1785, 1786-89, and 1792-94. As the censuses for Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1790 and 1800 were destroyed, we have to rely on the Tax, property and other Court records for this period. There is some indication that this is the same Matthew Maddox who later moved to Tennessee, but records there were also destroyed so we have very little to confirm this. However, there is *another* Matthew Maddox who was born in Maryland and died in West Virginia. In 1820, that Matthew Maddox applied for a Revolutionary War pension stating that he was 68 years old (born in 1752) and that he joined the Revolutionary Army in Shenandoah County, Virginia in 1780 (at age 28 years) under Captain Oldham for 18 months, that he marched to Hillsborough in North Carolina, that he was in the battle of Gilford Church, and at the battle of Camden where he received a wound that disabled him from service. He was sent to the hospital at Charlottetown and then sent home. Following this application he was granted a pension of \$8.00 per month. This Matthew Maddox married Rachel Bonfield and is in the Tax Lists of Culpepper County, Virginia during the same time period Eve and her husband were in Shenandoah. The two men are often confused. It is likely, however, that they are both from the same extended Maddox family of Maryland.

Carl Sebastian Kayser’s Oath of Allegiance in 1749 in Philadelphia was given in the presence of Joshua Maddox, Esquire, possibly of the same Maddox family to which Matthew Maddux belonged.

Matthew Mattocks (Maddux) also appears in the estate inventory record of Carl Sebastian Kayser, seen here as Charles Kizer. The following is regarding the estate of Charles Kyser, Kizer who died intestate. “On May 28, 1778, the Shenandoah County Court appointed Bryant

Breeding, Martin Comer, Matthew Mattocks, and Peter Ruffner to appraise the estate of “Charles Kizer, dec’d,” the following appraisement was made and recorded in Will Book “A” page 179”...the estate was valued at “£509 “15 “0” by “Martin Comer, Matthew Mattocks, Peter Ruffner”...“There is Ten Children, 50 pounds, 19 shillings, 6 pence Each Share.”...“Charles Kizer was granted administration of the estate, and gave bond in the sum of £1,000 on the 28 May 1778 with Frederick Comer and John Hastings as sureties. Kizer and Comer signed the bond in German.” ([Mead’s Relations, pages 181-184.](#)) This Charles Kizer who signed the bond in German was the son of “Charles Kizer, dec’d”. The author has never seen an original of this document, which information was given to Prichard by E. J. Sutherland.

Abraham Strickler, above, is from the same extended Strickler family seen in both the 1755 Court-martial records and in the letter of Adam Strickler, who was a step-son of Andrew Kiser/Keyser, son of Carl Sebastian Kayser.

Thomas Hurst is likely of the same Hurst family as Henry Hurst, son of John “Mill Creek” Hurst and Nancy Ann Nunn, who married Elizabeth Kiser and lived in Russell County, Virginia. (See above.)

A record of the baptism of daughter “Christine” is from the book, “A History of Shenandoah County” page 738. “Parents: John Countz & Magdalen, Children: Christina, Born: 5 mos., Baptized: Aug. 22, 1773”. Also baptized that day are John Adam, son of Fred. Altherr & Mary at 8 weeks; Rebecca, daughter of Conrad Bender & Rebecca, born June 25; David, son of David Profit & Ann, born Oct. 27, 1772; Phebe, daughter of John Stasy & Phebe, born Mar. 2, 1772; William, son of Henry Selzer & Mary, born Jan. 10; John, son of William West & Mary, born May 2, 1771 and James, son of William West & Mary, born Oct. 12, 1772. Again we see the Countz and “Stasy” families together. This list is from the Court Records of Shenandoah County, Virginia.

PROPERTY AND OTHER RECORDS IN SHENANDOAH COUNTY OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

Sutherland continues on page 15:

“On August 23, 1783, Christian Bumgarner for ten pounds current money of Virginia conveyed to John Countz a tract of two acres on Hawksbill.”

