

Shannondale Springs

By William D. Theriault

The Shannondale Springs resort, located in Jefferson County, was one of many eighteenth- and nineteenth-century enterprises developed ostensibly to profit from the curative powers of mineral springs.¹ The springs region ran the entire length of the Appalachian Chain from New York to Alabama, with most of the resorts being located in the Blue Ridge Mountains of Virginia and along the Alleghenies in West Virginia. Springs varied in both temperature and mineral content and specific types were thought to combat specific ills.

Mineral springs began to gain popularity in Virginia during the mid-eighteenth century and continued to grow and prosper until the Civil War. They began to prosper once more at the end of the nineteenth century and then declined again after World War I. Established in the early 1820s, the Shannondale Springs resort sought the prominence and prosperity achieved at other spas, such as the one at nearby Bath, present-day Berkeley Springs.² Although its fate often resembled that of many other spas in the region, a study of Shannondale Springs sheds light on important social, economic, and political changes that occurred in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia during the period.

Like its competitors, Shannondale owed its patronage as much to its image and atmosphere as to the efficacy of its waters. Its fate depended as much on the owners' economic and political savvy as on the staff's ability to stamp out a stray spark or sidestep the inevitable floods.

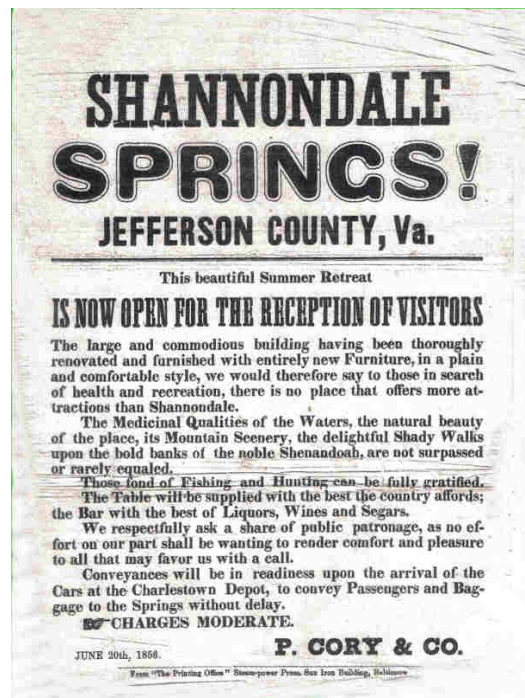
This study explores the ownership, construction, and renovation of Shannondale Springs and the factors contributing to its growth, decline, and demise.

The site now known as Shannondale Springs was part of a much larger twenty-nine thousand-acre tract called "Shannandale" acquired in January 1740 by William Fairfax, nephew and agent of Thomas,

Lord Fairfax. In contemporary terms,

Shannondale stretched along the Shenandoah River from Castleman's Ferry in Clarke County, Virginia, to Harpers Ferry in present-day Jefferson County, West Virginia. William Fairfax conveyed the whole estate to his son George William on October 20, 1754. George in turn bequeathed the property and other substantial holdings to his nephew Ferdinando Fairfax in 1787.³

Ferdinando Fairfax (1769-1820), the third son of the Reverend Bryan Fairfax, was just eighteen years old when he inherited the Shannondale tract as well as Piedmont plantation and the Belvoir estate in Fairfax County, Virginia. Both



Poster dated 1856

Shannondale Springs

his uncle and father were good friends of George Washington, who had stood godfather to Ferdinando.⁴

Details of Fairfax's use of the property before 1800 are sketchy, although he did erect a residence on it called "Shannon Hall" across the Shenandoah River from the springs.⁵ By the start of the new century, Fairfax was one of the richest and most prosperous residents of the area. He was one of the original trustees of the Charlestown Academy (founded in 1797), the largest slaveholder in the area, and one of the original members of the Jefferson County Court in 1801. He owned or leased several properties in Charlestown, was a justice of the peace during this period, and played a major role in the design and construction of the original Charlestown jail (1802) and Market House (1806).⁶

Fairfax's attempts to develop the commercial potential of his Shannondale property appear to have begun in earnest by 1808, when he gave notice of his intent to apply to the February term of the Jefferson County Court to establish a ferry across the Shenandoah River from his land to the public road opposite Shannon Hill.⁷ The Shannondale Ferry was probably established in spring 1809. Since the road to the ferry landing went past the springs, this resource was known, at least locally, by this period. However, no evidence has been found thus far to indicate that the medicinal properties of the waters had been recognized.

By 1809 Fairfax had extracted iron ore samples from five sites on his property and sent them to several ironmasters for conversion into bar iron and then to James Stubblefield at the Harpers Ferry Armory to determine their suitability in the manufacture of firearms. These activities suggest Fairfax did not have

his own furnace or forge at Shannondale at this time. Nevertheless, he appears to have been moving in this direction; between 1809 and 1811 he purchased the furnace bellows, various pieces of equipment, and available cast and wrought iron of the defunct Keep Triste Furnace from the armory.⁸ In 1811 Fairfax sold a 1,395.5-acre segment of the Shannondale tract to the United States government. The land was on the east side of the Shenandoah River, beginning at a point below Harpers Ferry and running up the river. The following year, he advertised for an individual to build a flour warehouse on the Potomac River just below Harpers Ferry and very near Digg's Island, and he mortgaged part of his Piedmont estate in Loudoun County to Elijah Chamberlain. In 1813 he purchased the 196-acre farm in Harpers Ferry that included the Lee-Longworth House. The land was leased by the United States government. That same year Fairfax mortgaged his Shannon Hill tract to Charles Gibbs.⁹

All of these events point to Fairfax's attempts to find a market for his own goods, certainly iron ore and possibly wheat or flour, at Harpers Ferry. Lacking the capital to finance an iron furnace at Shannondale, Fairfax advertised for partners in an 1815 prospectus published in Washington, DC. His efforts to find financial backing for the Shannondale Iron Estate were unsuccessful. Except for a sawmill and some scattered tenant farms, Fairfax's Shannondale property, including the springs, seems to have undergone relatively little development by 1815.¹⁰

By 1814 Fairfax's financial empire was unraveling. Mortgages made during the last decade had come due, and he was obliged to auction the ten thousand-acre Shannondale Iron Mine tract and his

Shannondale Springs

Short Hill property in Loudoun County to pay his debts." Even if Fairfax had known of Shannondale Springs' medicinal properties, he lacked the funds to develop a spa.

In the context of all the previously mentioned financial activities, Ferdinando Fairfax "of the city of Washington" sold Thomas Griggs Jr. and Benjamin Beeler an undivided two-thirds of the land containing Shannondale Springs in November 1819. The property was described as being "opposite the Shannon Hill tract, containing by estimation about sixty acres more or less and being commonly called the Horse Shoe Tract. . . ." On July 1 of the following year, Fairfax sold Griggs his remaining one-third interest in the Horse Shoe Tract to secure payment for a debt. Ferdinando Fairfax, age fifty-two, died at his residence in Fairfax County, Virginia, on September 24, 1820.¹²

Shannondale Springs

The First Era

Shannondale Springs was not used for commercial purposes until after Beeler and Griggs had acquired two-thirds interest in the property. Even then, they may not have recognized the springs' full potential. In 1821 the owners had the water analyzed by a Dr. DeButts, who pronounced it comparable to that found in the best spas in Europe.¹³

After Beeler and Griggs purchased the property, the winter weather would have prevented work from commencing until the following spring. There are indications that some facilities were available by the summer of that year; Rosalie Stier Calvert reported visiting the springs on July 15, 1820. Thus, the opening of the Shannondale Springs resort can be pinpointed with some confidence to the summer of 1820.¹⁴

During the construction of the "houses" at Shannondale Springs, Beeler accumulated debts that forced him to mortgage his share in the sixty-acre parcel, the ferry, the mineral waters, and the houses he had already erected. Several other transactions took place in August and September 1821, with James L. Ranson, Thomas Brown, Samuel W. Lackland, and Thomas Griggs Jr. emerging as the new owners. The four men then entered into an agreement which indicates Griggs erected a "boarding house" (i.e., hotel) in the summer of 1821, along with several other structures (baths or bathhouses) which augmented the houses constructed by Beeler the previous year.¹⁵

According to one contemporary source, President James Monroe and his cabinet used Shannondale Springs as their summer White House until 1825. Such patronage may account for the

resort's initial success. After getting off to a good start in the early 1820s, the resort fell on hard times, lasting perhaps until the late 1830s. Until the arrival of the railroads and the Chesapeake and Ohio (C&O) Canal, access to the resort from Washington, Richmond, or Baltimore was difficult. The reputation of the resort also appears to have suffered during this period. Samuel Kercheval noted that, when it first opened, "A few extraordinary cures were effected by the use of the water, of obstinate scorbutic complaints, and it suddenly acquired a high reputation." Writing in 1838 John S. Gallaher observed, "After passing through various vicissitudes, and encountering many prejudices, as well as no small share of obloquy, the most impartial, as also competent judges, have at length stamped upon these waters that character to which they were early entitled, and which gives them a just claim to rank with the most celebrated mineral waters of this country." Another writer recalled, "The few bilious cases that occurred here in the summer of 1822,—a season well remembered of general bilious sickness throughout the country,—has unfortunately but unfairly been remembered to have occurred here, when forgotten as having happened at other places." Another visitor to the springs writing in 1838 believed disagreements among the original owners had led to the resort's being only partially completed and the original buildings had deteriorated to the point where no guests could be accommodated.¹⁶

The layout of the early resort was well documented by the pen of Charles Burton about 1831. His illustration shows the hotel as a two-story, red-roofed, white structure with an

Shannondale Springs

additional basement and a porch spanning the entire first floor. The first and second floors show eight rectangular windows evenly spaced across the front; the basement level reveals eight evenly spaced square windows. Ten single-story structures form a rough semicircle around the hotel.

