

Millbrook Chain of Title

March 2007

Paula S. Reed & Assoc.

Stone house, 2 story, original 3 bay w/d/w, now 5 bay center door (ca.1820), openings w/ flat jack arches ca.1815, rear brick wing ca.1880

1734 grant to John Vanmeter for 1,786 acres along Vanmeter's Marsh (Grant Book 15, page 327).

Frederick County (Virginia) Will Book 1, page 52

John Vanmeter

1745

John Vanmeter divided the "plantation I now live on" (the John Vanmeter house is believed to be a stone house in Berkeley Co. known as the Orndorff House on Vanmeter Marsh) among his many children, approximately 200 acres to each.

To the heirs of his daughter Sarah, wife of James Davis, he gave 220 acres.

FC DB 3, page 332

9 July 1754

To: Jacob Vanmeter

From: James Davis

220 acres by Lease & Release, £60 for the Release. "Beginning at the first beginning of the entire tract." **[from the grant description this appears to be the correct parcel but we do not have the survey plat of this tract so we don't know exactly where the beginning of the survey was – that would confirm if this is the correct parcel]**

FC DB 10, page 306

3 June 1764

To: Thomas Thornborough

From: Jacob Vanmeter, and Lettis his wife

16 acres of the 220-acre Davis parcel, "devised by Will to the Heirs of James Davis by John Vanmeter the Older and from said Davis Conveyed to said Vanmeter"

"Beginning at a Hickory and white Oak corner to John Vanmeter's old Originall Tract Standing between where the said Thornberry now lives and the Marsh known by the name of Vanmeters Marsh and Running thence across the Marsh [north & west] to a Locust stake thence [north & east] to a stake near a marked white Oake Bush standing on the line between John Willson and said Vanmetre then with Willisons line [north & east] a Cross

the Marsh to a Locust Bush corner to Wilson standing on the Point of a Hill thence [south & west] to the Beginning.”

The subject 16 acres appears to include the mill seat (though not mentioned) and probably the parcel on which the house now stands.

Thornburg also purchased in 1764, 200 acres from Thomas Swearingen of his adjoining patent (400 acres N.N. GB H, page 430). [this later becomes the McQuilkin property]

Berkeley County WB 2, page 44

Thomas Thornborough

Written 30 July 1787, probated 20 October 1789

Asked that all his property be sold at public sale.

Witnessed by Jacob Williamson, Thomas Clawson, John Smith, and Peter Williamson. Thomas Turner and Joseph Swearingen as executors.

BC DB 13, page 160

30 August 1794

To: Josiah Thornborough

From: William Lemen and John Thornborough, administrators of Thomas Thornborough the Elder (Turner and Swearingen “refusing to act”)

16 acres for £600, same description as the deed from Jacob Vanmeter.

On 30 August 1794, Josiah Thornborough petitioned the Berkeley Co. Court to erect a mill on the 16-acre tract. (Billmyer Mill vertical file No. S-10, BCHS)

It does not seem likely that the subject Millbrook house was constructed as the Thornburg mansion house was (still is?) located across the road in the NE corner of the intersection with Turner Road.

BC DB 13, page 104

24 March 1795

To: John Roarer (Rohrer) of Washington County, Maryland

From: Josiah Thorburgh

15 acres for £1,280, indicating improvements – certainly the mill was constructed.

“Beginning at a [whide?] a Corner to Peter Staley & Running [north & W] crossing the Marsh to a Locust stake thence [north & east] to marked white Oak thence with Wilsons Line [north & east] crossing the Mill race to a stake in the road thence along the road [south & east] to a stake in the road and in John Thorburghs Line thence with his Line [south & west] to the beginning.”

BC DB ?, page 17

27 June 1796

To: Christopher Orndorff

From: John Roarer (signed John Rohrer) and Catharine his wife, of Berkeley County, Virginia

15 acres for £2,200.

1798 House and Slave tax, Christopher Orendorf was assessed for one house in the “country” valued at \$630. According to Don Wood, this was the stone house originally belonging to John Vanmeter and described in the 1786 Clark survey as the Adam Stephen house: “one two story stone house with two chimneys and cellar, 34 by 24, the two lower floors laid & lath’d below, and very few glass in the windows.” If this is true, then the Millbrook house was probably not yet standing and likely dates from the Billmyer occupancy (see below).

Jefferson County DB 3, page 205

6 April 1805

To: Martin Billmyer of Washington County, Maryland

From: Christopher Orndoff [sic] and Mary his wife of Jefferson County, Virginia

\$7,000 for a total of 135 acres: the 15-acre parcel bought from Rohrer, “except a small part of this lot that was surveyed off for a school house that part I gave away and must be held for that...” and for 120 acres “bought by Christopher Orndoff [sic] from John [?] and [?] Willson Excs for John Willsons Estate decd...November 24, 1796...” adjoining John Thornburgh, Thomas Turner and others. (see attached annotated plat)

The 1790 U.S. Population census record for Washington County, Maryland does list a Martin Billmire [1] with six others in his household. He was listed nearby Frederick Nicodemus who owned a mill southeast of Boonsboro. The Orendorffs were also a prominent Washington County milling family, as were the Rohrers, and it seems likely that the connections here were not random (see attached notes on Orendorff Mill near Sharpsburg).

The 1800 census listed Martin Billmire [1] (over 45) and Martin Billmire Jr. [2] (26-44) in separate households in Lower Antietam Hundred (Boonsboro, Sharpsburg, Pleasant Valley).