In the same year he purchased the two acres from Christian Bumgarner, the 1783 Tax List of Abraham Hite for Shenandoah County shows one John Counts with seven white persons in his household, and no slaves. Although it has been said that John Counts of Glade Hollow was a slave owner, the author has found *no evidence* to support this idea, and records which would have reflected this practice, such as the above Tax List, do not do so. There were many slave owners in Virginia at this time and the Shenandoah Valley was such a place. It is true that later on his sons did own slaves. Philip Kountz owned slaves, the most ever being recorded was four, one of which is Judy, Anna’s household servant. John Counts of Cleveland, son of John Counts of Glade Hollow, owned a larger number of slaves which can be seen from his Will.

On [25 Feb 1784](#), Mary “Mollie” Counts, daughter of John Counts of Glade Hollow, and seen in his Will as “Mary Rarsnake”, married Jacob Rasnick, whose birth name was Johann Jacob Rierschneck or Rihrschneck, a German soldier from the Ansbach-Bayreuth Regiment who had been hired out to the British military to fight against the American Revolutionary Patriots and arrived on American shores in 1777. His story is told on the following website. (See [Jacob Rasnick website](#).) In the book, “A History of Shenandoah County” page 743, the marriage is

listed as, “Date: 1784, Feb. 25, Groom: Jacob Nesersmith (?), Bride: Molly Countz” with no minister given. The next year, as bondsman for the marriage of “Philip Coutts”, his brother-in-law, Jacob signed in German as “Jacob Rihrefschneck” (author’s transcription of the signature) on 22 Aug 1785. Jacob and Mollie lived in Shenandoah County until they moved to Russell County, Virginia in 1789, where they lived near John Counts Senior in Glade Hollow. (This is also the family line of Marie Rasnick Fetzer.)

On page 220 of the book “A History of Shenandoah County” mentioned above, we find the 1785 Tax List of Edwin Young who enumerated that part of Shenandoah County in which John Counts lived. John Countz is listed with 6 “white souls”, 1 building, and 1 other building; George Countz with 4 white persons [possibly the son of Michael Coones, also in the 1783 Tax List, married 22 Jul 1782 in Shenandoah County to Rachael Keane (Rachel Kane), moved to Tennessee]; Jacob Countz with 2 white persons [probably the son of Elder John Koontz, age 21]; Andrew Kiser with 3 white souls, 1 building, and 1 other building; and Charles Kiser with 6 white souls, and 1 building. Along with others, we see Frederick Alter with 9 white souls (see in baptism record above), as well as Peter, David and Christian Bumgarner, Cunrod Beever (Conrad Bender in baptism record above) with 1 white soul, Christian and Abm. Beever, and Sinnet Young. “White souls” taxed would usually be able-bodied males age 16 and above.

It should be mentioned that in the 1785 Tax List of John Anderson, “taken in Woodstock, along the river from Woodstock to Edinburg, around Hamburg, etc.” is one George Countz with 9 “white souls”, one building and two other buildings.

John Counts Senior’s son Philip married on 22 Aug 1785 to Anna Kiser, daughter of Carl Sebastian Kayser, named Charles Kizer in his estate record, who had died seven years before. As she is not mentioned in any record, it is assumed that Anna’s mother, whose name is still unverified, had died also, as she does not attend the wedding. Anna is accompanied to her wedding by friends and her brother Andrew. The couple was married by Simon Harr in Woodstock, Shenandoah County, Virginia. Below is the author’s transcription of the original marriage documents which can be found at the Courthouse in Shenandoah County, Virginia.

In the marriage record below the “long s” (long, medial, or descending s – “ſ”) is used in both the text and Jacob’s signature. This was a commonly used letter symbol at this time. It should also be noted that this transcription differs from the one used by Sutherland on page 15 of Appendix A.