A barn-like structure and a two-story house lie close behind the cottages on the southeast. Far in the distance to the southwest, two other buildings can be seen near the edge of the woods. Other parts of the illustration show two small buildings

northwest of the hotel near the Shannondale Ferry and a grove of trees uphill from the hotel, possibly at the site of one of the springs.¹⁷

Shares of the resort property were frequently bought and sold throughout the first half of the 1830s, perhaps reflecting economic hardship, cholera epidemics, or speculation based on the arrival of the railroads.¹⁸ The C&O Canal reached Harpers Ferry in 1833, the Baltimore & Ohio (B&O) Railroad in 1834, and the Winchester and Potomac (W&P) Railroad in 1835. Extolling the virtues of the springs, John S. Gallaher, owner of *Charlestown's Virginia Free Press*, noted in 1835:

"Shannondale Springs . . . can be reached in less than a day by travellers from Baltimore. They may start from that city at 5 in the

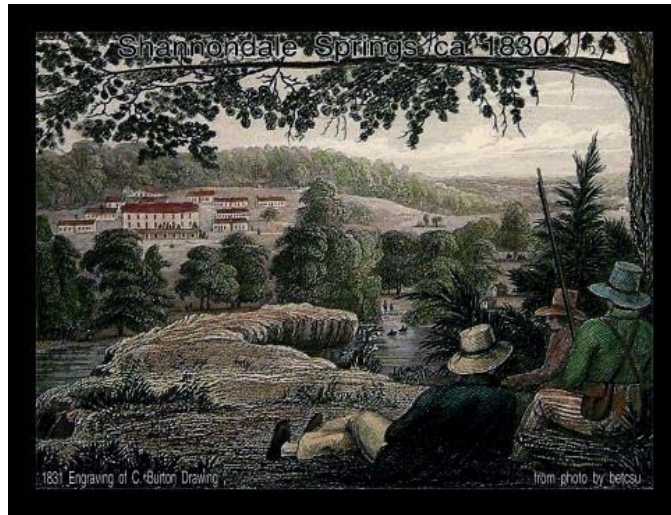
morning, dine at Harpers-Ferry at 1, and be here by 3. They can then ride out, in one hour more, to the Springs, or, (which would be far preferable by-the-by,) they can defer riding out till the cool of the morning, and, in the meantime, rest themselves at some of our hotels, where they will be regaled with

delicacies not surpassed by the rich tables of Hussey himself. On the other hand, the citizens of the District have ready access to this watering place, by way of the Little River Turnpike, which crosses the river a few miles above, and by the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. From the west, too, is

ready access by means of stages, two lines of which run daily from Winchester to this place and Harpers-Ferry."¹⁹

Shannondale Springs was now accessible to the wealthy and influential from Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond and the improvements in transportation were opening up new markets for the area's natural resources. The heyday of Shannondale Springs was about to begin.

During the early 1830s, Samuel W. Lackland gained control of most of the Shannondale Springs property. On September 1, 1837, he and his wife sold their eight-ninths interest in the 66.5-acre Shannondale Springs tract and the entire 121-acre tract adjoining it to a new group of investors. The group included Andrew Kennedy, Joseph T.



Burton's drawing ca. 1831

Shannondale Springs

Daugherty, Robert T. Brown, George W. Hammond, William Yates, John S. Gallaher, William Crow, John B. H. Fulton, and Charles G. Stewart.²⁰ This group, plus James L. Ranson, comprised the ownership of the Shannondale Springs Company when it was incorporated in March 1838 by the Virginia General Assembly. The men had their share of power, influence, and financing. To finance the purchase of the property from Lackland, each member of the group placed his forty shares in the company in trust to Richard Parker. A loan of five thousand dollars for improvements was obtained from the Charlestown branch of the Valley Bank, whose president was their long-standing associate, Thomas Griggs Jr.²¹

The birth of the Shannondale Springs Corporation in 1838 takes on additional significance when we recognize that the incorporators were members of Virginia's Whig party who had been working for more than a decade to have the legislature fund internal improvement projects such as railroads, highways, and canals. One of the former owners, Thomas Griggs Jr., had served in the House of Delegates in 1835.²² John S. Gallaher, in particular, was an important force in the success of the resort. Gallaher had fought for internal improvements from his seat in the House of Delegates and from his position as editor of or investor in several Whig newspapers in Virginia. As the fame of Shannondale Springs grew during the next twenty years, it became a resort for the wealthy, as well as a Whig enclave with strong ties to Baltimore, Washington, and Richmond.

The hotel reopened on June 10, 1838. Isaac N. Carter was hired as proprietor of the hotel, and a writer noted the "company are erecting bath houses

where persons can be provided with warm or cold baths, for which purpose they can use either the mineral waters, or the river water, as may be preferred." Gallaher lost no time in promoting the virtues of his new investment. In 1838 the Virginia Free Press, published a prospectus entitled *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters and Their Effects upon Various Diseases*.²³

Gallaher's prospectus included the following description of the resort by a Professor Hall of Maryland:

"As you descend towards the [Shannondale] Ferry, you see on the Northern side of the hill, and near its base, a long two-story brick edifice, made snow white by lime, and back of it, farther up the hill, a dozen or more small dwellings, mostly of wood, and now in good repair. Back of these, and withdrawn a few rods from them, stand two one-story brick lodgments, separated each into four small convenient apartments. These are the best private rooms belonging to the concern, and are preferred by those who love and seek retirement. The upper stories of the long edifice are divided into twenty-five lodging rooms. The dining room, in the first story, is 80 feet long and 30 wide. In this spacious apartment, the light-footed nymphs and joy-seeking swains often mingle in the giddy dance. The buildings are neatly finished. Comfort is consulted."²⁴

A visitor to the hotel in 1848 provided further details of the landscape. Describing the panoramic view from the hill in back of the hotel, he noted, "To the right, the waving and sloping ground is devoted to agricultural purposes, and exhibits an appearance of great fertility and productiveness. To the left of the main building [are] gravelled walks, bordered by trees. ..." ²⁵

Shannondale Springs

Outlining the regimen at the springs, Professor Hall asserted, "no mineral water of this country, possessing the same constituent parts, is a more active purgative, when freely taken, than the Shannondale; being, in general, equal in power to most of the neutral salts; or, on the contrary, more bland in its operation, when used with moderation; acting as gently as the mildest aperient, without giving rise to griping or flatulence, or that feeling of debility so often occasioned by ordinary cathartics." He observed that "morning is considered the most suitable—drinking it at the springs if practicable... It may also be taken at night by those who are desirous to secure its full effect on the bowels." As to other treatments,

... the warm bath will serve as a very important auxiliary to the water. . . . It is generally believed to be a much safer remedy than the cold bath, and more particularly applicable to persons of weak and irritable constitutions, who could not bear the shock produced by cold bathing, in consequence of their not possessing sufficient vigour of circulation to bring about the proper reaction.... The necessary change of scene that takes place in visiting watering places, the exercise of the body, the abstraction of the mind from the cares attendant on business, the interruption of a uniform train of thought and attention, all certainly co-operate with the beneficial effects of the waters.²⁶

George Watterson, visiting the springs a decade later, noted that the principal spring was surrounded by magnificent elms and other ornamental trees, with seats placed in their shade for those who wished to drink the water. "An old colored woman seated near the Spring, from morning to night, employs herself in dipping up the water for visitors, and

whose compensation is regulated by the charity of those who avail themselves of her voluntary aid. She may be the genius of the fountain, but she is far from being its nymph. ..."27

But what if a guest demanded amusement rather than treatment?

"Are you a pedestrian? You have an agreeable promenade of a mile on the banks of a stream about as wide, but not so deep, as the Thames at London, but far more beautiful. Are you an angler? The home of the perch, the sucker and the eel, is the Shenandoah;—a boat and fishing apparatus are prepared, and a colored man ever ready to attend you. Are you fond of hunting? Four or five fowling pieces are now standing in one of the rooms for your use. Do you like excursions on the water? A skiff is at hand—you can go down the river in it to Harpers-Ferry in the evening, and row back in the morning. Are you a mineralogist or geologist? Gratifying ambulations may be made for examining the structure of rocks, and the collecting of specimens. "I have not strength," you may say, "to perform these excursions." Then you can sit in your apartments, and amuse yourself in looking at the long rafts of lumber which are continually passing, and boats freighted with flour, some destined to the city of power, but more for the city of shot towers, and steamboats, and fine hotels. Backgammon, checker and puzzle boards, are at your call. Do you wish for the society of well educated gentlemen and ladies? No where in this country, or perhaps in the world, do you meet with better informed or more polished people, than very many of those who reside within the compass of six miles around Shannondale."²⁸

Another visitor to the resort in the summer of 1838 observed that a floating house had been erected for men wishing

Shannondale Springs

to bathe in the river and that a similar establishment for ladies would soon be erected.²⁹

Under Gallaher's direction, the Virginia Free Press became an important vehicle for advertising the virtues of Shannondale Springs. During the next twenty years, its pages contained numerous

testimonials to the curative powers of its waters and descriptions of the events attended by local society and visiting dignitaries.

