

The World of an Early Harrison Countian

by Dorothy Davis

The papers of William F. Randolph <sup>1</sup> (1800-1861) show that the people living on the runs and up the hollows in Northwestern Virginia (W.Va.) in the first half of the nineteenth century were not necessarily isolated.

William Randolph was deputy surveyor of Harrison County by 1825 and took the oath for justice in the Harrison County Court September 20, 1841.<sup>2</sup> Even though he lived four miles from Salem on Greenbrier Run in present Doddridge County, Randolph was in and out of Clarksburg constantly to attend court and to buy items of clothing. The following receipts are for purchases at stores in Clarksburg:

Received March 30th 1830 of William F. Randolph three dollars & sixty two & 7/10 cents the amount of his account in full to this date  
Mth.

W. Webster & Co

Received of Mr. Randolph three Dollars and ninety nine cent in full of acct  
1 April 1830  
Simpson & Co  
Clarksburg

Received November 12<sup>th</sup> 1830 of William F. Randolph one Dollar & Twelve Cents the amt. in full for his acct.

J. H. ...  
for W. F. Randolph

Clarksburg March 31<sup>st</sup> 1830  
Recd of Mr. William F. Randolph three Dollars fifteen & 3/4 cents in full of his account  
\$6.15<sup>3/4</sup>  
S. Lloyd & Co

1385  
615  
2000

William Randolph subscribed to The Recorder, published in Westerly, R.I., by the Seventh Day Baptist Church; the Clarksburg Virginian, (1840); and Cooper's Clarksburg Register (1852-57). He ordered from Richmond, Va., Acts of the Virginia Assembly (1852-53).

Received / dollar and 80 cents in full of *Wm F Randolph*  
 for his subscription to the Clarksburg Virginian for the year 1840  
 BENJAMIN DOLBEARE.<sup>4</sup>

William Randolph's son Waldo suffered from epilepsy. When he reached the age of twenty-three, Waldo had seizures frequently and in nature so severe that the father decided to take Waldo to a state institution in Staunton, Va., called West Insane Asylum.<sup>5</sup> William Randolph kept a log of the trip made on horseback:

October 29, 1851	left home for Stanton [sic]	19
30th	to Buckhannon	28 miles
31	to Beverly	30
November 1st	up the valley on the Stanton Road over Cheat Mountains to Bemers on Greenbrier River	35 miles
Nov. 2	left Bemers; crossed Greenbrier River; crossed over Cheat and Alegany [sic] Mountains 19 miles to Heveners in a pleasant valley immediately at the divide of the waters of James River and the South Branch of the Potomac. Then on through Monterey, county seat of Highland County, to Halls on Bull Pasture 9 miles from Monterey; waters of James River.	
3	on to Stanton crossing Shenandoah Mountains and waters of Potomac to Staunton 36 miles. Stopped at the Virginia Hotel, McClungs.	
4th	left Stanton in the afternoon; traveled back through Jennings Gap of the North Mountain to Heiskills Tavern.	18 miles
5th	on back crossing Calf Pasture, Cow Pasture, and Bull Pasture and the Shenandoah Mountains to Heveners.	34 miles
6th	on crossing the Allegany [sic] Mountain, Greenbrier River (in Pocahontas County) and Cheat Mountains to Hamiltons in the Valley.	38 miles
7th	on down the valley passing Beverly at 15 miles taking the Fairmont Road about 30 miles to Philippi.	
	Then on to Clarksburg 23 miles where we <sup>6</sup> arrived on the evening of the 8th and the next day got home in the afternoon. <sup>7</sup>	

The Virginia Assembly passed an act on March 10, 1851, authorizing the formation of the Salem and Harrisville Turnpike Company to construct a road from Salem to Harrisville. The State of Virginia would subscribe three-fifths of the stock needed to pay for the turnpike and private citizens were to buy two-fifths of the stock in the company.<sup>8</sup>

Citizens who subscribed to stock had been told that the road would run from east to west through the center of Doddridge County, which had been formed from Harrison County in 1845, via Greenbrier Run and New Milton to Oxford near the Ritchie County line. William Randolph wrote Virginia Governor Joseph Johnson, a native of Bridgeport in Harrison County, and the Board of Public Works when Randolph learned that some stockholders had other ideas for the route the road would follow:

August 1852

To Joseph Johnson

Dear Sir:

Enclosed is a letter relative to the Salem and Harrisville Turnpike the contents of which I desire the board of public works to consider.