[Page 1](#): “Couts M L [marriage license]} Bond 22d August 1785”

[Page 2](#): “Know all men by these presents that we Philip Coutts & Jacob Rersneck – are held & firmly bound unto his Excellency Patrick Henry Governor of Virginia and his Jucefsors in the penal ſum of Fifty pounds current money to be paid to his Excellency the Governor or his Jucefsors to the which payment well and truly to be made We bind ourselves our and each of our heirs Executors and Administrators Jointly and Severally firmly by these presents sealed whitth our seals & dated this 22 day of Aug^t 1785 The Condition of the above obligation is such that whereas I John Williams Clerk of the County Court of Shanando hath this day Iſued a Licence for the Marriage of the above bound Philip Coutts unto Anna Kifer – of the ſaid County there for If there is no lawfull cause to obstruct the ſaid Marriage and that no Damage accrue by means of the ſaid Licence being Iſued Then the above obligation to be ſaid other wiſe to remain in full force and Virtue Sealed and Delivered In the preſents of } Sam’l Clayton

PhilipXCouts {seal} Jacob Rihrefschneck {seal}” Philip signed by mark, Jacob signed with his own signature.

[Page 3](#): “Shanandoah County and beckford Virgany Phillip Coutf and anna Kifer is a go to git marred John Coutf and his father and mother is will that they shoud git marred [word blacked out] and anna Kifer friends is all a will that she sud get mared to the sad Coutf Auguft the 22 1785”

[Page 4](#): “her
Any + Kifer
mark
hif
John X Coutf
mark
Andrew Kifer
teft” [Testator]

“John Coutf and his father and mother” indicates that Philip’s brother John and his parents John and Magdalene Counts were all present at the Court when these documents were made. It is likely that the John Coutf who signed by mark was Philip’s brother, who is named, and not his father. It has been stated that Philip’s father had to approve his marriage (Mead’s Relations, page 186), and we see that “his father and mother is will that they shoud git marred”, but in the original, both Philip’s brother John and his parents were present along with his brother-in-law Jacob Rersneck who was his bondsman. Philip signed his own marriage license bond by mark. Andrew Kiser, brother of the bride, was testator for Anna and she signed by mark. Anna’s friends were also mentioned as approving of the marriage. This was a large and happy gathering. Simon Harr, who married the couple, was a Lutheran teacher and lay minister for the Lutheran congregation in Strasburg, Virginia. Harr was authorized by the church to conduct Lutheran services during the late 18th century and he performed over 300 wedding ceremonies both in Strasburg and Woodstock. He also operated the church’s school, which was the first in Strasburg. Harr’s service ended in 1796. Besides the records of Carl Sebastian Kayser in 1750 and 1751 Lutheran church records, this marriage by Simon Harr in Woodstock is the best evidence we have of the two families’ Lutheran roots. However, the Primitive Baptist influence of Elder John Koontz and others had already converted members of both families.

On [27 Nov 1786](#), Catherine Countz was married to Michael Peters by Anderson Moffitt, a Baptist minister serving in Shenandoah and Rockingham Counties. Catherine is mentioned in her father’s Will as “Catherine my daughter” and was given one shilling. She remarried about 1792 to John Gray, and their son Jonas Gray is mentioned in the Will of his uncle Philip Kountz as his nephew. In “A History of Shenandoah County” page 748, “Date: 1786, Nov. 27, Groom: Michael Peters, Bride: Cathe. Countz, Minister: A. Moffitt” who is identified as Anderson Moffitt on the same page.

Although there is no record, John Counts Junior married circa 1786 to Margaret “Peggy” Kelley. They lived in Russell County, Virginia and much has been written about “John Counts of Cleveland”. As he was well-established on the Clinch River by the time his father wrote his Will, he was left one shilling. “John Counts of Cleveland” was a slave owner, active in County affairs, wrote a Will naming his heirs and is buried in the cemetery near his farm.

The last record of John Counts found in Shenandoah County was a deed which was signed by mark as “John Coutts”. It was dated August 22, 1789, and conveyed to Sinnet Young 248 acres of land “more or less”, described as being land conveyed by John Bumgarner to “John Coutts” by deed dated 06 Aug 1765. The consideration was two hundred and thirty pounds.