Gallaher's articles and the property transactions of the period also reveal that the owners of Shannondale Springs were developing the local tourist industry by

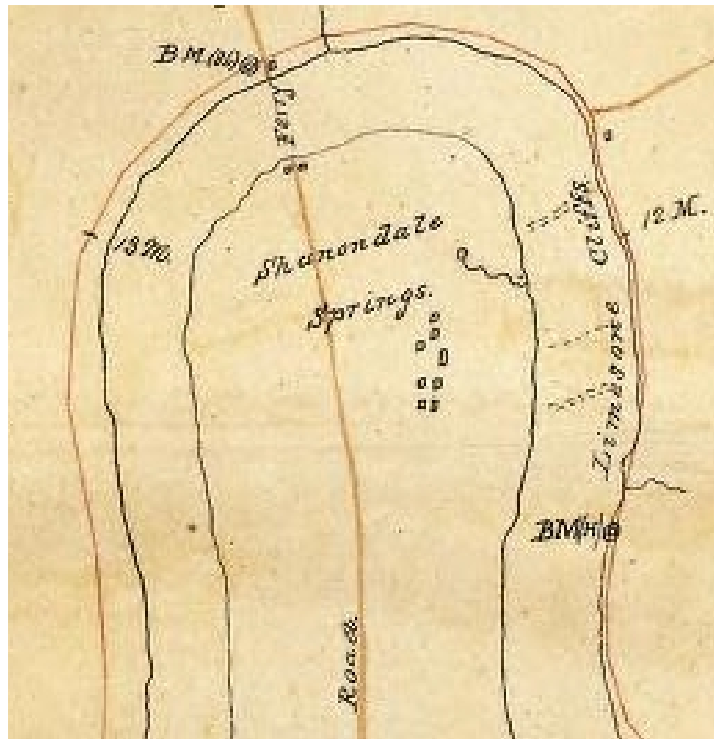
acquiring property near the intersection of highways and the newly built railroads and by forming business alliances with hotel owners in Charlestown and Harpers Ferry. Shortly after the Shannondale Springs Hotel opened under the management of Isaac Carter, a guest wrote to the Free Press that he had stopped at Carter's hotel in Charlestown, where he had been invited to visit the springs. Carter was actively recruiting guests for his hotel at Shannondale.³⁰

Other persons associated with the springs were also busy forging alliances.

In August 1839 Henry Berry sold the Shannondale Springs Corporation two parcels of land near the intersection of the Charlestown-to-Martinsburg road (now West Virginia Route 9) and the W&P, in present-day Kearneysville, West Virginia. Berry, who had served in the Virginia House of Delegates with

Thomas Griggs Jr. and John S. Gallaher, had acquired the property in 1834, before the railroad had reached Harpers Ferry. By November 1841 T. A. Milton and Company, former investors in the Shannondale Springs property, had leased the U.S. Hotel at Harpers Ferry.

One of the company, Capt. Joseph F. Abell, had been the hotel keeper at Shannondale Springs for several years and became the proprietor of the U.S. Hotel in 1845. An 1847 Free Press article identifies Capt. John J. Abell as the proprietor of the Shannondale Springs Hotel and Capt. M. Thompson as bartender at both establishments. The Free Press noted that guests arriving at Harpers Ferry on the B&O could enjoy a delicious meal at the local hotel, then board a W&P train for Charlestown, where they could take a carriage to the springs.³¹ These alliances suggest that



Map dated 1832

Shannondale Springs

businessmen in Jefferson County were aggressively building local tourism as an industry.

Visitors to Shannondale Springs during the 1840s and 1850s included invalids taking the waters, artists seeking inspiration, and members of the social and political elite who renewed old friendships and forged new alliances. One New York columnist, characterizing the difference between Shannondale and its northern competitors, noted,

"... there is an entire absence of that codfish aristocracy, and those sets of would-be exclusives, of whom we have been so much in connection with Northern watering places; none of your Simkinses, or Timkinses, or such people whose pedigree runs full tilt into a grocery or soap factory; but we have unassuming people—F.F.V's, if you please—whose history runs back to the ancient cavaliers, who, with Lord Fairfax and

the Washingtons, first crossed over the Ridge before the Revolution."³²

Residents of the surrounding counties, many of them friends and associates of the owners, mingled with the guests for a fortnight, a day, or an evening, returning regularly for concerts, dress balls, July Fourth fireworks, and ring tournaments—good-natured jousting matches in which local "knights" vied for the honor of crowning their "ladies." One of these tournaments was captured by the pen of a guest in July 1848:



Map dated 1852

"The sound of many feet and the murmur of voices rose through the vale. The crowd gathered from all points to witness the expected pageant. The rush of vehicles and horses was so great that they had to be left upon the opposite side of the river, and gentlemen and ladies were borne over in the large ferry boat as thick as they could stand, and walked thence to the Hotel. It was truly an exciting and strange sight, to see them

Shannondale Springs

stretching in hurried and confused step across the lawn.

At 10 o'clock the knights gave in their names to the Herald, and 18 brave and daring champions were registered. They were then ordered to prepare themselves and horses for the tournament. At 11 o'clock, the crowds gathered beneath the umbrageous and majestic elms that overhang the fountains, where they had a near and far view of the scene. The bugle then sounded and the knights, all mounted, rode in front of the assembled throng under the direction of the Herald, Dr. G[erard]. F. Mason. Dressed in peculiar and picturesque costumes, with their tall lances glittering in the sun-beams, they presented an imposing and brilliant spectacle. The President of the day, the Hon. Henry Bedinger, addressed them in such eloquent tones and elevated and inspired sentiments, that the dullest bosom was roused to the highest daring and the true spirit of ancient chivalry was revived.

The privilege of selecting the fairest from the lovely array, and crowning her the Queen of Beauty, was to be the deed of victory, and there was not one among them would not have scaled a fortress for so rich a boon. The speech of Mr. Bedinger was most appropriate and beautiful, and I regret that I cannot give it here. When he had concluded, the knights repaired to the place of starting.

Then began the most splendid contention that eye ever witnessed. It is impossible to give a detailed account of it but the horses, catching the spirit of the rider, flew like the wind, and their flashing eyes and foaming mouths betrayed the high excitement....

Mr. K. [the victor]... was then requested to name the first maid of honor and selected one of the belles of Jefferson, Miss Rebecca.... Mr. Moore then named for second maid of honor, Miss Fitzhugh of Stafford, and... Washington for third maid of honor the fair and graceful Miss...Martin of Kentucky. After the selection [concluded], the company repaired to the Hotel, where a most

sumptuous feast was spread. There with the flow of Champagne and the exchange of . . . consumed the afternoon.... Every one then retired to their rooms to prepare for the Fancy Ball....

At about half past 8 o'clock, the spacious ball room was thronged with spectators awaiting the entrance of the Queen, her champion and cortege and attendants.... At the sound of music the folding doors at the upper end of the room were suddenly opened, and the Queen and her champion, richly dressed, in fancy costumes . . . appeared, followed by the knights and maids of honor, and a long train of attendants, all fancifully attired. . . . The many characters . . . represented every nation, and flitted before you in such rapid succession that it was impossible to identify them. A few, however, were very conspicuous. Mr. L[awrence]. W. W[ashington], as the English hunter of the 15th century, was superb; he filled the character to very life. Mr. J[ohn]. W. K[enne]dy, in the court dress of Lewis [sic] 14th looked remarkably striking and handsome....^{"33}

Scenes like this were repeated frequently during this period, with southern ladies and gentlemen reenacting Sir Walter Scott's tales of medieval chivalry while they were waited on by black servants in livery.

Although not every evening at the springs was filled with such splendor, dances were held almost nightly. Mary J. Windle, who stayed at the springs in July 1851, described the music from the ballroom as drawing guests from their cottages on the summer evening, "and the variety of costumes and colors in constant motion formed a gay piece of human Mosaic."³⁴

Promoted as a "Fashionable Watering Place," praised by Henry Howe as "easier of access from the Atlantic cities, than any others in Virginia,"

Shannondale Springs

Shannondale Springs drew high recommendations from the travel critics of its day. John J. Moorman, writing of its pleasures just two years before the hotel burned, noted, "The accommodations at Shannondale are not

area. A writer to the Virginia Free Press in 1875 nostalgically recalled that, at the resort's bowling saloon, he "had the pleasure of rolling with the distinguished authoress, Mrs. Southworth . . . where, surrounded by so much of the romantic



**Depiction of "The Shannondale Springs" from
Henry Howe's 1845 Historical Collections of Virginia**

extensive, perhaps adapted to 140 to 150 persons, but it is admittedly a very delightful place."³⁵

One writer of the period further advanced the springs' reputation when she stayed there in July and August 1850. Mrs. Emma D. E. N. Southworth, one of the best-known "female novelists" of her time, spent part of the summer there with her son Richmond and daughter Charlotte. Fleeing the oppressive heat of Washington, DC, she joined other members of society leaving the sweltering cities and those who believed that the springs' iron-laden waters would protect them against the cholera epidemic that was sweeping the

and beautiful, she no doubt received no little inspiration for her interesting novels."³⁶

It was here that she penned her novel *Shannondale*, a romantic tale with a convoluted plot, set at the estate of the fictitious Lord Summerfield. The novel has virtually nothing to do with its namesake, although it was used as an historical reference by one misguided newspaperman in the mid-1920s. Southworth's novel appears to be the origin of the myth about "Lover's Leap," a cliff overhanging the Shenandoah River across from the Springs. According to the novelist's rendition, a

