

# **Farming at Clermont during the Age of Grain: The World of Edward McCormick**

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## **Introduction**

Over the span of about two weeks in the late winter of 1859, Edward McCormick, the proprietor of “Clermont,” hauled some 1,240 bushels of wheat to the Spout Springs Mill, located about five miles west of Clermont on the main road to Winchester, thereby completing the final task in the seasonal round of activities that commercial wheat production entailed (Figure 1).<sup>1</sup> For this wheat that McCormick carried away from his farm in late February and early March of 1859, production would have begun about eighteen months earlier, in the late summer and fall of 1857, when he would have plowed and tilled his fields for the sowing of the wheat crop. He would have sown his seed wheat in late September or October, perhaps November if he was running late that year. He would have harvested the crop during the following summer—in late June and early July of 1858. Then, as time permitted during the ensuing months of late summer, autumn, and winter, he would have threshed his wheat crop, and poured or shoveled the clean wheat into bags that held two bushels of the grain (Figure 2).<sup>2</sup> Then, as we have seen already, during the late winter of 1859—before the onset of the busy spring planting season—he loaded

his wheat onto wagons and hauled it to a local grist mill for processing into flour. These are the seasonal rhythms of wheat production that McCormick would have presided over at Clermont beginning in about 1848, when he inherited the farm, until his death in 1870 (albeit, perhaps with a hiatus during some of the years of the Civil War).<sup>3</sup>

Surviving documents pertaining to McCormick's agrarian activities at Clermont reveal a strong preoccupation with wheat farming. We find McCormick buying seed wheat, hiring labor for harvesting the crop, hauling the grain from his fields to his barn for threshing and storage, and selling it.<sup>4</sup> There is even paperwork indicating that he bought insurance to cover the loss of his wheat crops.<sup>5</sup> Commercial wheat farming was central to the agrarian entrepreneurship that McCormick directed at Clermont. This paper builds upon this main fact of economic life at Clermont by placing it within a broader context. It identifies the central tendencies of agriculture as practiced at Clermont during the late antebellum era and shows the extent to which they conform to trends in Clarke County and in the larger region of the Shenandoah Valley (Figure 3).<sup>6</sup>

### **Wheat Farming**

In producing prodigious quantities of wheat for the commercial flour trade, McCormick participated in a form of agrarian activity that dominated the rural economy of Clarke County—and indeed the entire Shenandoah Valley—all during the nineteenth century, a period included in what environmental historian Jack Temple Kirby has referred to as “Virginia’s age of grain.”<sup>7</sup> By the beginning of the nineteenth century the Shenandoah Valley had become “the most important wheat and flour-producing region of the entire South,” and it remained so during the nineteenth century and well into the twentieth century as well (Figures 4 and 5).<sup>8</sup> In 1840, for example, Valley farmers produced a fifth of all the wheat produced in Virginia in that year, and

at mid-century, working only nine percent of the improved acres of farmland in Virginia, they produced 22 percent of the state's wheat crop.<sup>9</sup>

In August of 1845, an editorial writer for a newspaper published in Martinsburg, a town situated a few miles northwest of Berryville and Clermont, described the wheat harvest scene of that year. He wrote that:

“the last fortnight has been the busy season of our people in this wheat-raising country. . . . while our town has presented the stillness of the Sabbath, [but] without its church going crowds, the country has been alive with the industrious bands of cradlers, rakers, binders and shockers. Every farm—almost every golden-covered hill and valley—has been peopled by the harvesters in their white garments, securing the staple of our country, the wealth of the farmer, and the food of all classes.”<sup>10</sup>

In this brief passage, the writer recognizes wheat growing as a powerful source of regional cultural identity, pays tribute to the farmers who produced it, and underscores the significance of commercial wheat farming to the regional economy. He went on to assert that “wheat is the crop which the farmer looks to make money.”<sup>11</sup> A decade later, in 1855, a resident of Winchester echoed this point when, in writing to an acquaintance who lived outside the Shenandoah Valley, he remarked that “wheat is the staple crop with us, and the only one not consumed at home.”<sup>12</sup> One year later, in 1856, a writer for the most widely read southern farm periodical of the day—a publication called the *Southern Planter*—referred to the Valley of Virginia as “the great wheat-growing section of the state.”<sup>13</sup>

Wheat production statistics confirm the claims of these writers. One historian compared levels of wheat production in 1850, in ten multi-county regions of Virginia, Tennessee, Kentucky, Missouri, and Georgia. Farmers in nine of these regions produced fewer than six bushels of wheat per capita and in many instances fewer than two bushels per capita.<sup>14</sup> In the remaining region—a four-county area of the Shenandoah Valley (Rockingham, Augusta, Page, and Rockbridge Counties)—per capita wheat production stood at almost 20 bushels, far

surpassing levels of production in the other regions.<sup>15</sup> In Clarke County, by contrast, farmers produced almost 42 bushels of wheat per capita—more than twice the figure for the four-county region of the Shenandoah Valley.<sup>16</sup>

