

**APPENDIX A**  
**JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW**

Sketch prepared by E. J. Sutherland  
of Clintwood, Virginia

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**JOHN COUNTS OF GLADE HOLLOW** is the earliest definitely known ancestor of the Counts of Southwest Virginia. The large number and the solid character of his descendants make him an important personage in the pioneer annals of this section of Virginia.

I will now give you the results of over fifteen years of my investigation into the life of this man. Some of it is tradition; but most of it has been taken from the court records of Frederick, Shenandoah and Russell Counties in Virginia. While the public records of no county or city will give one a complete record of the daily or even yearly personal life of anyone, they do give something of their public life and their legal relations with their neighbors.

This John Counts, if known to most of us at all, is merely a faint, legendary person, and we have little knowledge of where he lived, what he did, or what kind of a man he was. I will attempt to reach into the fragmentary records concerning him and bring forth from the dim and forgotten past the figure of a man who looms large in the ancestral life of the Counts Family. At one time he lived heartily and roamed over the hills and valleys among which we now assemble. He lived out a long life, filled with the joys, the sorrows, the hopes and ambitions of the average American of his day. I would like to be able to bring him back, in your mind's eye, to stand here before you in his pioneer habiliments to smile at you, and to say: "Well done, my children!"

Nothing is definitely known of his ancestry, birth, relatives, and early life.  
Family tradition

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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 eighteenth century. There were numerous immigrants of the name of K-u-n-t-z (the old German form of COUNTS), and its various spellings. Several of them settled in the Shenandoah Valley at an early date, and the Christian name of JOHN being popular among the Counts generations from the earliest records, it is difficult to trace any certain JOHN COUNTS (or Kuntz) through the public records. 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.

**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.” Was this the same John Stacey later found in Russell County Transferring his entry of 50 acres of land in Glade Hollow to John Counts in 1791? What relation was this John Stacey to Susannah Stacey, who married Joseph Kiser, who was reared in the neighborhood of the Counts in the Shenandoah Valley, and who came to Russell County about 1783?**

**In August, 1765, John Bumgarner conveyed to John Counts, both of Frederick County, Virginia, 270 acres more or less on the west side of**

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**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.**

**The records of Frederick County are incomplete and no other reference to John Counts has been found in them. He evidently continued to live on Hawksbill in Frederick County until the new county of Dunmore was struck off from Frederick County in 1772, and John Counts’ home was included in the new county, which took the name of Shenandoah in 1776. In 1831 the new county of Page was established and the old Counts home on the Hawksbill fell into this county. The old Counts home-place is located about 3 miles northwest of the town of Luray and about one mile south of the mouth of the Hawksbill in Page County.**

**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.**

**On August 23, 1783, Christian Bumgarner for**

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**ten pounds current money of Virginia conveyed to John Countz a tract of two acres on Hawksbill.**

In the court files at Woodstock, the county-seat of Shenandoah County, has been found the marriage bond of Philip Counts (“C-o-u-t-s”) to Anna Kiser. This bond shows they were married August 22, 1785. Jacob Raresnake, a brother-in-law of Philip, was the surety on this bond. With this bond was filed a certificate, required by law at that time, as follows:

“Shenandoah County and beckford of Virginy  
Phillip Coutts and Anna Kiser is ago to git  
mared and his father John Counts and mother  
is will that they should git mared  
And Anna Kiser friends is all will that she shd  
get mared to the sd Coutts August the 22  
1786”

her  
“Any X Kiser  
mark  
his  
John X Coutts  
mark

The Virginia Census for Shenandoah County for 1783 shows one John Counts with seven persons in his family, and the census taken two years later shows only six in his family.

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, described as being land conveyed by John Bumgarner to “John Coutts” by deed dated August 6, 1765. The consideration was two hundred and thirty pounds. I have not yet found any record to which John Counts of Glade Hollow signed his own name. All records found show his name by mark, and it is variously spelled. In the

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deed to Young, as in the certificate for the marriage of his son Philip to Anna Kiser, it is misspelled as “C-o-u-t-s”. His wife’s name in this deed is stated to be “Mary,” but she did not sign the deed, and a dedimus was awarded to take her acknowledgment. She evidently could not go to the court-house to acknowledge the deed. Was she sick at home, or had she already gone west to the new frontier in Russell County? There is nothing on record to show that she ever signed and acknowledged this deed, though she lived twenty-five years longer.