It sometimes is essentially necessary to look timely and close to public interests in order to secure their property.

There is different lines spoken of a part of the way along this contemplated road. In such cases you know feelings for personal interest are liable sometimes to be stronger than the public good. Signs seem to indicate something of the kind here. Amaziah Bee lives on a line which will throw the Turnpike on or near the line of the railroad as located running parallel with or near the same and not far from the Northwestern road several miles, thus throwing these three improvements all near together leaving another route quite as favorable for the road and where it would doubtless be of greater utility to those destitute of any road. Now as Mr. Bee lives on and advocates the former line and as it is believed his brother Ephriam with Daniel Sherwood are using their influence with him in the matter, we deem it prudent to guard against their having any power for controlling the road put in their hands. This I fully believe is the sentiment of quite a majority of the stockholders. Was it the business of the stockholders to elect all the directors, we should have nothing to fear. Hence I feel I am but discharging an act of duty to the public, to the friends of the road generally in addressing the board on the subject.

August 21, 1852

To the Board of Public Works

Gentlemen:

As you may soon be called upon to subscribe stock for the construction of the Salem & Harrisville Turnpike road and appoint officers to represent the interests of the state in that road, I beg leave to recommend to your notice the following named persons as suitable men for said officers: Alexander Lowther, Franklin Maxwell, C. J. Stewart, and being somewhat remote from the most of those interested in the road, Peter F. Randolph. I know not who may write to you on the subject of appointing these officers, but supposing that the appointment must necessarily be dictated somewhat by recommendation, I take the liberty of bringing these men to your notice under various consideration.

First because I wish the [?] and all the affairs of the road to be conducted in such a manner as best to subserve the interests of the whole community.

Secondly I believe that the men named are tolerable, competent and if appointed, will endeavor to do what is right in the matter.

And thirdly, I have had an opportunity of knowing the minds of the people generally along the line of the road. I feel confident that if these men are appointed, it will meet the approbation of a majority of the stockholders.

P.S. If there should be any objection to appointing F. Maxwell and A. Lowther on account of the amount of stock subscribed by them, I would name William Maxwell and Joshua Percy as suitable persons to fill their places.<sup>9</sup>

On September 27, 1852, Randolph was named as a director on behalf of the state in the turnpike company. He sent off many letters to the secretary of the Board of Public Works for information as to duties. He was told on November 5, 1852, that he would attend meetings of stockholders and cast a vote entitled to the state and that a director for the state could not be given any other office in carrying forth the work of the road.<sup>10</sup>

From 1852 to 1856 Randolph attended meetings of stockholders and directors, secured right-of-way for the road, and examined the work done on the road.

## DIRECTOR.

Be it Known, That at a meeting of the BOARD OF PUBLIC WORKS, held at the Capitol, in the City of Richmond, on the *27* day of *September* 18*52*.

*William F. Randolph*  
was appointed a **DIRECTOR** on behalf of the State in the *Salem and Harrisville Turnpike* Company, for one year, or until a successor shall be appointed.

IN TESTIMONY WHEREOF, I have hereunto affixed the Seal of the said Board, and set my hand, as Secretary thereto.

*Thomas H. Serritt*  
*Assistant*  
Secretary of the Board of P. Works.