Shenandoah-Valley farmers' exceptionally high levels of wheat production made the Valley a center of wheat production in Virginia and the South but, within the region, Clarke County formed an epicenter of high-levels of production. At midcentury, in the counties of the Shenandoah Valley other than Clarke, bushels of wheat produced per improved acre of land ranged from 1.46 in Botetourt County to a high of 2.99 in Rockingham County, and bushels of wheat production per farm ranged from a low of 170 in Botetourt County to a high of about 500 in Rockingham County. In Clarke County, by contrast, comparable figures were 5.08 and 1,130.<sup>17</sup> In 1880, the first census year in which enumerators recorded information on the number of acres sown to a given crop, Clarke County farmers planted 22.4 percent of their improved acres in wheat, while the comparable figure for all other counties of the Shenandoah Valley stood at 18.7 percent.<sup>18</sup> Throughout the nineteenth century, although Shenandoah Valley farmers emphasized the commercial production of wheat, they grew greater quantities of corn. In most census years of the nineteenth century, Valley farmers produced about one million more bushels of corn than wheat. In Clarke County, however, farmers produced more wheat than corn. In 1850, for example, they produced about 307,000 bushels of wheat as compared to about 163,000 bushels of corn.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, in a region noted for its farmers' concentration on wheat production, farmers of Clarke County devoted extraordinary emphasis to the crop. Edward McCormick was among those who did so: in 1850, he produced 2,500 bushels of wheat, an amount that was more than

twice as high as the average production of wheat in the county, and which made him the 22<sup>nd</sup> highest wheat producer in Clarke County, and in 1860 he produced 4,000 bushels of the grain.<sup>20</sup>

### **Patterns of Wealth-Holding**

A fact of main importance for the contextualization of Clarke County farmers' emphasis on wheat farming and their production of prodigious amounts of the grain is that many of them were members of a land-holding elite who dominated the social structure of the county. Local society in Clarke County was highly stratified and wealth quite unevenly distributed. Placing all 1860 Clarke County household heads into quintiles on the basis of the total wealth held by each, reveals that those in the highest quintile (the wealthiest 20 percent of household heads), owned about 83 percent of total wealth in the county, and those in the two highest quintiles (the wealthiest 40 percent of all household heads), owned about 98 percent of total wealth (Table 1). Edward McCormick, who valued his wealth at over \$60,000, fell into the ranks of the wealthiest quintile. On the eve of the Civil War, among the 674 heads of household in Clarke County, only 22 held more wealth than McCormick.<sup>21</sup>

McCormick's consumption of luxury items from specialty shops in Baltimore—a city he traveled to with some frequency—provides one indication of his wealth and comfortable economic position in local society.<sup>22</sup> A more prominent sign of his wealth, however, and one perhaps more readily visible to members of the wider community, was the relatively large number of slaves he owned—23 in 1850 and 27 in 1860.<sup>23</sup> In the mid-nineteenth century, farming remained a labor-intensive enterprise—despite the advent of horse-drawn laboring saving equipment—and human muscle continued to serve as the motive power for much farm work.<sup>24</sup> Virginia formed a part of the slave-holding south with the result that many farmers of

the Old Dominion, including those of the Shenandoah Valley, relied heavily upon slaves to meet their demand for labor.

A remarkable feature of slavery in the Shenandoah Valley is the unevenness of slaves' geographic distribution. Although slaves constituted about 20 percent of the total population of the Shenandoah Valley during the antebellum era, in Clarke County their proportion of the total population approached 50 percent, while in nearby Shenandoah County, for example, the comparable figure stood at about 6 percent (Table 2).<sup>25</sup> Thus, in all counties of the Shenandoah Valley but nowhere more than in Clarke County, farmers relied upon slaves to do the carrying, digging, chopping, cutting, shucking, lifting, hauling, and the like that were integral to antebellum-era agrarian work.<sup>26</sup>

As a slave-owning and land-holding elite of the locale, farmers dominated numerically within the highest quintile of wealth-holding in Clarke County. As shown in Table 3, nearly 82 percent of all heads of household in the wealthiest quintile self-identified as farmers. Also, it is likely that many of the 14 (10.4 percent) female heads of household for whom enumerators did not list an occupation, were widows of men who had been farmers. As might be expected, farmers show a decreasing presence among the lower wealth-holding quintiles (Table 4), and the rising numbers of "farmers without farms" among those quintiles suggest an increasing degree of farm tenancy among them.