John Counts of Glade Hollow was a true pioneer. He could not be satisfied to stay in a thickly settled section. He wanted more room, and he sought to find it on the borders of the advancing white settlements. This characteristic of the old German wanderlust has appeared again and again in many of his descendants.

He at length tired of the crowding valley, and having heard of the rich lands on the Clinch in the far backwoods from some of his former Shenandoah neighbors,

particularly the Kisers and the Kelleys, he determined to move to this new land of plenty. So he left the Valley of the Shenandoah for the Valley of the Clinch. We should remember fierce Indians still made their murderous raids on the Clinch after he came here. I am wondering how he traveled the 300 miles of rugged and almost trackless forest from Luray to Lebanon? Did he come by wagon or by horseback? Did part of the party—in true pioneer fashion—foot it with moccasined feet all these long and weary miles? Who composed the party that made this migration? What roads did they travel, and how did they cross the several large rivers that intervened between the old home and the new? We do not know.

In his deed to Sinnet Young he did not convey all his Hawksbill farm. He kept part of it and he left his son Philip on it when he came westward, and later he made Philip a deed for this land. On

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September 5, 1936, I visited this old farm for the first time. I found it had long since left the hands of the Counts family. It was divided into two smaller farms by Philip Counts, and one part now belongs to Mrs. Florence E. Cameron, and the other part, on which was located the old John Counts home, belongs to the heirs of Charley Mauk. On the Mauk tract I found an old graveyard, which Mrs. Cameron told me was the old Counts graveyard. It was unenclosed and grown up with rank weeds and locust trees, one of which was about three feet in diameter. Several rough limestone head-rocks were found, but none of them had any inscriptions.

Our best present source of information about the old wanderer in his new homeland is the court records at Lebanon, and they are not complete. Again we run into some confusion by reason of there being two John Countses in this territory at that time. I cannot say definitely which John Counts—John Counts of Glade Hollow or his son John Counts of Cleveland—is referred to in all the records.

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.

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

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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 assd to Ricd. Price.”

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.

We are now approaching the end of this patriarch's life. He sensed this and began to divide up his property among his children. On April 3, 1802, he prepared his last will and testament. On July 27<sup>th</sup> 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

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"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."

He died just after the turn of the century, and his earthly remains were buried amid the beautiful hills and vales of Russell County. The exact date of his passing is not now known. On April 27<sup>th</sup>, 1803, his will was presented before the court of quarterly sessions for Russell County and proven by the oath of John Hargis, a witness thereto, and on July 26<sup>th</sup>, 1803 it was again presented in court and proven by the oath of Duritee Counts, another of the witnesses thereto, and ordered to be recorded. Who was Duritee Counts?

The following is a complete copy of this will as recorded:

"In the name of God Amen, I John Counts, Senior, of Russell County and Commonwealth of Virginia being old and frail in body, but perfect in mind and memory, blessed be God, 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.

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., and my soul I give to God who gave it hoping it may find peace in the Arms of his Mercy, and as touching

what worldly Goods and estate which I possess I give, devise and bequeath in manner following to wit:

Eve Maticks my eldest daughter I give one Shilling Mary Rarsnake I give one Shilling John Counts Junior also I give one shilling, Lissey Willard I give one shilling.

Item, I give to Harry Willard's eldest son Martin Willard Catherine my daughter one shill-

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ing Christian my daughter one shilling, my son Phillip one shilling.

Item, I give and bequeath to my son George with whom I live the plantation on which I live with all appurtenances thereunto belonging out of which I am to be maintained in a good common manner while I live with victuals and cloathing and at my death everything possessed by me shall belong to George Counts and to his heirs forever and I do hereby revoke and disannul all former wills by me made and ratifying and confirming this to be my Last Will and Testament.

In witness whereof I have hereunto set my had and seal this third day of April one thousand eight hundred and two.