Shannondale Springs

beautiful Indian princess threw herself into the river after being wooed and spurned by one of the white gentlemen staying at the Summerfield estate. The story has been used frequently to promote the hotel since the novel's publication.³⁷

Whatever failings the novel might have had, there was something romantic and special about Shannondale that drew people to it again and again. As a correspondent from the New York Herald wrote about his visit to the springs, "We feel completely cut off, shut out, or rather shut in, from the busy, delving, money making world which we have left behind."³⁸

Throughout the 1840s and 1850s the resort continued to be owned by the group of Whigs who had formed the Shannondale Springs Corporation in 1838. During the 1840s at least, it appeared to prosper, and beginning about 1847 the hotel came under the management of John J. Abell. One correspondent to the Virginia Free Press described him as "a gentleman of the most urbane manners, and assisted by that old Virginia gentleman, Capt. Thompson, gives an additional attraction to the place." Abell seems to have been careful in the use of the hotel's resources, suspending all credit to guests in 1848 and hiring out slaves used as domestic servants when they were not needed at the hotel.³⁹ Despite Shannondale Springs' popularity, it is unlikely that the hotel was expanded during this period. Henry Howe's depiction of an enlarged hotel in his *Historical Collections of Virginia* (1845) probably reflects the improvements made in 1838.⁴⁰

The Abells' associations with the U.S. Hotel in Harpers Ferry and the

Shannondale Springs Hotel appear to have ended in 1848, with James B. Wager leasing the former establishment and Capt. M. Thompson overseeing Abell's interests during his "absence."⁴¹ The springs' biggest promoter, John S. Gallaher, accepted an appointment from President Zachary Taylor in October 1849 to be third auditor of the treasury and presumably moved his residence to Washington, DC. By May 1850 an advertisement in the *Spirit of Jefferson* noted that the Shannondale Springs Hotel had been leased by Hall, Osburn, and Company and was undergoing thorough repairs. The following season, the proprietors promised all was in a state of readiness for the June 10 opening and added, "They have procured the best Band of music, and most capable servants that can be found without regard to price." According to one newspaper correspondent, the music was provided by

"a band of colored musicians, and their favorite air is—"Carry me back to ole Virginny" which they play almost every day at dinner time; and sometimes in the evening, when the sun is sinking behind the western mountains, they give us a variety of Virginia melodies, with the variations, the favorite of which, among the ladies, appears to be—"Why don't you stop dat knocking at da door?"⁴²

President Millard Fillmore, Secretary of War Charles Magill Conrad, and Postmaster General Nathan K. Hall visited Shannondale Springs in August 1851. The president first stopped at Harpers Ferry to inspect the armory, then took a special train to Charlestown and a carriage to the springs. He attended a ball given in his honor, stayed

Shannondale Springs

overnight at Shannondale, and then proceeded to Winchester.⁴³

In 1852, when S. Howell Brown had completed his first detailed map of Jefferson County, he showed eleven buildings arranged around the hotel to the north and west, a bowling green to the northwest, and three mineral springs to the southwest of the hotel, between it and the river. The road to the ferry was shown on the north side of the river; a building stood at the ferry crossing; and the road from the ferry continued along the south bank of the river, passing in front of the hotel. Henry Howe's 1845 illustration of Shannondale Springs, depicting an expanded hotel, was included as an illustration on the map.⁴⁴ As late as 1854 the resort seems to have been doing well. An article of the period notes that festivities included fireworks and a ball well attended by visitors from neighboring counties.⁴⁵

If the success of Shannondale Springs was tied to the patronage of prominent Whigs, the election of Democrat Franklin Pierce may have been the harbinger of hard times. After Pierce's inauguration, John S. Gallaher and other Fillmore supporters lost their appointments. In April 1855 corporation president Samuel W. Lackland advertised that the resort was for rent, and a month later the furniture and 140 acres attached to the springs were put up for sale. Lackland's attempts to find a buyer appear to have been unsuccessful.⁴⁶

With Gallaher's continued absence in Washington, the Virginia Free Press's promotion of the hotel and reportage of its events dwindled. In March 1858 a fire from a burning chimney progressed so rapidly that efforts to save the hotel were fruitless. Although the Free Press reported that "The entire buildings . . .

all now lie a mass of smoldering ruin," the damage seems to have been limited to the hotel and a few adjacent structures. The reporter hoped "that the Springs and lands attached, in all about one hundred and ninety-six acres, may fall into the hands of capitalists, who will erect spacious accommodations, and the gaiety of former years be also inaugurated."⁴⁷

Before the hotel was rebuilt, the nation would experience the devastation of the Civil War and Jefferson County would face incorporation into the new state of West Virginia and the miseries of Reconstruction. An era had ended at Shannondale Springs and its rebirth would be left to another generation.

In September 1859 a writer for the Virginia Free Press noted the Shannondale Springs property was now on the market:

"Although the main building was burned some two years ago, the walls are in a fair condition to admit of improvement at comparatively little expense, whilst there are 15 cabins on the Lawns attached. There are two brick cabins, with 8 rooms, all having chimneys, 13 frame, besides Bath Houses, Dairy, Stabling, Ice House, Corn House, etc., etc.... Hundreds of people even now resort there for pleasure and the benefit of the water, although there are no accommodations offered."⁴⁸

Perhaps the hotel would have been restored to its earlier genteel ambiance had a buyer been found at the time. But less than ten miles away, John Brown and his men were gathering at the Kennedy Farm in preparation for his raid on Harpers Ferry. Col. Lawrence Washington, who had attended the costume ball at the springs dressed "as

Shannondale Springs

the English hunter of the 15th century," had already been identified by one of John Brown's party as a slaveholder and potential hostage. Andrew Kennedy, one of the members of the Shannondale Springs Corporation, would soon be the prosecuting attorney in the trial of the conspirators. Judge Richard Parker, who had handled some of the financial affairs of the corporation, would preside over the case.

Little information about Shannondale Springs is available for the war years. The area was frequented by Confederate raider John Singleton Mosby and his men and by Federal cavalry responsible for destroying Mosby's disruptive operations.⁴⁹

By 1867 Shannondale Springs was once again in use, with the Shannondale Circuit of the Methodist Episcopal Church South holding its first quarterly meeting there. Religious services, church meetings, and church picnics were frequently held at the springs during the summer months even though the hotel was no longer standing. Many attendees to these meetings stayed overnight, presumably in the remaining cabins or in tents erected for the occasion. Other private groups on pleasure excursions came to picnic for the day. The Spirit of Jefferson noted that the place had become popular with the " votaries of the terpsichorean art." The Virginia Free Press, observing that some of the cabins were being renovated that summer, stated Shannondale Springs "is now an attractive resort for Pic-Nic and Fishing parties."⁵⁰

That summer new proprietors Samuel Hill, M. D. Wilson Jr., S. H. Wilson, and J. W. Milton attempted to revive the elegant festivities that had been held at the springs in its antebellum days. They advertised a "Grand Pic Nic and

Barbecue" to be held on August 22. Persons interested in dancing were assured that the services of the best musicians in the state would be procured and "a good floor would be prepared" so they could dance under the stars. Although the ring tournaments were gone for the present, various earlier participants calling themselves the "Knight of Shannondale" represented the springs at tournaments both near and far.⁵¹

In May 1868 the property was advertised for sale. Commenting on recent attempts to revitalize the springs, one writer observed, "the war itself prevented the company from rebuilding. There are now but two [John S. Gallaher and William Crow] of the original proprietors living, and they are too old to commence the work of renovation. The heirs of others are numerous and prefer selling." The Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad was to come within a mile of the springs, providing additional access. The property was still on the market in October 1870 when the flood that devastated Harpers Ferry and many of the industries along the Shenandoah River also took its toll on Shannondale Springs. The Spirit of Jefferson reported, "The old Ferry-House at Shannondale is no more, but acted as escort to its downstream neighbors, Walraven's saw-mill and house, in their transit oceanward." Some of the cottages were renovated in 1872 in an effort to accommodate a few of the visitors that frequented the site. The assessed value of the property continued to decline through the 1870s, suggesting deterioration was outpacing the minimal efforts made at maintenance.⁵²

The full extent of deterioration at the springs was described by a visitor who had frequented the place in the 1850s.

Shannondale Springs

Returning in 1875 he observed that, in earlier days,

"sounds of music were to be heard there, and gay parties of dancers filled the halls, and other lively sports were the order of the day, at this then fashionable resort.—All was life and activity. Now the scene is changed. Herds of cattle, roaming at will, are the only living creatures to be seen, and the voice of the ploughman, and the old familiar voice the passing river, dashing over the rugged rocks, are the only sounds that greet the ear. . . . Amongst former improvements which have passed away, is the old bowling saloon, to which ladies as well as gentlemen were in the habit of resorting for agreeable exercise, in the edge of the forest on the top of the hill.... Nothing remains now to mark the place [of the hotel], where so many bright eyes glanced and pretty feet danced over the smooth boards, but the cold stones of the foundation—and some barbarous sinner, having no veneration for cherished relics, has run through the centre of this almost sacred spot, a worm fence!"⁵³

Of the group that had formed the Shannondale Springs Corporation in 1838, only John S. Gallaher remained. Seventy-five years old and living in Washington, he lacked the energy, influence, and capital needed to resurrect the once famous resort. He died on February 4, 1877.⁵⁴

By 1883 Shannondale Springs appears to have dwindled to only eight cottages. Nevertheless, it was still frequented by parties from the surrounding counties who picnicked, played croquet, played music, and danced on the green. The springs and the natural beauty of the spot remained. In May 1885 Mary Crow, widow of William Crow, one of the last shareholders in the Shannondale Springs Corporation, conveyed her interest in the property to Eugene Baker and J. Garland

Hurst. Baker and Hurst purchased Shannondale Springs at a public sale in 1888."