As farmers dominated numerically within the highest wealth-holding quintile of Clarke County, they also predominated within the occupational structure of the county as a whole. In 1860, among all heads of household in the county, farmers formed the largest single occupational group; heading 46.4 percent of all households (Table 5). Farmers and laborers together composed about 70 percent of all household heads. Other occupations represented among

household heads, albeit in relatively small numbers, included various craftsmen, providers of goods and services, professionals, and merchants.

### **General Mixed Farming**

Clarke County farmers produced wheat on a grand scale, at least by the standards of the larger region, and they dominated the local social and economic structure. An additional key attribute of farming and agrarian life in the world of Edward McCormick is that although commercial wheat farming was supremely important to McCormick's household economy and to the economy of the immediate locale and the larger region as well, production of the crop never developed into a monoculture. Farmers emphasized production of wheat but they did so within a system of agriculture that cultural geographers call "general mixed farming," the main feature of which is diversity of enterprise.<sup>27</sup> Thus, farmers raised an array of crops other than wheat and they kept a variety of types of livestock. The main crops included corn, other small cereal grains (such as oats, rye, buckwheat, and barley), and hay, including clover and timothy.<sup>28</sup>

Horses, present on virtually every farm of the county, including Clermont, where Edward McCormick kept 16 of them, provided draft power for pulling plows, harrows and other implements for tilling or pulverizing the soil, and vehicles of transportation such as wagons, carts, buggies, and the like (Figures 6, 7, and 8).<sup>29</sup> Some Clarke County farmers—including Josiah Ware, a near neighbor of Edward McCormick—kept fine thoroughbred horses that they exhibited in nearby towns and offered them for stud services.<sup>30</sup>

Cattle, whether kept for milk, beef, or draft power, were also common to most farms of Clarke County. Edward McCormick kept all three types of cattle. At least some farmers of Clarke County tried to improve their herds by purchasing purebred cattle from outside the region. In the 1830s, for example, Josiah Ware traveled to York, Pennsylvania, with one his

slaves in order to purchase purebred Shorthorn cattle and drive them back to his farm near Berryville.<sup>31</sup>

Large herds of cattle were driven from western Virginia through Clarke County to markets in Baltimore or Philadelphia (Figures 9, 10, and 11).<sup>32</sup> Alma Hibbard, a young woman from New York living on a Clarke County farm where she served as a tutor for the children of the household, noted in her diary in October of 1854 that during an evening walk along the bank of the Shenandoah River near Berry's Ferry, a "drive of cattle" was making its way to "the ford." She remarked that the cattle of this herd of about 700 animals, which were "very small," ... "drank their fill" of water and then were "turned into a field" to spend the night. The next morning, she "went to see the drive across the ford," noting in her diary that "two men on one horse prevented their going upstream [while] others below urged them behind. They crossed in a close body, very gently."<sup>33</sup> Farmers of the Shenandoah Valley, including those of Clarke County, often contributed to these herds or bought cattle from them, and they sometimes earned quick cash as payment for allowing cattle of the drives to graze their fields overnight.<sup>34</sup>

Many farmers of Clarke County, including Edward McCormick, kept span of oxen as draft animals. Farmers of Clarke County collectively owned an unusually large number of oxen. In 1850, with 276 oxen, Clarke County farmers owned more oxen than all the farmers in the four counties contiguous to Clarke (a total of 241 oxen in Frederick, Warren, Page, and Shenandoah Counties), and fully one-third of all oxen in the Shenandoah Valley in that year.<sup>35</sup> This reliance on large numbers of oxen as a source of draft power on Clarke County farms may be viewed as a cultural marker of the tidewater Virginia origins of Clarke County society. In their ownership of large numbers of oxen, farmers of Clarke County manifested a cultural similarity to farmers and



planters of eastern Virginia, where oxen rather than horses had traditionally served as the dominant source of draft power.<sup>36</sup>

Many Clarke County farmers, including McCormick, kept large numbers of sheep both for wool and for meat (Figures 12 and 13). With 75 sheep in 1850, McCormick maintained one of the larger flocks in Clarke County.<sup>37</sup> His neighbor Josiah Ware also maintained a large flock sheep—in this case purebred fine-wooled Merinos. Every few days, Ware directed his slave Newman to “kill a mutton” to add to the household larder.<sup>38</sup> Clarke County farmers concentrated on sheep production to an unusual degree by regional standards, and produced a vastly disproportionate share of the total wool clip in the Shenandoah Valley. For example, the 43,000 pounds of wool produced in Clarke County in 1850 was exceeded only by Rockingham County, where the wool clip amounted to some 46,000 pounds.<sup>39</sup> The latter county, however, is more than five times larger than Clarke County.<sup>40</sup>