Signed Sealed and delivered published and Declared to be my last will in presence of these Witnesses.

his  
John X Counts  
mark

Teste

John Hargis  
her

Lydia X Hargis  
mark

Duritee Counts.”

Of the eight children named in the will of John Counts nothing further is known of Catherine and Christine. Eve married Matthew Mattox, and they were living in Shenandoah County as late as 1789. Elizabeth (Lissey in the will) married Henry (or Harry) Willard, who entered 66 acres of land in Russell County on February 16, 1791. They later moved to parts now unknown. They had at least one son—Martin Willard.

Mary (or Molly) Counts married Jacob Rasnake in Shenandoah County in 1784, and within a few years came to Russell County. They lived on a farm in Glade Hollow and had the following children: Jacob, Elijah, Crissa (married John Fuller), Lazarus, Jonas, Nancy (married-----

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Fields), John, Mary (Polly) (married John Robinson) and Margaret (married Samuel Miller). Lazarus Rasnake, Polly Robinson and Margaret Miller moved west.

Phillip Counts lived on the old Counts Farm on the Hawksbill, and died there about 1843. He married Anna Kiser, a sister of Joseph Kiser, the ancestor of all the Kisers of Russell County. They had two children—Jacob and Elizabeth. Elizabeth married Robert Carter and later their children moved to West Virginia and Indiana.

John Counts, Junior, lived at Cleveland, and the very land on which we are now meeting belonged to his farm. He lived on the north side of Clinch River, where his grandson, Joshua J. Counts, now lives. His wife was Peggy Kelly, and they had the following children: Sarah (married James Smith), Joseph, James, Crissa (married Richard Colley), John, Elizabeth (married George L. Jessee), Margaret (married Henry Long), Joshua, Nancy (married Jefferson Jessee), and Ezekiel. Joseph late in life moved to Mississippi, and Margaret Long moved to Alabama.

George Counts lived on the old Glade Hollow farm until about 1835, when he moved to Washington County, Virginia. He married Eve \_\_\_\_\_ (Note by DKT: Haynes sometimes spelled Haines) and had the following children: John, Linnix, Philip, and Eva (m. \_\_\_\_\_ Fleenor). Philip later moved to Carter County, Kentucky.

On August 27<sup>th</sup>, 1931, I first visited the old Counts Farm in Glade Hollow. I found it in the possession of Mrs. Alice Gray, the widow of Henry F. Gray. She told me that she had lived there 53 years, she and her husband having gone to house-keeping in the old two-story log house known as “the Granny Counts House.” There was one room in each story, and a log kitchen stood a short distance away. They were a few feet west of the fine spring now used by Mrs. Gray. The old house had been torn down about forty years, and all the other Counts buildings had disappeared.

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She showed me the Old Counts Graveyard, about 200 yards west of the house on a ridge. It is in an open field without any fencing or other protection. I trampled down and pulled up enough weeds to find markers for seven graves—very old—and two sunken places indicating old graves. The markers were made from native limestone slabs and were very old and weather-beaten. I could find no inscriptions on four of the stones, and very little on two others. On the largest headstone I found the following:

JUNE 25<sup>TH</sup>  
1814  
MARY COUNTS  
WAS BORN  
1728

The body of John Counts of Glade Hollow lies in an unmarked grave. His numerous descendants owe him a hearty apology for the long and inexcusable

**neglect they have shown his memory in not properly caring for his last resting place on earth. It is not yet too late to remedy this indifferent and discreditable condition.**

**He was a peaceful man. Few court records mention him, and none to his discredit. He was evidently a religious man, and two of his children belonged to the Reeds Valley Baptist Church.**

**John Counts of Glade Hollow has come into this world, run his long race and gone hence to receive his reward from his Maker. He came far in this land, and we may never know just how much he has meant to us in choosing the beautiful Mountain Empire for our homeland. We do know that he was the connecting link in our ancestry from the eighteenth to the nineteenth centuries and from the Shenandoah to the Clinch Valleys.**

**May all of his descendants take just pride in his worthy life, and strive so to live that our own lives will be an honor to his name and his blood.**