*Office of the Board of P. Works, 27 Sept. 1852*

*Sir*

William Randolph taught the three R's at home to his oldest children who in turn taught the younger children. In 1850 William Randolph had joined six other men to form a corporation to sell stock for a West Union Academy to be housed in a new two-story, 36x26 foot building on Lot No. 4 in the town of West Union. Randolph, a director of the school, sent his younger children to live in a house on the school grounds and attend classes taught by Azor Estee from Alfred, N.Y. The school was not successful and on August 8, 1856, the directors sold the school property.<sup>12</sup> The same month William Randolph sent his daughter Esther and his sons Silas, Judson, and Preston<sup>13</sup>, in a road wagon<sup>14</sup> to St. Marys, Va. (W.Va.), where the children "thence by steamboat to near Pittsburg, and by railroad, via Cleveland, [traveled] to Alfred [N.Y.] in four days."<sup>15</sup>

October 12, 1856, the Virginia (W.Va) heirs of Samuel Bond, who had died at his home near Potts Grove, Pa., hired William Randolph to look after their interest in the Bond estate.<sup>16</sup> Perhaps visiting the lawyer who administered the Bond estate and lived near Potts Grove, Pa., was an excuse<sup>17</sup> for a trip on the train which now ran through Salem on the Northwestern Virginia Railroad track that would be officially opened to Parkersburg as part of the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad system in July 1857.<sup>18</sup>

1856 to Pennsylvania [and New York and Ohio]

Started from Salem 24 Nov. at 3½ o'clock p.m.; reached Baltimore next day at 10 o'clock a.m.; left Baltimore at 3¼ p.m. laying over a few hours at York; reached Harrisburgh at about 2½ a.m. next morning; Northumberland, Nov. 27 and on to J. McMahan's<sup>19</sup> same day.

Expense of trip to Pa. 1856

Fare to Grafton	\$1.25
2 days car to Baltimore	4.50
Expense in Baltimore	.50
Fare to Harrisburgh	2.50
Expense at York	.75
Expense at Harrisburgh	.75
Fare from Harrisburgh to Junction	.45
Fare from Junction to Northumberland	2.00
at John Moore's for dinner	<u>.20</u>
	\$12.90

From Milton, Pa., towards New York

From Milton on through Williamsport to Elmira, Dec. 1; on to Alfred Dec. 2, where I remained until Dec. 8.

Expense towards N.Y.

Fare to Williamsport	.85
Fare to Elmira	2.25
Expense at Elmira	.75
Fare to Alfred	<u>1.85</u>

\$5.70

Started [home] on Dec. 9; arrived at Cleaveland [Cleveland] at 4½ a.m., Dec. 10. Left Cleaveland at about 4 p.m.; at Wellsville [Ohio] at 6½ p.m. same day. Got on steamboat at about 11 and arrived next day at Wheeling at about 9 a.m. Left Wheeling at 4½ p.m. Dec. 11; got to Grafton at 1½ a.m. Dec. 12; left Grafton at 8¾ a.m. same morning. Got to Salem about 1 p.m.

Expenses [Alfred to Salem]

Fare paid at Alfred to Dunkirk	2.75
From Dunkirk to Cleaveland	3.65
Expense at Cleaveland	.50
From Cleaveland to Wellsville	3.00
Expense at Wellsville	.25
From Wellsville to Wheeling	1.50
Expense at Wheeling	.25
From Wheeling to Grafton	3.50
Expense at Grafton	.25
On to Salem	1.25
	<u>\$16.90</u> <sup>20</sup>