On farms throughout the Shenandoah Valley, including Clarke County, swine were ubiquitous and hog meat served as a major source of animal protein.<sup>41</sup> Annually, Josiah Ware recorded in his diary, meticulously and in great detail, the number of hogs killed on his farm and their weights.<sup>42</sup> In October of 1854, Alma Hibbard recorded in her diary that hogs ran wild on the farm, feeding on “white oak mast” in nearby woods which, that year, “never was heavier.” No one could tell her how many hogs were running about but it was “between 70 and 100.” In October of each year, pens for the hogs were constructed and they were “called” to the pen for feeding and fattening before the annual slaughter, during which they killed “25 for our family eating and sell as many.” In her diary entry for November 19, a day that fell during a period of “cold and freezing weather,” she described the annual fall slaughter of hogs on the farm:

“This morn a fire was built out by the pig pen, water brought, and a great holiday, though a busy one, followed. Boys, young ladies, and all went to enjoy the sight of what? Why

to see the hogs killed. During the day 48 were slaughtered and hung up. ... I thought I would accept the invitation to go down and see them after the killing part was over, but they looked so unlike our fair white porkers that I thought if I had yet to eat one of them, I would not examine nearer.”<sup>43</sup>

Edward McCormick’s papers do not include direct evidence of hog slaughtering but he kept large numbers of hogs at Clermont and receipts among his papers indicate that he frequently supplemented his farm income by selling various cuts of hog meat—bacon, ham, and pork shoulders (Figures 14, 15, and 16).<sup>44</sup>

The full diversity of agrarian enterprise in Clarke County and at Clermont may be discerned in a statistical profile of farming in the county in 1850, in which all 277 county farmers are placed into quintiles on the basis of the value of their farm assets or levels of farm production relative to other farmers in the county (Table 6).<sup>45</sup> For numerous items relating to the size of value of capital assets critical for the economic activity of farming—the number of improved acres of land, the value of the farm, the value of farm implements and machinery, and the number of draft animals (horses and oxen) on-hand—Edward McCormick’s holdings placed him within the highest quintile. This generalization applies also to each field crop grown by McCormick, and each type of farm animal he kept. With few exceptions, if McCormick participated in the production of a given crop or chose to raise a certain type of livestock, he produced at levels that placed him in the highest quintile. Figures in Table 6 indicate a number of anomalous circumstances pertaining to McCormick’s farming operation at Clermont. He raised milk cows—at ten, a fairly sizeable herd of them—but did not produce any butter, as most farmers who kept milk cows did. Also curious is that although Clermont featured a full complement of various types of farm animals, McCormick did not produce any hay for overwintering them. Only about 50 percent of Clarke County farmers produced hay.

Although census enumerators did not solicit information on chickens or other domesticated birds, chickens and other types of barnyard fowl were common on farms of the county. Alma Hibbard reported that chicken was often served at meals. Also, in the farmyard and around the house where she lived, she noticed large numbers of turkeys, peacocks, ducks, and guinea hens in addition to chickens (Figures 17, 18, and 19).<sup>46</sup>

### **Significance of Diversity of Agrarian Production**

The diversity of agrarian enterprise characteristic of mixed farming facilitated the enhancement or maintenance of soil fertility on Shenandoah Valley farms, including those of Clarke County. Farmers could more readily exploit to their advantage, the biological linkages between plant and animal production. Livestock made large and healthy through eating forages produced large amounts of manure which, saved and accumulated, could be spread onto fields in order to return nutrients to the soil.<sup>47</sup>

Also, farmers integrated clover into their crop rotations. Clover provided nutritious forage for overwintering livestock and as a nitrogen-fixing legume it also increased the yields of subsequently grown field crops such as wheat (or other small cereal grains) and corn.<sup>48</sup> Since many farmers of Clarke County raised clover and produced clover seed, it seems reasonable to infer that they routinely integrated the crop into their rotation schemes. Edward McCormick produced clover seed and sometimes he bought it from others, suggesting that he understood the value of the crop and utilized it accordingly.

Farmers who produced a diverse array of crops and livestock could allow their perceptions of changing market demand for various agricultural products to influence their entrepreneurial decision-making regarding the allocation of farm assets and resources. They could practice what adherents of the English agricultural revolution of the eighteenth century

advised: they could change their commercial emphasis from the production of one crop or type of livestock to another, depending upon changing circumstances of the market. When cattle prices were high, for example, they could attempt to increase the size of their herds. And, if grain prices were low, they could use it to fatten their livestock cheaply instead of selling it at unremunerative prices.