PROPERTY AND OTHER RECORDS IN RUSSELL COUNTY OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

The Petition to form Russell County, Virginia was signed Dec 1785 by Joseph Kiser, son of Carl Sebastian Kayser, and also Edward Kelly. The Russell County Tax lists for 1790-1801 list John Counts or Countz both Senior and Junior, Joseph Kiser (Kizer, Kyser), and Jacob Raresnake. Harry or Henry Willard is listed from 1790-1795. Also listed from 1790-1797 are Luke Kelley or Kelly, brother of Margaret “Peggy” Kelley who married John Counts Junior, and husband of Mary Kiser, daughter of Carl Sebastian Kayser, as well as Henry Hurst, husband of Elizabeth Kiser, Mary’s sister. From Shenandoah County Marriage records, “1782 Feby 1st I do hereby certify that Luke Kelly & Mary Keaser are lawfully married by publishment. Given under my hand this above date. Anderson Moffitt.”

In June 1794, George McCoy sued John Counts in Russell County, Virginia.

In the Tax Lists of 1796, 1798 and 1797 John Counts Senior pays no taxes. In the Russell County, Virginia Law Order Book 2 (1792 - 1799), page 19, we find John Counts exempted from paying poll tax & levies on account of age and bodily infirmities.

In 1796, George Counts or Countz appears on the list through 1802.

The 1802 Tax List enumerates John Counts (Junior), George Counts, Jacob Raresnake, and Joseph Kiser with sons Samuel and Abednego Kiser also listed. The next Tax List of 1809, includes John Counts (Junior), George Counts, Jacob Rasnake (Senior), Jacob Rasnake (Junior), John Rasnake, Joseph Kizer (Senior), Joseph Kizer (Junior), and John Kizer.

Sutherland continues on pages 17 and 18,

“In Land Entry Book 1, page 23, is the first known Counts record in Russell County. It is dated November 20, 1787, and records that “John Counts enters 50 acres of land by part of Warrant No. 14803 dated November 9, 1783, lying & being at the Widow Lards old place between that and the River lying on both sides of a branch that runs into the river.” We are now meeting on this tract of land, and evidently it was John Counts of Cleveland who made the above entry.”

As we know “John Counts of Cleveland” married Margaret “Peggy” Kelley about this time, probably in Russell County, Virginia, whose marriage records are not available for this time period, we can say with some confidence that this is John Counts Junior.

The next two paragraphs are also likely John Counts Junior.

“On June 17, 1788, the grand jury returned the following indictment: “A bill found against Obediah Payne for abusing John Countz and Robbing said Countz of his papers and for forging an order in the name of Francis Hines presented by the oath of John Countz.”

The Land Entry Book again shows John Counts entering land, this time on October 1, 1790, when he entered fifty acres “on north side of Clinch River adjoining the land of Cornelius Robts Dec’d on his east line and on both sides of the path leading from sd. Roberts to Dumps Creek that crosses the low Gap.” However this entry was later marked “void War’t asd to Ricd. Price.””

However, the following is known to be John Counts Senior:

“John Stacey, on April 28, 1791, transferred his entry of fifty acres in Glade Hollow to John Counts, and on June 30, 1794, said John Counts withdrew 36 acres of this entry and re-entered it. This is very evidently our John Counts of Glade Hollow, for he left this land to his son George by his will.

On June 26, 1792, the county court entered this order: “On motion it is ordered that John Counts be exempted from paying poll tax and county levies on account of his age and bodily infirmities.”

His plantation in Glade Hollow was further augmented on August 28, 1792, when Robert McFarland and Ann his wife conveyed to John Counts for the sum of one hundred and fifty pounds in hand paid one hundred and sixty-six acres on both sides of Glade Hollow. On August 29, 1799, John Counts had thirty-six acres surveyed on the north side of Glade Hollow and adjoining the “tract of land on which said Counts now lives.” This is evidently the thirty-six acre tract mentioned as having been re-entered in 1794. This Russell County farm is very similar to his old Hawksbill farm. It is in the limestone belt, with red clay soil, gently sloping hillsides and level bottoms.”

...and following...

“On April 3, 1802, he prepared his last will and testament.” (See [text of “Last Will and Testament of John Counts Senior](#) of Russell County and Commonwealth of Virginia”, Russell County Will Book 2, Page 33.)

The Will is simple. His acknowledgement of his relationship to his Creator is traditional in some aspects and revealing in others.