#### FOOTNOTES

1. The William F. Randolph Papers, which came to light in 1982, were the chief source for Historic Sketch No. 22 "Harrison County Loses Land to a New County" published in the Spring 1983 Newsletter of the Harrison County Historical Society.
2. Harrison County, Va. (W.Va.), Court, Order Book 1839-1841, p. 402.
3. William F. Randolph Papers.
4. Ibid.
5. The children of William F. and Mary Davis Randolph were Harriet (1826-1900), Waldo (1827-1863), Esther (1828-1905), Ezra (1830-1854), Lydia (1832-1837), Silas F. (1833-1862), Judson (1834-?), Preston (1836-1919), Jethro (1838-1857), Sarah Jane (1840-1844), Lewis F. (1841-1913), Zipporah E. (1844-?). Susie D. Nicholson, Davis "The Settlers of Salem, West Virginia", p. 31.
6. The plural "we" may refer to Randolph and his horse ( or horses).
7. William F. Randolph Papers.
8. Virginia, General Assembly, Acts 1850-51, pp. 119-20.
9. William F. Randolph to Joseph Johnson and the Virginia Board of Public Works August 1852. William F. Randolph Papers.
10. W. R. Drinkard, secretary of the Virginia Board of Public Works, to William Randolph November 5, 1852. William F. Randolph Papers.
11. Ibid.
12. Susie D. Nicholson, Davis "The Settlers of Salem, West Virginia", p. 26.
13. William Randolph in a letter to Waldo Randolph, Sept. 8, 1856. William F. Randolph Papers.
14. Jephthah Randolph wrote his brother William April 5, 1848, as to how to paint a wagon: "Wm., I do not recollect how much paint it would take for to paint a waggon [sic]. It will be best to get aplenty. Say 2 lbs. real lead, ½ lb. vernishion [varnishing?] red, ¼ lb. litharge: this for the running gears. The bed I would have but little choice whether it was blue or green. Green will cost a little more than blue. Get 1½ lbs. white lead, 2 oz. Prucian [sprucian] blue. This will make a blue and if you make it green, get 1 ox. crome [sic] yellow to add to the white lead and prucian blue. This will make a green. If you want the iron black, get a little lamp black. I suppose it will take a half gallon of oil for all.....For the waggon cover use 3 quarts linceed [sic] oil, ¼ lb. litharge, ¼ lb. Spanish brown, ½ gallon rye flower [sic], 2 oz. beeswax." William F. Randolph Papers.
15. The Salem Herald, Industrial & Historical Review of Salem, p. 65. Preston Randolph finished school in Alfred and "the summer of 1861, during the Lincoln campaign, he traveled through the New England States canvassing, closing this work at Portland, Maine, when the Prince of Wales, now King Edward VI, embarked for England...he [Preston Randolph] went to Quincy, Pa., near Gettysburg and took charge of Quincy Academy, but his work there was closed by the invasion of Lee's army. During the boom of cannons, he started home afoot, was captured and held a prisoner one night by Southern scouts. At Cumberland, Md., he found trains running and soon reached home after an absence of more than seven years." Ibid. It was in the attic of Preston's house in Salem where the box containing the William F. Randolph papers sat for almost one hundred years.

16. William F. Randolph Papers.
17. The estate of Samuel Bond was settled January 26, 1860, the same day the heirs dismissed William F. Randolph as their attorney. William F. Randolph Papers.
18. William P. Smith, The Book of the Great Railway Celebration of 1857.
19. McMahan was the attorney who was executor of the Samuel Bond estate.
20. William F. Randolph Papers.

#### BIBLIOGRAPHY

Harrison County, Va. (W. Va.). Court. Order Book 1839-1841, p. 402

Nicholson, Susie. Davis "The Settlers of Salem, West Virginia; (Their Ancestors and Some of Their Descendants). Revised and enlarged. Strasburg, Ohio: Gordon Printing, 1979.

William F. Randolph Papers. These papers were deposited in 1983 in the West Virginia and Regional History Collection, Colson Hall, West Virginia University, Morgantown, W. Va. 26506

The Salem Herald, Salem, W. Va. Historical and Industrial Review of Salem, W. Va., 1905.

Smith, William Prescott. The Book of the Great Railway Celebration of 1857. New York. D. Appleton & Co., 1858.

Virginia. General Assembly. Acts of the General Assembly 1850-51. Richmond, Va.: William Ritchie, 1851.