Shannondale Springs

The Second Era

Since the Shannondale Springs Hotel had been reduced to ashes in 1858, its owners and potential investors had lacked the resources to restore the resort to its former splendor. The devastation caused by the war and the challenges of Reconstruction had forced the owners to focus on rebuilding their lives. But the economic climate had changed by the time Baker and Hurst purchased Shannondale Springs in 1888.⁵⁵

Baker and Hurst began construction of a new Shannondale Springs Hotel in the spring of 1890. The frame structure was built on the spot where the earlier hotel had been. The building was one hundred feet long by forty-five feet wide, included a basement and two stories, and contained twenty-five guest rooms, a ballroom, and several bathrooms. Allowing for porches and piazzas, the new building closely resembled the original structure in size and external appearance.⁵⁶

The hotel opened early in July 1890 with a dance marking the occasion. The only criticism of the well-attended festivity was that the women outnumbered the men three to one. An advertisement marked the spring's season opening: "Excellent Boating, Bathing, Fishing and Hunting—Scenery Unsurpassed. Three Fine Mineral Springs. Cool, Quiet. Reasonable Charges. Everything new."⁵⁷

The rebirth of the hotel at this time was directly related to the establishment of the Charlestown Mining, Manufacturing, and Improvement Company. Formed to inject new economic vitality into Jefferson County, the corporation planned to improve transportation, establish major industries, create a large residential and

commercial subdivision adjacent to Charlestown, and utilize local resources such as limestone, timber, clay, and iron ore. The company purchased options on both the iron deposits at Shannondale and the Shannondale Springs resort, meaning the owners of the springs would share in the prosperity if the economic boom occurred.⁵⁸

By 1896 the tradition of ring tournaments returned to the springs, although on a smaller scale. The participants were ages six and seven. In the years that followed, the contestants were to be more mature. The springs attracted more families, young people, and sportsmen and few members of the nation's political and social elite.⁵⁹



The financial boom envisioned by the Charlestown Mining, Manufacturing, and Improvement Company did not materialize, and the hopes of the springs' owners collapsed with those of the grand project. Baker and Hurst used the springs property and the adjacent farm to secure a note for \$8,000. When they defaulted on the loan, H. C. Getzendanner purchased the property in October 1902 at public auction for \$9,055. The purchase included the 66.5-

Shannondale Springs

acre springs property, the adjacent 125-acre farm, and "the ferry and ferry franchise and cable and large ferry boat."⁶⁰

When the springs was about to open in the summer of 1902, William P. Craighill reminisced about the past glories of the place and the eminent visitors it had served. The author claimed at least five presidents had visited the springs—George Washington as a surveyor, James Monroe as a friend of the Craighills (who owned property nearby), Andrew Jackson, Martin Van Buren, and Millard Fillmore. Although documentation has not yet been located to verify the visits of Washington, Monroe, and Jackson, Craighill claimed to have seen Van Buren and Fillmore at the springs. The claims for presidential visits have continued to grow from this period and most of them remain unsubstantiated.⁶¹

The new hotel was scheduled to open under Getzendanner's ownership on June 1, 1903, and advertisements and newspaper articles promised significant improvements. One writer observed:

"The hotel at this old historical resort, famed in song and story, is thoroughly renovated and newly and comfortably furnished, including bath rooms, electric fans, etc.... Telephone connection with Charles Town and surrounding towns. Three fine mineral springs—Chalybeate, Red and Blue Sulphur. Amusements—Golf Links, Tennis Courts, Bathing, Boating, Bass Fishing and other sports can be indulged in by guests at all suitable times, as they will have free use of over 100 lovely acres of blue grass, wood and meadow land. Terms—\$2 per day; \$10 per week; \$30 per month. Special rates to parties and families; when two occupy the same room the rate is \$8 per week each or

\$25 per month each. Horses boarded. Livery attached to hotel. Bait always on hand."⁶²



By the end of July 1903 all of the cottages had been filled and the hotel rooms taken. Shortly after he reopened the hotel, Getzendanner issued a prospectus describing it as a plain wooden structure consisting of a basement, two stories, and an attic. The overall dimensions of the building were "about 100 feet long by 30 feet wide," with the addition of porches accounting for the imprecise measurements. The basement contained a dining room of 50 feet by 30 feet, a kitchen about 25 feet by 30 feet, plus a cellar and pantry. The first floor included a ballroom about 32 by 30 feet, an office and waiting room, and eight bedrooms with front and rear porches. The second floor had sixteen bedrooms and a rear porch. Two brick cottages with shingle roofs were located near the hotel. Referred to by later writers as the "Presidential Cottages," each was about 50 by 15 feet, with a porch and four bedrooms. Getzendanner also built a new stable and servants' quarters. A large wooden water tank provided the hotel with water for the

Shannondale Springs

bathrooms and for domestic purposes, the water being pumped by a gasoline engine from a driven well.⁶³

There was "a beautiful lawn around the entire hotel, sloping to the river and extending above and below the hotel, and containing over one hundred acres."



The hotel was more of a family resort than a watering place for the elite. The author noted, "One will find here entire freedom from all formalities, and the Springs are especially adapted to those seeking the freedom and outdoor amusements the place affords, rather than the style and attractions of a fashionable summer resort." For those who might be concerned about the moral climate, "No bar for the sale of spirituous liquors is maintained on the property."⁶⁴

Other amusements included a piano in the ballroom, a large, open fireplace, a tennis court, a croquet ground, and a six-hole golf course. The bass fishing directly in front of the hotel was reported to be excellent, boats were available for the guests, and there was "good bathing ground and moderate depth of water just above the riffles in front of the hotel." For those willing to row across the river and

climb the cliffs, there was also a magnificent view from Lover's Leap of the horseshoe bend, the mountains, the hotel, and the lawn. Persons coming to the resort late in the season would also find good hunting. The mineral springs, as always, were praised for their medicinal powers, but the focus of the resort clearly was recreation rather than medication.⁶⁵

In addition to the resort, Getzendanner owned several other businesses, including an operation to manufacture railroad ties from timber on his Shannondale tract. Previous owners of the springs had relied on their political influence, a local network of hotel, transportation, and tourist enterprises, and diverse investments to promote the resort and help it weather the hard times. Getzendanner's success did not last long.



Presidential cottages

The hotel was destroyed by fire early in November 1909. According to a contemporary source, "the conflagration begun about 5 p.m., and in a short while the entire building and contents with one of the cottages, were destroyed. No one knows how the fire started. Mr. H. F. Koonce, the lessee, was at the barn when his wife called him, saying the hotel was on fire. It was first discovered by Mrs. Koonce who found a blaze in the office."⁶⁶ Getzendanner had insured the hotel for five thousand dollars and the

Shannondale Springs

furniture for an additional one thousand dollars. Virginia Koonce Cosy, the Koonces' daughter, was of the opinion that the fire had started in the rafters on the basement floor. She also believed that both the hotel fire and the blaze which leveled the farmhouse at Shannondale a few weeks later were of suspicious origin. The hotel fire was so intense that even possessions placed nearby on the lawn were consumed. A spoon with "Shannondale Springs" stamped on the handle was rescued from the ashes and remains in her possession.⁶⁷



Despite the fire, the ferry continued to operate and visitors frequented the springs for picnics and religious retreats. A. M. S. Morgan II clearly remembered the ferryboat that transported passengers across the river for a nickle or their buggies for a quarter. For several summers the grounds were occupied by a group of young men from Washington, DC, studying to be Catholic priests. They erected tents on the site and had their own mess hall.⁶⁸

On October 1, 1919, Getzendanner and his wife Anna sold the resort property and the adjacent farm to E. B. Frye for five hundred dollars. Frye grazed cattle on the land, attempted to raise sugar beets, and continued to make what was left of the resort available to friends.⁶⁹ Within a few years, the new owner encountered serious financial problems, and in 1923 he mortgaged the property

to pay his outstanding debts. Of the twelve new cases reported on the local chancery docket for April 1924, four involved Frye as defendant. The charges alleged he had transferred the Shannondale Springs farm to his wife the previous fall to the detriment of his creditors.⁷⁰

That same year, C. L. Crane attempted to form a country club at Shannondale Springs. In his prospectus, *Outline of Plan for the Organization and Development of Shenandoah Country Estate and Colonial Country Club at Shannondale Springs*, Crane proposed erecting an elegant stone clubhouse and selling club memberships that included fifty- by one hundred-foot lots. Memberships, set at two hundred dollars, could be paid in installments. Designed for "those of limited means and who, through force of circumstances, are unable to pay the high cost of membership in the existing Country Clubs," the facility was to include extensive recreational facilities for all members. There is no evidence that the plan went much further than the prospectus. Despite their financial hardships, the Fries managed to hold on to the property for more than a decade, and in August 1931 they gave Crane a lease on the springs' resources. A flyer published in 1931, probably by Crane, advertised five-gallon bottles of Shannondale Springs water for one dollar each, claiming it was beneficial for high blood pressure, rheumatism, "auto intoxication," kidney conditions, tuberculosis, eczema, acne, neurasthenia, and constipation.⁷¹

Representatives from the West Virginia Geological Survey who visited the property in 1936 noted that little of the original resort remained standing and that the springs, though still flowing,

Shannondale Springs

were dirty and unprotected. In 1937 Thornton T. Perry Sr. began acquiring portions on the original Shannondale Springs tract, including the resort property.⁷²

Shannondale Springs

The Third Era

For almost half a century, the Shannondale Springs property and much of the larger Shannondale estate remained in the Perry family. In August 1980 Eleanor C. P. Read and T. T. Perry III received title to the Shannondale property through the will of T. T. Perry II. Shortly thereafter, they transferred



The concrete fountain ca. 1910

580 acres of the land to the Nature Conservancy. This property was then transferred to the state of West Virginia in 1986 and is now administered as a hunting and fishing preserve by the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources.⁷³

In March 1996 the Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission obtained a lease from the state on the portion of the Shannondale Springs property where the resort had been located.⁷⁴ At that time, only two

structures on the resort property were still intact - a stone springhouse/bathhouse dating from the early period of the resort's history and a concrete fountain probably dating from Getzendanner's renovations in 1903.