By knowing himself as “...being old and frail in body, but perfect in mind and memory blessed be God,” John Counts is thankful to God for his sound mind and memory, regardless of his old and frail body, which we know he had suffered with for some years. He knows his time on earth is coming to an end, “but calling to mind the mortality of my body and knowing it is appointed once for all men to die I do make and constitute this my Last will and Testament in manner and form following,” but he wants to be sure his family and his life’s work is properly settled. “And first I give my body to the earth from whence it was taken desiring it may be buried in a Christian manner without pomp &c.” His family gave him the simple burial and marker he asked for and laid his body to rest on his beloved farm in the Glade Hollow. Then he tells us of the kind of relationship he has with his God: closely personal, completely trusting and with a great understanding of a sinful soul humbling himself and putting his faith in the God he worships, the Savior he knows and the promise of heaven, “and my soul I give to God who gave it hoping it may find peace in the Arms of his mercy.”

The known children of John Counts Senior and Mary Magdalene his wife are listed in this Will. We can conclude several things about his children from the Will.

First, that his sons John, Phillip (Philip) and George are living in 1802, and George is living with his father on property they share. John and Phillip are acknowledged in the Will as sons and given one shilling each as an inheritance. George is given the estate, both real and personal, of his father, a farm which is already his in part and of which he is the main caretaker. Son John has his own farm and is well-established in Russell County. Son Phillip or Philip is well-established on the “home” farm in Shenandoah County, a fact legally acknowledged by his parents a few months later.

Second, we can conclude that five daughters are living in 1802. Daughters Eve Maticks, Mary Rarsnake and Lissy Willard are acknowledged with one shilling and by their married names. Grandson Martin Willard is acknowledged with the same inheritance as the children, a special acknowledgment not given to the other grandchildren. Martin Willard was about age 9 to 12 years old in 1802. The Willard’s do not appear in Russell County Tax Lists after 1795 and moved to Kentucky, so this acknowledgement may have been due to the family leaving Virginia. Daughters Catherine and Christian are acknowledged with one shilling, but they are not listed

with their married names. Daughter Christina or Christian would have been 28 years old when her father wrote the Will. As Catherine and Christian are given no means of support in the Will, it must be assumed that they are both married women having the support of a husband, as we know to be true of Catherine who was married to John Gray at this time.

Sutherland continues, “On July 27th following he and Magdalene Counts, his wife, appeared before the County Court of Russell County and acknowledged a deed to Philip Counts of Shenandoah County for a tract of land estimated to contain seventy-five acres, situated on Hawksbill Creek in Shenandoah county, and “being a part of a tract of land which was conveyed to the said John Counts by John Bumgarner” in 1765, containing at that time 270 acres, more or less, and from which he had conveyed 248 acres more or less to Sinnet Young, the residue of said original tract now being conveyed to Philip Counts.”