Finally, to borrow language from the world of finance, diversity spread risk. A “diverse portfolio” of crops and livestock made the economy of farm households more resistant to economic disaster brought on by crop failures, such as those caused by insects, diseases, bad weather, or a combination of any of these problems. Farmers of the Shenandoah Valley were known outside of their region for their practice of mixed farming and the economic advantages it provided. An 1867 report issued by the United States Commissioner of Agriculture includes an article entitled “Diversity in Agricultural Productions,” in which mixed farming as practiced in the Shenandoah Valley is recommended to planters of post-Civil War tidewater Virginia, both for its salutary effects on soil fertility, and for the freedom it provided from the financial consequences of relying on one staple crop. In making this latter point, the author wrote that farmers who practice this form of agriculture

“derive no large revenue from the sale of any single item; but, gathering something from numerous sources, the aggregate amounts to a handsome sum ... moreover, should any one crop fail, disaster cannot be expected to befall all ... under the most unfavorable circumstances, some one or more will succeed.”<sup>49</sup>

The diversity of enterprise that characterized farming in the Shenandoah Valley generally and in Clarke County in particular during the late antebellum era extended through the remainder of the nineteenth century and into the twentieth century as well, until the 1940s. Until about the mid-twentieth century, wheat remained important but a sustained period of low and falling prices for the grain led farmers to search for alternative sources of farm revenue. Consequently, in the

late decades of the nineteenth century farmers began to plant apple orchards, develop dairies for the production of milk, and focus on grass farming in order to expand herds of cattle and flocks of sheep (Figures 20 and 21).<sup>50</sup> Also, as elsewhere in the Shenandoah Valley, Clarke County did not escape the mechanical, chemical, and biological revolutions that transformed American agriculture during the early to mid decades of the twentieth century.<sup>51</sup>

### **Ideas for the Future of Clermont**

Diversity of farm enterprise, such as that prevailing in Clarke County and at Clermont during Edward McCormick's era and into the first half or so of the twentieth century, could serve as an guiding principle in current efforts to develop Clermont as a profitable working farm serving public educational purposes. Example abound of numerous nineteenth century enterprises that could be reestablished at Clermont, or of altogether new rural economic activities that could be developed to generate multiple revenue streams, in profitable and environmentally sustainable ways. (Regarding the following discussion, I wish to clarify that I am neither prescribing nor recommending; rather, I am simply offering ideas to facilitate discussion and exploration).

Wheat could be grown for the purpose of supplying a local grist mill with the raw material for producing stone-ground flour; corn or rye could be raised to support a distillery; apples trees could be planted for the establishment of an orchard producing heirloom apples; and groves of trees capable of producing truffles could be planted as well.<sup>52</sup> Hogs could be kept to fatten on offal from a grist mill, or mash from a distillery, or fallen and bruised apples (and I have read that pigs have been trained to find truffles). Range-fed chickens could be kept for the production of eggs. Numerous enterprises would allow the establishment of an on-farm business, the purpose of which would be to retail farm products, preferably those to which value

would have been added. Bee yards for the production of honey and wax could allow sales of various forms of honey—extracted (liquid), comb, granulated (creamy), or chunk (comb with liquid poured over it)—as well as honey produced from various nectars, e.g., clover or buckwheat. Also, beeswax and beeswax-based products such as candles could be sold.

Similarly, a well-managed flock of high quality sheep offers numerous possibilities of sales for the generation of a revenue stream: wool, milk, grass-fed lambs for slaughter, lamb pelts, and lambs for breeding stock. Wool could be sold to spinners as raw or washed fleeces, or it could be processed into yarn or roving to sell to spinners, or processed into blankets for sale. Farm workshops could be held to teach visitors how to wash, card, dye, spin, or weave wool, and an on-farm shop could sell the equipment necessary to do these things. A dairy flock producing milk could serve as the basis for the production of cheese, yogurt, and soaps and lotions. As suggested by the examples discussed above, ideally the particular collection of enterprises chosen to develop a product mix and represent diversified, mixed farming at Clermont, should feature what might be called symbiotic interdependence.

An agricultural operation featuring some of the enterprises described here, or similar ones, offers a host of opportunities for facilitating public understanding of topics such as farming and rural life in modern times as well as in the past, farming practices associated with environmentally sustainable agriculture, issues associated with food and the maintenance of the integrity of the food supply, and the like. Clermont could be operated as a bed and breakfast for working vacations on the farm or what has been referred to more broadly as “agricultural tourism.” An apprenticeship program for teaching techniques of sustainable agriculture in a farming operation based on the practice of general mixed farming could be established. Also, Clermont could serve as a center for the scholarly study of the model of agriculture pursued

there. Annual symposia could be held at Clermont, or perhaps it could serve as a writer's retreat for scholars writing on rural Virginia (or rural cultures elsewhere as well), past and present.