The concrete fountain in 2004

The deteriorating springhouse/bathhouse was restored in the summer of 1997 with a grant from the state. The landmarks commission, with a grant from the State Historic Preservation Office, resurveyed the historic boundaries of the resort, collected and analyzed available documentation, identified the locations of many former structures, and prepared a nomination to place Shannondale Springs on the National Register of Historic Places. That nomination was approved by the West Virginia Archives and History Commission in February 1998.⁷⁶

Thus far, study of the Shannondale Springs resort has provided important information about the development of the recreation and tourism industries in West Virginia and about the culture of the area during the century of the resort's existence. Its role in Virginia Whig politics and local plans for internal improvements has yet to be explored fully. Much knowledge may also be gained through archaeological investigation and the rediscovery of

Shannondale Springs

long-forgotten documentation. Perhaps the current interest in the springs will help bring these resources to light so we can understand more about this fascinating part of our past.⁷⁷



The bathhouse west wall before restoration in 1997



After restoration (2004)

Shannondale Springs

Addendum

In 1955, 2500 acres of the mountain above the horseshoe bend was subdivided and named Shannondale (sans 'Springs'). Soon a lake was formed by damming a nearby creek, and a third Shannondale resort was built on its bank. This resort was not used as a hotel, though nearby cabins were rented. In 2003, it too was destroyed by fire.

Shannondale Springs

Footnotes

1. This study builds upon the studies of T. T. Perry, "Shannondale," address given to the Jefferson County Historical Society, 9 August 1940, and reprinted in *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society* 7(December 1941): 19-22; and Susan E. Winter, "A Short History of Shannondale Springs," 23 January 1983, unpublished paper. The former work, an undocumented lecture, provides tantalizing references to sources in the author's private collection, many of which have not been authenticated. The second work provides an extensive record of the property ownership of the entire Shannondale estate, as well as an analysis of the newspaper sources available to the author. Perry's address and Winter's paper, along with many of the Jefferson County resources cited in this article, are available in William D. Theriault, "Jefferson County Module" of Explorer: The West Virginia History Database CD-ROM (Charleston: WV Div. of Culture and History, 1996), hereafter referred to as "Jefferson County Module," Explorer.

2. Stan Cohen, *Historic Springs of the Virginias: A Pictorial History* (Charleston: Pictorial Histories Publishing, 1981), vi-vii. The Berkeley Springs were well known by the mid-eighteenth century and had undergone substantial development by the 1780s. See Thomas Marshall Hunter, "Two Famous Springs of Eastern West Virginia," *West Virginia History* 6(January 1945): 193-204.

3. William Fairfax was selected by his uncle to manage the Northern Neck

proprietary after the death of the previous agent, Robert Carter, in 1732. Several agents were also employed by the Fairfaxes, including Col. George Colville. While performing their duties as agents, Fairfax and Colville acted as partners to amass substantial land holdings of their own. The Shannondale tract appears to have passed from Fairfax to Colville and back again as part of their efforts to arrange an equitable settlement when their partnership ended. William Fairfax had two sons by his first marriage, George William and Thomas. Two sons, Bryan and William Henry, and a daughter, Hannah, were the issue of his second marriage. When Fairfax died in 1757, George William succeeded him to the proprietary stewardship. Upon the death of Thomas, Lord Fairfax in 1782, his successor Denny Martin appointed William Fairfax's son Bryan the steward of the proprietorship. One of Bryan's sons, Ferdinando, inherited the Shannondale property from his uncle George William in 1787.

See Jefferson County, WV, Deed Book 1, 290; Stewart E. Brown Jr., *Virginia Baron: The Story of Thomas 6th Lord Fairfax* (Berryville, VA: Chesapeake Book Co., 1965), 102-03; and Battaile Muse to George Washington, 6 November 1788, in *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 1, ed. Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1987), 97-98.

4. George Washington to Bryan Fairfax, 6 April 1789, in *The Papers of George Washington, Presidential Series*, vol. 2, ed. Dorothy Twohig (Charlottesville: Univ. Press of Virginia, 1987), 27-29.

5. Fairfax's mortgage of the property in 1800 notes his residence as "Shannon

Shannondale Springs

Hall county of Berkeley." Jefferson County Deed Book 1, 290-91.

6. The Charlestown Academy was a private school established in 1797 and its supporters included many rich and influential landholders. At the age of twenty-one, Ferdinando Fairfax had published an article opposing slavery in the December 1790 American Museum or Universal Magazine, but by 1800 he owned sixty-two taxable slaves. "The Wonders of Charles Town: The Crane House" (n.p., n.d) records that on 1 May 1804 Magnus Tate Sr. rented to Ferdinando Fairfax "a lot of ground (1 acre) in Charlestown on the main street whereon is erected a dwelling house and small kitchen...." The town established in present-day Jefferson County by Charles Washington originally was called Charlestown, although variant spellings were frequent. The name was changed to Charles Town in 1912 to distinguish it from Charleston.

7. Farmers Repository, 2 December 1808.

8. According to Fairfax, several of the samples received enthusiastic recommendations. See Description of Ferdinando Fairfax 's Shannondale Iron Estate, with A Plan of a Company for Improving the Same (Washington, DC: J. Crossfield, 1815). See also "Notes on Keeptryst Furnace," 23 November 1809, R18, vol. 2, 105, Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, Harpers Ferry, WV. These notes record "Sale of bellows to F. Fairfax. Mr. Fairfax requested if he might purchase pair of bellows at Keeptryste Furnace. If they weren't needed at the Ferry they might be valued and sold."

9. Jefferson County Deed Book 8, 67, 514; Farmers Repository, 27 March 1812 and 20 August 1817; and National Park Service, National Register Nomination Form for Lee-Longworth House.

10. Description of Ferdinando Fairfax's Shannondale Iron Estate, 7-8. Although maps by Charles Varle (1809) and John Wood (1820) both record Fairfax's residence, neither shows a ferry or any structure on Horse Shoe Bend, the name first given to the area. See Charles Varle, Map of Frederick, Berkeley, & Jefferson Counties in the State of Virginia (Philadelphia: Benjamin Jones, Engraver, 1809); and John Wood, Jefferson County Surveyed and Drawn under the Direction of John Wood, (n.p., 1820). Both maps clearly depict mills, ferries, and other industries in the area. Varle is silent on Shannondale Springs while mentioning Berkeley Springs and other local resources in Topographical Description of the Counties of Frederick, Berkeley & Jefferson Situated in the State of Virginia (Winchester, VA: W. Heiskell, 1810).

11. In 1814 the administrators for William B. Paige [Page], deceased, initiated a chancery suit against Fairfax. Under the terms of the settlement, issued in 1816, Fairfax was obliged to auction his iron mine tract. The land was purchased by William Herbert Jr. In April 1817 Fairfax was involved in a chancery suit with George Reynolds, and in September he sold the Short Hill tract to repay the 1812 mortgage. See Jefferson County Deed Book 9, 414-15; and Farmers Repository, 4 May 1815 and 30 April 1817. While Fairfax struggled to stay solvent, Col. Benjamin Beeler in 1816 sold Thomas Griggs Jr.

Shannondale Springs

"one undivided third part of a certain tract . . . extending on both sides of the Shenandoah river, . . . containing as is supposed 125 acres and 3/4 of an acre." This land was adjacent to the springs and would eventually become part of the resort property. Jefferson County Deed Book 10, 135. Beeler served in the War of 1812 from Jefferson County, as did Griggs and John S. Gallaher. His daughter, Sarah C. Beeler, married William Arthur Carter in 1824. Mary E. Carter, the daughter of William and Sarah, married James T. Milton, whose father had received title to part of Shannondale Springs in 1825. See J. E. Norris, *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley* (Chicago: A. Warner and Co., 1890), 624. Griggs served as a member of the Virginia House of Delegates with Henry Berry in 1835. See Millard Bushong, *Historic Jefferson County* (Boyce, VA: Carr Publishing Co., 1972), 572.

12. Jefferson County Deed Book 11, 201, 327; and *Farmers Repository*, 27 September 1820.

13. [John S. Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters and Their Effects upon Various Diseases* (Charlestown: Free Press Office, 1838), 5. DeButts's analysis of the water revealed the following constituents (translated into parts per million by the West Virginia Geological Survey): iron (Fe), 18.5; calcium (Ca), 942.8; magnesium (Mg), 207.2; sodium (Na), 16.29; carbonate (CO₃), 275.8; sulfate (SO₄), 2,625.5; and chloride (Cl), 55.9.