As we see from the above paragraph, the acreage does not “add up”. Robert Carter and wife Elizabeth lived at first with her parents, but on October 16, 1817, “Philip Counts and wife Anna” executed a deed to Robert Carter for a tract of 79 acres on the west side of Hawksbill Creek, “the same is a part of a certain tract of 159 acres on which was granted to the said Philip Countz by John Counts and Magdalene his wife by their certain deed of bargain and sale dated July 27th, 1802” which is recorded in the Shenandoah County Deed Book on page 214. As 248 acres and 159 acres is 407 acres, much larger than the “270 acres more or less” which we know was added onto by 2 acres, we must conclude that the Bumgarner purchases of 1765 and 1783 of about 272 acres were not the only property owned by John Counts Senior on Hawksbill Creek. The 1817 deed says the acreage deeded to Philip was 159 acres, not the 75 listed by Sutherland, and the property deeded to Robert and Elizabeth basically divided in half the original 159 acre tract deeded to Philip by his parents. While the deed mentions Anna, the wife, she did not sign, but we know she was living in 1817. The Carter’s “built a home at the foot of the hill and lived on this farm, which is north of the old Counts home in Hawksbill Valley.” Robert and Elizabeth (Kountz) Carter maintained a residence and farm next to Philip Kountz until Philip died in late 1842 or early 1843. They owned about 100 acres more than the original 79 acres, which may be some of the “missing” acreage of the original John Counts farm. The Carter portion of the original Counts property was sold after Philip’s death when they moved to Barbour County, Virginia (which became West Virginia in 1863), and Robert died there on 15 Mar 1850 before the census of 1850. Elizabeth’s brother Jacob was given a “life estate” on the portion of the farm retained by Philip, which “life estate” Jacob sold for a debt and he never lived there. It should be mentioned here that Jacob, son of Philip Kountz, Coutz, Counts, grandson of John Counts of Glade Hollow, is *not* the “12. JACOB KOONTZ” on page 197 of Mead’s Relations listed as the son of “Anna Keyser”. E. J. Sutherland was correct to doubt this relationship. That Jacob Koontz is the son of Elder John Koontz. As the heirs of Elizabeth were to own Philip’s farm after Jacob died, and they had all “moved west”, the farm ended up in lengthy Court records, first deeded to Legrand Wilson, eldest grandson of Elizabeth Kountz Carter, and when he died unexpectedly it became the property of his brother John R. Wilson, who eventually sold it, ending the family’s ownership of the Hawksbill Creek property. It is said by Sutherland in 1936 that “the old John Counts home, belongs to the heirs of Charley Mauk.”

THE BIG PICTURE OF “JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW”

In the early 1720’s a German male child was born to unknown parents who were born in Germany. They named him Johann Kuntz, or a variation of this name, and immigrated, probably

during his youth, to the shores of the British American Colonies. As did so many German families of the era, they probably landed in the Port of Philadelphia and may have made their way from Pennsylvania on the Great Wagon Road into the wilds of Virginia.

John Countz, as his name is written in the first record we have of him, is known to be in Frederick County, Virginia by about 1753. He married a woman named Mary Magdalene and began a family. In Frederick County, Virginia he established a home and farm. His known children, named as adults in his Will in 1802, are Eve, Mary "Mollie", John, Elizabeth "Lissy", Philip, Catherine, George, and Christina, who were not necessarily born in that order.

In 1755, John Countz is fined for missing two musters of the Frederick County, Virginia "levies" or foot soldiers in Captain Bethel's Company.

In 1759, John Counts is in Court Records of Frederick County, records which continue through 1764 regarding non-payment for property he sold and for trespass on his land.

In 1765, he purchased property on Hawksbill Creek in Frederick County, Virginia, that part of which becomes consecutively Dunmore, Shenandoah and Page Counties, Virginia. In 1783, he added to that property and is enumerated in Shenandoah County records through 1789. Here he farmed, raised his family and lived his life. During that time, his children married and began their own families, some in Shenandoah County and some in Russell County, Virginia.

In 1785, Philip "Couts" was married by the Lutheran lay minister Simon Harr to Anna Kiser, the daughter of his neighbor Charles Kyser. In Philip's marriage record his father is mentioned as being present and willing that the marriage proceed. Others of his children are married by Baptist ministers.

In 1789, along with other members of his family and two of the grown children of his neighbor Charles Kyser who died in 1778, John Counts moved to Russell County, Virginia where he purchased property in Glade Hollow, established a new farm and lived with his wife and younger children. Three of his adult children had farms nearby.

In 1792, at about age 70 years, he became physically frail and is exempted from paying taxes. This occurs again in 1796, 1798 and 1799, during which time his son George took over the farming.

John Counts Senior continued to live out his years on the Glade Hollow farm until he decided to write his Last Will and Testament in 1802. He died within the year at about age 80 years. The Will is proven by oath in 1803. As he had requested, John Counts was buried in a simple fashion on his Glade Hollow property. Eventually his gravestone became weather-worn and unreadable. It may have been one of the unmarked sunken graves mentioned by E. J. Sutherland.

A new [memorial stone](#) was placed to commemorate his resting place on his beloved [Glade Hollow farm](#), a monument to our immigrant ancestor "**John Counts of Glade Hollow**".