As a working farm, Clermont could serve the local community and the larger region of northern Virginia and Washington, D.C. as well by opening periodically (weekends, one weekend per month, one weekend per season?) to visitors interested in learning about a plethora of topics relating to farming and food. As but one possibility, imagine this: once each season (spring, summer, autumn, and winter) on a Saturday morning, the public would be invited to an educational "workday" on the farm that would begin with a "Clermont breakfast" featuring eggs produced by chickens at Clermont; sausage derived from hogs kept at the farm; pancakes made of buckwheat flour, ground at the Burwell-Morgan mill from buckwheat grown at Clermont, and drizzled with clover honey produced by bees kept at Clermont working a nearby field of clover; and on the side, slices of a Clermont-grown heirloom apple and a slice of cheese made of milk from the Clermont sheep flock. Add some Clermont-produced apple juice and perhaps some apple-butter to spread on bread made of flour processed at Burwell-Morgan mill, from wheat grown at Clermont. After the breakfast, visitors would be free to roam specified areas of the farm where they would find personnel on-hand to describe and explain, say, the seasonal cycle of work routines that apply to a given enterprise or enterprises. While conceding that this example may be somewhat overdrawn, it does, I hope, illustrate that opportunities abound for engaging public audiences in the barns or other outbuildings and fields of Clermont in active learning experiences pertaining to farming and rural life, past and present.

## **Conclusion**

Farmers organize the productive resources of land, labor, and capital in order to create wealth in the form of crops and livestock. When large numbers of farmers of a given region

organize their agricultural resources in generally the same way, they form what cultural geographers call an agricultural system. In Clarke County during the age of grain, which began before the time of Edward McCormick and lasted through his era until well into the twentieth century, the agricultural system that prevailed was general mixed farming with an emphasis on wheat. The diversity of agrarian enterprise characteristic of that system of farming, and which was a defining feature of the agrarian world of Edward McCormick, could be resurrected and revived at Clermont in order that farming principles associated with it could inform and shape the repurposing of the working landscape there in the years ahead. In this way, the desire of Elizabeth Rust Williams for Clermont to be maintained as a profitable working farm that would also serve the community as a resource for public education relating to agriculture and rural life, could be admirably and abundantly fulfilled.



## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>Receipts from Spout Spring Mill for grain from Edw. McCormick, February 28, 1859 to March 12, 1859. Clermont Archives, Berryville, Virginia.

<sup>2</sup>Receipts from Spout Spring Mill.

<sup>3</sup>Edward McCormick's Chronology Report, Clermont Archives, shows McCormick acquiring land and beginning to farm at Clermont in 1848; buying property in Amherst County when he spent time there during the Civil War; and dying in 1870.

<sup>4</sup>See the following items in Edward McCormick's Chronology Report, Clermont Archives: seed wheat purchase from Joseph Ryan, December 12, 1859; paid harvest wage to Mr. Sherman of Hardy County for harvesting, July 1859.

<sup>5</sup>See, for example, McCormick's Policies on Wheat Crop and Grain Stacked, August 30, 1850 to August 30, 1855, with the Washington County Mutual Insurance Company, Granville, New York, Clermont Archives.

<sup>6</sup>For the purposes of this study, the Shenandoah Valley is defined as encompassing nine counties of western Virginia: Frederick, Clarke, Shenandoah, Warren, Rockingham, Page, Augusta, Rockbridge, and Botetourt.

<sup>7</sup>Jack Temple Kirby, "Virginia's Environmental History: A Prospectus," *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 99 (Oct. 1991): 461. A full discussion of wheat farming in the nineteenth-century Shenandoah Valley may be found in Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Staple of Our Country': Wheat in the Regional Farm Economy of the Nineteenth-Century Valley of Virginia," in *After the Backcountry: Rural Life in the Great Valley of Virginia, 1800-1900*, ed. Kenneth E. Koons and Warren R. Hofstra (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 2000), 3-20.

<sup>8</sup>Robert D. Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier: Perspectives on the Early Shenandoah Valley* (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1977), 176.

<sup>9</sup>Percentages calculated from data contained in U.S. Department of State, *Compendium of the Enumeration of the Inhabitants and Statistics of the United States ... From the Returns of the Sixth Census* (Washington, D.C.: Thomas Allen, 1841), and U.S. Census Office, *Statistical View of the United States, ... Being a Compendium of the Seventh Census* (Washington, D.C.: A.O.P. Nicholson, Public Printer, 1854).

<sup>10</sup>"The Harvest," *Valley Farmer, and Gardeners' Monthly Chronicle* 2 (August 1845): 10 (reprinted from the *Martinsburg Gazette*).

<sup>11</sup>Ibid.

<sup>12</sup>Robert Young Conrad, Winchester, Va., to [Dan], 15 August 1855, in Robert Young Conrad Papers, 1850-1944, Virginia Historical Society, Richmond.

<sup>13</sup>"Harvesting Wheat," *Southern Planter* 16 (August 1856): 237.

<sup>14</sup>Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington, D.C.: Carnegie Institute, 1933; reprint, New York: Peter Smith, 1941), 2: 876.

<sup>15</sup>Ibid.