14. Rosalie Stier Calvert, *Mistress of Riversdale: The Plantation Letters of Rosalie Stier Calvert, 1795-1821*, ed. Margaret Law Callcott (Baltimore: Johns

Hopkins Univ. Press, 1991), 362. Thomas Deakin of Harpers Ferry advertised in the 21 June 1820 *Farmers Repository* that "he intends keeping neat and substantial hack for hire at Harpers Ferry for accommodation of persons visiting Shannondale Springs." Samuel Kercheval, *History of the Valley of Virginia* (Winchester, VA: Samuel H. Davis, 1833), 473-274, supports the belief that the resort opened some time between 1817 and 1821. He notes, "It is not much more than twelve or fourteen years since this spring was first resorted to as a watering place, though it was known for some years before to possess some peculiar medicinal qualities. . . . A company of gentlemen in its neighborhood joined and purchased the site, and forthwith erected a large brick boarding house, and ten or twelve small buildings for the accommodation of visitors. For several years it held a high rank among our watering places."

An undated painting of the springs may document this phase of its construction. Entitled "A view of the Shannondale Springs and the Horse Shoe bend on the Shenandoah River," the scene depicts a man, woman, and baby sitting on a hill on the north side of the river, possibly at Shannon Hill. Behind them, on the south side of the river lies a U-shaped collection of one- and two-story buildings. No hotel is visible. In the lower right portion of the picture, the road leading to the ferry is shown, as well as a structure on the riverbank and a boat crossing the river. This painting is in the collection of the Jefferson County Museum, Charles Town, WV.

15. See Jefferson County Deed Book 11, 392, 414, 498. The sequence of construction is substantiated by

Shannondale Springs

Kercheval, *History of the Valley of Virginia*, 473-74.

To summarize ownership of the property in 1821, the 66+-acre tract containing the ferry, "houses," "boarding house," and "baths and bath houses," was owned by James L. Ranson (one-ninth), Thomas Brown (one-ninth), Samuel W. Lackland (one-ninth), and Thomas Griggs Jr. (six-ninths). Griggs also owned one-third of the adjacent 125-acre parcel. The remaining two-thirds of the larger tract was owned by James Milton, a relative of Benjamin Beeler, who transferred his ownership of the property to Robert Milton in 1825. See *Jefferson County Deed Book 14*, 490.

16. *Virginia Free Press*, 5 July 1838 and 9 August 1838. The *Free Press* also noted, "During the administration of Mr. Monroe, the President and the highest officers of the Government made it their summer retreat." James Monroe may have heard of Shannondale from Nathaniel Craighill, who then lived on the Shenandoah River near the springs. Craighill and Monroe had been born on adjacent places on Monroe Creek in Westmoreland County and grew up there together. See Kercheval, *History of the Valley of Virginia*, 473; and [Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters*, 5.

17. The view of "Shannondale Springs, Virginia," was drawn by "C. Burton, New York," and was engraved and printed by Fenner, Sears, & Co., in London, 1 September 1831. A 28 May 1823 advertisement in the *Farmers Repository* noted, "Charles Burton of Harpers Ferry is to take likenesses in Charlestown in a few days." C. Burton and Charles Burton are probably the same person. It is also likely that the

artist of this view of Shannondale Springs was the father of James Henry Burton, master armorer at Harpers Ferry, who was "born of English parents August 17, 1823, at Shannondale Springs. . . ." Norris, *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley*, 612.

18. *Jefferson County Deed Book 16*, 9, 286, 368, 371. Cholera first reached the area in the summer of 1833 and reappeared sporadically during the next half century.

19. *Virginia Free Press*, 4 June 1835.

20. *Jefferson County Deed Book 24*, 287.

21. James L. Ranson sold his one-ninth share to the corporation in October 1838. See *Jefferson County Deed Book 23*, 460. He was one of the incorporators of the Smithfield, Charlestown, and Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company, as well as a director of the proposed Alexandria, Loudoun, and Hampshire Railroad, which had planned to have a stop at Shannondale Springs. Acts of the General Assembly of Virginia, 1830 (Richmond: Thomas Ritchie, 1830), 86; *Spirit of Jefferson*, 18 April 1853; and *Virginia Free Press*, 22 September 1853. Andrew Kennedy was a prominent lawyer, who later became prosecuting attorney in the trial of John Brown, and one of the directors of the Smithfield, Charlestown, and Harpers Ferry Turnpike Company. He was the brother of John Pendleton Kennedy, the author and secretary of the navy under Millard Fillmore. Robert T. Brown was clerk of the circuit court for almost fifty years. George W. Hammond was a local justice of the peace, the owner of Happy Retreat, and builder of "Shannon Hall"

Shannondale Springs

on the Shenandoah River. William Yates sold his interest in the corporation to Samuel W. Lackland in May 1839. See Jefferson County Deed Book 23, 534. Richard Parker, then a circuit court judge for Jefferson County, later presided over John Brown's trial. John S. Gallaher was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates from 1830-34 and 1842-43, editor of the Virginia Free Press, and owner or editor of several other Virginia newspapers. See Jefferson County Deed Book 23, 366; and Norris, *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley*, 658. The advertisement for the springs placed by the new corporation was printed in the Virginia Free Press, 17 May 1838. According to an article in the same issue, the company had a one hundred thousand-dollar line of credit.

22. Thomas Griggs Jr. was commonwealth's attorney, a veteran of the War of 1812, a member of the Virginia legislature, a member of the Virginia convention of 1829-30 and 1850-51, and for thirty-six years the president of the Valley Bank of Virginia at Charlestown. Norris, *History of the Lower Shenandoah Valley*, 658.

23. Virginia Free Press, 17 and 31 May 1838.

24. [Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters*, 13-14.

25. The layout of this hotel, which burned in 1858, matches the layout of the second hotel built on the same spot in 1890. George Watterson noted in the Virginia Free Press, 24 August 1848, that all three springs were located in groves of trees and described the landscape in some detail. An illustration

of Shannondale Springs in Henry Howe, *Historical Collections of Virginia* (Charleston, SC: Babcock and Co., 1845) shows a grove of trees surrounded by a fence; this is probably a depiction of the major (middle) spring. See also [Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters*, 6-11.

26. [Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters*, 13-14.

27. Virginia Free Press, 24 August 1848. The blacks mentioned in these and later antebellum descriptions were probably slaves who were owned or leased by the corporation's president, Samuel W. Lackland. Lackland was listed as owning 28 slaves in the 1850 slave census of Jefferson County and frequently offered his slaves for rent while the resort was closed during the winter. Other members of the corporation who owned slaves included Andrew Kennedy (19), George W. Hammond (6), William Crow (2), and Charles Stewart (3). See Hugh E. Vorees and Robert E. Allen, comps., "Jefferson County, West Virginia Slave Census for 1850," *Magazine of the Jefferson County Historical Society* 61(1995): 69.

28. [Gallaher], *Shannondale: The Quality and Character of the Waters*, 15.

29. Virginia Free Press, 9 August 1838.

30. *Ibid.*, 21 June 1838. A 17 May Free Press advertisement for Carter's Hotel, immediately following the one for Shannondale Springs, notes, "The proprietor's engagements at the Shannondale Springs will not interfere with the arrangements of this House—every department of which will continue

Shannondale Springs

to be conducted in a manner to insure entire satisfaction."

31. Jefferson County Deed Book 23, 538; and Virginia Free Press, 25 November 1841 and 17 June 1847.

32. Virginia Free Press, 14 August 1851.

33. For a description of the Fourth of July celebration, see Virginia Free Press, 10 July 1851. Tournaments were a frequent event at Shannondale and other health spas in the area. See Baltimore Herald, 2 August 1848; and Virginia Free Press, 18 July 1839 and 17 June 1841. Additional descriptions of tournaments and balls at Shannondale Springs can be found in Virginia Free Press, 28 August 1851 and 11 September 1851. The 1851 season closed with three days of horse racing at the springs. Virginia Free Press, 9 October 1851.

34. President Fillmore, along with Secretary of War Charles Magill Conrad and Secretary of the Interior Alexander H. H. Stuart, had arrived the same week at Harpers Ferry, where they had toured the armory. According to Windle, Conrad's son was present at the dance she attended. See Virginia Free Press, 7 August 1851.

35. Spirit of Jefferson, 28 May 1847; Howe, Historical Collections of Virginia, 342-43; and John J. Moorman, The Virginia Springs: Comprising an Account of All the Principal Mineral Springs of Virginia (Richmond: J. W. Randolph, 1857), 257-58.

36. Census of the Population, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850 (National Archives Microfilm Publication M432), Jefferson County,

Virginia. A 9 August 1850 Virginia Free Press article supported the belief that water from the springs would prevent cholera. The author recalled a C&O Canal contractor during the 1833 epidemic who said none of his workers contracted the disease even though hundreds living above and below his section were stricken with it. Both the writer and the contractor suggested that immunity came from drinking iron-laden water from Shannondale Springs. Virginia Free Press, 25 September 1875, recounts Southworth's visit. The bowling alley is also mentioned in the Virginia Free Press, 24 August 1848.