<sup>16</sup>Figures calculated on the basis of data found in *Seventh Census*.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid.

<sup>18</sup>Ibid.

<sup>19</sup>U.S. Census Office, *Report on the Productions of Agriculture as Returned at the Tenth Census (June 1, 1880)* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1885).

<sup>20</sup>Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Clarke County, Virginia, and Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Clarke County, Virginia.

<sup>21</sup>Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manuscript Schedules of Free Inhabitants, Clarke County, Virginia.

<sup>22</sup>Miscellaneous receipts in the Clermont Archives indicate that McCormick's purchases from manufacturers or specialty houses in Baltimore included saddlery, jewelry, woolen clothing, silk clothing accessories, and various household wares.

<sup>23</sup>Bureau of the Census, Seventh Census of the United States, 1850, Manuscript Slave Schedules, Clarke County, Virginia, and Bureau of the Census, Eighth Census of the United States, 1860, Manuscript Slave Schedules, Clarke County, Virginia.

<sup>24</sup>Thorough description and analysis of mechanization in nineteenth-century agriculture may be found in Peter McClelland, *Sowing Modernity: America's First Agricultural Revolution* (Ithaca, New York: Cornell University Press, 1977).

<sup>25</sup>Percentages calculated on the basis of data found in *Seventh Census*. Further discussion of the geographic distribution of slaves in the Shenandoah Valley may be found in Kenneth E. Koons, "'The Colored Laborers Work as Well as When Slaves,': African Americans in the Breadbasket of the Confederacy, 1850-1880," in *Archaeological Perspectives on the American Civil War*," ed. Clarence R. Geier and Stephen R. Potter (Gainesville: University Press of Florida: 2000), 231-236.

<sup>26</sup>The circumstances by which slaveholders of Clarke County owned a disproportionately large numbers of slaves during the late antebellum period (relative to slaveholders elsewhere in the Shenandoah Valley), relates to the settlement history of the region. Peoples of Scots-Irish, German, and English ancestry from Pennsylvania settled in the Shenandoah Valley beginning in the 1730s imparted to the region a distinctive human and cultural geography. These migrants carried with them to the Valley a host of cultural traits characteristic of Pennsylvania or of their particular ethnic groupings, including architecture, foodways, languages or dialects, social customs, religions, and agricultural methods, with the consequence that many historians have viewed the Shenandoah Valley as a socio-economic and cultural extension of Pennsylvania. The idea of the Shenandoah Valley as "greater Pennsylvania" has proven attractive to many, but two factors undermine this interpretation. First, in Old Frederick County east of the Opequon Creek, which became Clarke County in 1836, the large influx of large numbers of English-descended Virginians from the Piedmont and Tidewater regions led to the emergence of a substantially different culture than prevailing in Pennsylvania or in areas of the Shenandoah Valley where Scots-Irish and German settlers dominated. Also, unlike Pennsylvania, the Shenandoah Valley formed a part of the slave South, with the consequence that the region's population included substantial numbers of African-American slaves.

These two points are not unrelated. Planter families of Old Virginia purchased large tracts of land in eastern Frederick County from Lord Fairfax or his agents, for the express purpose of expanding their production of

tobacco. Leading families of eastern Virginia established “quarters” in eastern Frederick County where they brought large numbers of slaves—hundreds in some cases—to serve as laborers for the production of tobacco. Discussions of the distinctive folkways of migrants from Pennsylvania who settled in the Shenandoah Valley may be found in Ulrich B. Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown, 1946), 344; Wayland Fuller Dunaway, “Pennsylvania as an Early Distributing Center of Population,” *Pennsylvania Magazine of History and Biography* 5 (1931): 138 and passim; David Hunter Strother, *Porte Crayon Sampler*, ed. Jim Comstock (Richmond, West Virginia: Jim Comstock, 1974), 92; David Hackett Fischer and James C. Kelly, *Bound Away: Virginia and the Westward Movement* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 2000), 111-128. Other works focusing on the cultural attributes of migrants from eastern Virginia who settled in the area that became Clarke County, the circumstances that facilitated their movement to this eastern section of Old Frederick County, and the animosities that sometimes arose between migrants from Pennsylvania and those from eastern Virginia, include Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 9-11, 28-31, 55-56, and 99; Warren R. Hofstra, *A Separate Place: The Formation of Clarke County* (White Post, Virginia: Clarke County Sesquicentennial Committee, 1986), 3-9 and 34-38; Warren R. Hofstra, *The Planting of New Virginia: Settlement and Landscape in the Shenandoah Valley* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2004), 85-86, and 178-179; James D. Rice, *Nature and History in the Potomac Country: From Hunter-Gatherers to the Age of Jefferson* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 2009), 191-192, 196-197, 200-202, and 223-225; Fischer and Kelly, *Bound Away*, 83-87; Klaus Wust, *The Virginia Germans* (Charlottesville: The University Press of Virginia), 34-35; and Alonzo Thomas Dill, “Sectional Conflict in Colonial Virginia,” *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* 87 (1979): 300-302.