37. Emma D. E. N. Southworth, Shannondale (New York: D. Appleton and Co., 1851). Thus far, this author has found no references to "Lovers' Leap" before the publication of Southworth's novel. An historically inaccurate article containing references to attempts to revive the property in the mid-1920s was published in an unidentified newspaper. J. P. Cranke, "Shannondale: The Historic. To Be Modernized and Once More Opened to the Public Through the Colonial Country Club. Memberships in the Club Can Now Be Secured," in "Jefferson County Module," Explorer.

38. Virginia Free Press, 14 August 1851.

39. Ibid., 26 August 1847, 9 September 1847, 22 December 1847, and 3 August 1848.

40. Howe's illustration has prompted speculation that the hotel had been substantially enlarged by this time. According to a 5 July 1838 article in the Virginia Free Press: "Owing . . . to some misunderstanding perhaps, or want of harmony amongst the proprietors, the

Shannondale Springs

improvements [in the early 1820s] remained half finished, the accommodations became bad and finally none were provided." The new corporation, with capital of one hundred thousand dollars, was making substantial improvements.

The hotel depicted in the Howe illustration has twenty evenly spaced windows on the first and second floors, with a basement level obscured by an overhanging porch and the upper story capped by a peaked roof containing ten evenly spaced dormers. If the dimensions reported more than a decade earlier (a two-story structure approximately 30 by 90 feet with eight evenly spaced windows) are applied, the hotel shown by Howe must have been at least 160 feet in length. Rectangular, one-story structures are arranged around the hotel in a semi-circle; two two-story barnlike structures are shown to the north, another two-story structure to the northeast of the hotel, and a long, one-story building further to the northwest on the edge of the woods. A small building stands on the edge of the river close to the ferry landing. S. Howell Brown's *Map of Jefferson County, Virginia* (Philadelphia: J. L. Smith, 1852) included Howe's illustration. It is not known whether Howe accurately depicted the extent of the renovation. Archaeological investigation of the hotel site is needed to clarify this issue.

41. *Virginia Free Press*, 8 and 15 April 1848.

42. *Ibid.*, 10 February 1877; and *Spirit of Jefferson*, 28 May 1850. The *Spirit* advertisement first appeared on 14 May. See also *Virginia Free Press*, 5 June 1851 and 14 August 1851. An invitation from proprietor Hall to Postmaster

General Nathan K. Hall to accompany Fillmore on his visit to Shannondale Springs suggests the Halls may have been related. The identity of the black musicians has not been established. They were probably slaves of Samuel W. Lackland, president of the Shannondale Springs Resort.

43. *Virginia Free Press*, 7 and 14 August 1851; [Nathan K.] Hall to Hall, Osburn, and Co., 26 July 1851, Jefferson County Museum; and *Independent Democrat*, 21 August 1860.

44. Brown, *Map of Jefferson County*.

45. *Virginia Free Press*, 10 August 1854. The omission of Shannondale and other local springs from a tour book caused a great deal of consternation in this area, although it appears not to have adversely affected business at the time. One local writer noted, "Burke, in his book on the Mineral Springs of Virginia, has treated those of the Valley rather cavalierly. He extols to the skies, the Warm, Hot, Greenbrier, White Sulphur, and others; but does not give Shannondale, Jordan's, Capon or the Berkeley Springs, even a passing notice. He heaps praises upon the proprietors of those well known watering places, but acknowledges no acquaintance with the polite and accomplished hosts of the valuable medicinal Springs of this region. Had he extended his travel to this portion of the Valley, previous to writing his book, he would have found material for a more interesting work, readier sale for it, and a more extensive circulation. If he will allow us, we would advise him." See *Virginia Free Press*, 14 August 1851.

46. *Virginia Free Press*, 19 April 1855 and 23 May 1855.

Shannondale Springs

47. Ibid., 25 March 1858.
48. Ibid., 1 September 1859.
49. R. P. Chew, *Military Operations in Jefferson County Virginia* (West Virginia) (1910; reprint, Bakerton, WV: Jefferson County Oral and Visual History Association, Inc., 1992).
50. Virginia Free Press, 13 June 1867, 22 June 1872, 5 September 1874, 8 and 22 September 1877, and 12 August 1886; and Spirit of Jefferson, 21 June 1870, 18 June 1872, and 1 September 1874.
51. Virginia Free Press, 5 August 1867. Moses Ewing rode as the "Knight of Shannondale" at a tournament in Rippon in June 1870 and an unnamed contestant rode under the same title at a tournament held at Prospect Park, Brooklyn, that same year. See Spirit of Jefferson, 14 June 1870; and Virginia Free Press, 11 June 1870.
52. Virginia Free Press, 7 and 28 May 1868, 11 June 1870, and 22 June 1872; and Spirit of Jefferson, 4 October 1870. The property was also offered for sale in 1871. Virginia Free Press, 2 September 1871; and Jefferson County Land Assessment Books, 1st and 2d Dist.
53. Virginia Free Press, 25 September 1875.
54. Ibid., 10 February 1877.
55. S. Howell Brown, *Map of Jefferson County, West Virginia* (Philadelphia: J. L. Smith, 1883); Spirit of Jefferson, 27 July 1880; Virginia Free Press, 21 May 1885; and Jefferson County Deed Book 5, 64.
56. Spirit of Jefferson, 9 November 1909.
57. Virginia Free Press, 25 June 1890, and 2 and 9 July 1890.
58. Ibid., 18 June 1890.
59. Ibid., 8 July 1896.
60. Jefferson County Deed Book 91, 313-14; and Deed Book 92, 159.
61. Spirit of Jefferson, 17 June 1902. See also Spirit of Jefferson, 15 January 1901. Alvin Dohme, *Shenandoah: The Valley Story* (Washington, DC: Potomac Books, 1972), 85, apparently without any documentation, claimed that Presidents Hayes, Garfield, and Arthur had visited Shannondale Springs. T. T. Perry, in his lecture on Shannondale, mentions the visits of several presidents without providing references.
62. Spirit of Jefferson, 12 May 1903. See also Spirit of Jefferson, 28 April 1903 and 28 July 1903.
63. H. C. Getzendanner, *Shannondale Springs* (Washington, DC: W. F. Roberts Co., [1903]), 3.
64. Ibid., 5.
65. Ibid., 6-8, 13; Jefferson County Deed Book 104, 365, 369; A. M. S. Morgan, II, *Charles Town, 1912-1924: A Boy's Eye-View of Charles Town and its People*, 15 November 1987, 6, in "Jefferson County Module," Explorer.

Shannondale Springs

66. Spirit of Jefferson, 9 November 1909.

67. Interview by the author, Virginia Koonce Cosy, Hagerstown, MD, 5 March 1997.

68. Morgan, Charles Town, 8.

69. Jefferson County Deed Book 118, 47; Deed Book 114, 424; and Farmers Advocate, 8 and 15 May 1920, 26 June 1920, 24 July 1920, and 22 July 1922.

70. Farmers Advocate, 5 April 1924; and Jefferson County Deed Book 124, 5-6.

71. Jefferson County Deed Book 136, 383. [Charles L. Crane] Outline of Plan for the Organization and Development of Shenandoah Country Estate and Colonial Country Club at Shannondale Springs (n.p., [1924]), 1. According to J. P. Cranke, "It is proposed to develop a country club on a huge scale, its grounds to embrace three thousand acres of mountain, forest and stream. Before the plan [can] become operative the Chamber of Commerce resolution provided that a certain number of members, who shall be residents of Jefferson County, West Virginia, must be secured, and then memberships would become available for citizens of Washington and Baltimore who may desire to join the club. The Chamber of Commerce as a body pledged itself to get out and work for the success of the enterprise." See J. P. Cranke, "Shannondale: The Historic"; and "Shannondale Springs Water Has Health Building Properties" (Charles Town: n.p., [1931]).

72. Paul H. Price, John B. McCue, and Homer A. Hoskins, Springs of West

Virginia (Morgantown: WV Geological Survey, 1936), 13, 71-74; Jefferson County Deed Book 145, 293; Deed Book 146, 53-54; Deed Book 147, 521; Deed Book 149, 29, 205; and Deed Book 164, 332.

73. Jefferson County Will Book S, 270; and Deed Book 502, 484-86.

74. License Agreement, 18 March 1996, WV Bureau of Commerce, Div. of Natural Resources, Public Land Corporation, to Jefferson County Historic Landmarks Commission.

75. Preliminary archaeological studies of the stone bath/springhouse reveal that the original floor lies approximately one foot below the current dirt floor. No water flows through the structure at present. It did not house one of the three medicinal springs, which have all been located several hundred feet distant. A well lies directly behind the structure and includes plumbing once used to pump water uphill to the hotel. The depth of the building's original floor suggests it may have been used first as a bathhouse and then have been modified for use as a springhouse or icehouse. Visitors to the springs took warm or cold baths in addition to drinking the mineral waters, and the building may have been used for this purpose. Although the structure may predate the construction of the hotel and outbuildings (ca. 1821), more accurate dating will require further archaeological investigation.

76. WV Historic Property Inventory Form, in "Jefferson County Module," Explorer.

77. The author wishes to thank the WV Div. of Culture and History, the WV

Shannondale Springs

Div. of Natural Resources, the Jefferson County Museum, the Harpers Ferry National Historical Park, and the other individuals and organizations that assisted in information gathering, provided access to artifacts, and helped in survey efforts. In particular, he wishes to thank William D. Hartgroves, whose decade-long crusade raised the community's consciousness about Shannondale Springs and whose efforts helped to raise the local resources needed to complete this project.

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