<sup>27</sup>Migrants from Pennsylvania brought the practice of general mixed agriculture with them to the Shenandoah Valley, leading the environmental historian Albert Cowdrey to remark that because the Valley was peopled by farmers “whose agriculture, like their ancestry, is Pennsylvanian,” it formed a region of the South that was “only ambiguously southern.” See Albert E. Cowdrey, *This Land, This South: An Environmental History*, rev. ed. (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1996), 7.

<sup>28</sup>Koons, “The Staple of Our Country,” 4-6.

<sup>29</sup>Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Clarke County, 1850.

<sup>30</sup>Josiah Ware, Springfield Diary, 1830-1870 (Transcript), Clarke County Historical Association, Berryville, Virginia. As one example (there are many), Ware accompanied his slave Bob to exhibit his horse “Byron,” at Leesburg, Virginia, on the March 13, 1831, court day there.

<sup>31</sup>Josiah Ware Springfield Diary. See entries for August 10 and October 3, 1831.

<sup>32</sup>Discussions of cattle drives may be found in Richard K. MacMaster, “The Cattle Trade in Western Virginia, 1760-1830,” in *Appalachian Frontiers: Settlement, Society, and Development in the Preindustrial Era*, ed. Robert D. Mitchell, 127-149 (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 1991); Mitchell, *Commercialism and Frontier*, 147-149; and Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States*, 2: 840.

<sup>33</sup>Alma Hibbard [?] Journal, 1854-1855, in “Special Collections Library, Duke University, Durham, North Carolina.

<sup>34</sup>Koons, “The Staple of Our Country,” 4.

<sup>35</sup>*Seventh Census*.

<sup>36</sup>Ibid. On Shenandoah Valley farmers' traditional use of horses rather than oxen as draft animals, see Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Atlas of Antebellum Southern Agriculture* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1984, 51-52 and 55-56; and James T. Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country: A Geographical Study of Early Southeastern Pennsylvania* (New York: Norton Books, 1972), 156 and 164.

<sup>37</sup>Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Clarke County, 1850.

<sup>38</sup>Josiah Ware, Springfield Diary, passim.

<sup>39</sup>*Seventh Census*.

<sup>40</sup>Charles S. Johnson et al., *Statistical Atlas of Southern Counties: Listing and Analysis of Socio-Economic Indices of 1104 Southern Counties* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941), 245-260.

<sup>41</sup>For discussion of the importance of pork in the southern diet, see Sam Bowers Hilliard, *Hog Meat and Hoecake: Food Supply in the Old South, 1840-1860* (Carbondale: Southern Illinois University Press, 1972).

<sup>42</sup>Josiah Ware, Springfield Diary, passim.

<sup>43</sup>Hibbard Journal.

<sup>44</sup>For examples, see Edw. McCormick Personal Money Ledger, Clermont Archives.

<sup>45</sup>Manuscript Agricultural Schedules, Clarke County, 1850.

<sup>46</sup>Hibbard Journal.

<sup>47</sup>Koons, "The Staple of Our Country," 5-6.

<sup>48</sup>An informative discussion of the qualities of clover for improving soils and for its role in the agricultural revolution of the late eighteenth century in Europe appears in Thorkild Kjaergaard, *The Danish Revolution, 1500-1800: An Ecological Interpretation*, trans. David Hohnen (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994), 59-60 and 67-68. Also see Lemon, *The Best Poor Man's Country*, 159-160, 170-171, and 208, and Thomas Shaw, *Clovers and How to Grow Them* (New York: Orange Judd Co., 1906).

<sup>49</sup>Thomas S. Pleasants, "Diversity in Agricultural Productions," in *Report of the Commissioner of Agriculture for the Year 1867* (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1868), 247-253.

<sup>50</sup>Fuller discussion of these trends may be found in Koons, "The Staple of Our Country," 13-15.

<sup>51</sup>Description and analyses of these revolutions in American agriculture during the first half of the twentieth century may be found in John T. Schlebecker, *Whereby We Thrive: A History of American Agriculture, 1607-1972* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1975); John T. Shover, *First Majority, Last Minority: The Transformation of Rural Life in America* (DeKalb: Northern Illinois University Press, 1976); and R. Douglas Hurt, *American Agriculture: A Brief History* (Ames: Iowa State University Press, 1994).

<sup>52</sup>On the cultivation of truffles in North America for commercial sales, see the following website: <http://garlandtruffles.com/>. On heirloom apples, read about Tom Burford on this website (and others): <http://www.vintagevirginiaapples.com/consultants.htm>.