Martin Billmyer [2], born Dec. 22, 1767, married Susanna Nicodemus. Martin and Susanna Billmyer’s first three children were born in Maryland; see the 1850 census record in which Solomon, Martin [3], and Judith, several other children of Martin Billmyer [2] indicated that they were born in Maryland. Thus it appears that Martin Billmyer [2] came from Maryland and settled ca.1805 on Rocky Marsh Run (Vanneter’s Marsh).

1809 Charles Varlé map shows an unnamed grist mill on Vanmetre's Marsh at the road crossing (now called Billmyer's Mill Road).

1810 census record listed Martin Bilmire [2], still in the 26-44 age range, in the Terrapin Neck neighborhood (same page as Jacob Williamson – Mason Farm, and Solomon Ropp – Fulk/Tabler Farm). His large household included nine other males, five of them young children, eight females (five young), and no slaves.

1814 List of Grist Mills and Saw mills for Jefferson County did not include a Billmyer mill. "A List of Mills in Jefferson County...from 1st Augst 1819 to 1st August 1820" did include Martin Billmires mill on Vanmetre's Marsh, producing 2,500 Bbls of flour.

1820 census record listed Martin Billmire [2], a farmer over the age of 45 with ten other males, three under the age of 16, a wife and five other females, and no slaves. Five in the household were occupied in agriculture and two in manufacture (milling).

BC DB 52, page 508

7 May 1849

To: Solomon Bilmyer

From: Martin Bilmyer [3]

\$7,000 for "one third of a track of about 143 acres of land lying in the Countys of Berkeley & Jefferson, adjoining the lands of McQuilkin, Williamson, Hill & Miller which decended [sic] from Martin Bilmyer [2] Decd also one half of a track of about sixty seven acres of land in Berkeley & Jefferson Countys, which was conveyed to the said Martin & Solomon Billmyer by Thomas N. Lemon and also all his Interest in the personal property now held by the said Martin & Solomon Bilmyer jointly hereby his life estate in three acres in Berkeley & three acres in Jefferson, of the track of land purchased of Thomas N. Lemon..."

An August 1849 "Platt & Report of Mr. Solomon Bilmyer's Land" showed that the total acreage then owned by Solomon Billmyer was approximately 216 acres (see attached plat; Surveyor's Record No. 8, Berkeley Co., in Billmyer's Mill vertical file No.S-10, BCHS).

Martin [3] and Solomon Billmyer are brothers, sons of Martin Billmyer [2], and Thomas N. Lemen was married to Margaret Billmyer. The 1820 census indicates there were possibly as many as 15 siblings in the Martin Billmyer [2] household.

[Martin, Jr. married Sally Greenwood, David m. Ellen Spong; Solomon, unmarried; John J. m. Eliza Williamson Lemen; James; Margaret m. Thomas Newton Lemen; Esther m. Willoughby Newton Lemen; Mary m. Eliza Baker; Elizabeth m. unknown Noll; Susan m. William McQuilkin (newspaper clipping, n.d., Billmyer Mill file S-10, BCHS)]

1850 census record listed Solomon Billmire, a farmer age 45, with \$29,000 in real estate. In his household was his brother Martin Billmire [3], age 47, and sister (?) Judith Coontz, age 52 (Solomon, Martin, and Judith all born in Maryland), her daughter Caroline Coontz, age 23, and David Weaver, a laborer.

1860 census record listed Solomon Billmyer, age 55, a farmer with \$70,000 in real estate and \$10,000 in personal property – keeping in mind that Billmyer owned a mill. In his household were Emily Coontz, age 26, and Hortense Coontz, age 24, neither with an occupation listed, and Harrison Bell, age 33, a miller. His near neighbors included Jacob Fulk (Fulk/Tabler Farm) and Ann K. Robinson (Fruit Hill).

Solomon Billmyer died 29 June 1864 at the age of 59. He was born in 1805. He left no will (in fact there were no Billmyer wills at all in the 19th century). (Tombstone Inscriptions of Jefferson County, 1981, Beeline Chapter, DAR)

DB 6, page 166

12 October 1865

To: Willoughby N. & Esther Lemen

From: D.A. Hill & Jane his wife, James & Eliz. Billmyer, Catherine V. Billmyer, Anna M. Billmyer, Juwayne Koontz, Emily Koontz, Hortensia Koontz, Martin Billmyer, David F. Billmyer, Milton J. Billmyer, John T. Billmyer, William T. Lemen, Susan M. Lemen, Jacob W. Billmyer, Robert L. Billmyer, Elias Baker & Mary A. his wife, David Billmyer, Margaret Lemen

113 acres for \$9,842.91, “assigned [Willoughby & Esther Lemen] in the Division of the lands of Solomon Billmyer dec...” between the heirs of Solomon Billmyer described as his brothers and sisters and their descendents.

Except the “Cooper Shop” assigned to Juwayne Koontz and 1 ½ acres for the school house.

Willoughby N. Lemen was born in 1844 and died 19 July 1913 without a will. It appears, however, according to David Lemen’s will (see below) that the “Mill Farm” passed to his son (?) David Lemen.

WB D, page 426

David Lemen

Written 19 September 1918, probated 22 September 1919

David Lemen owned several farms which he instructed his executor (George Beltzhoover) to “take charge” of and manage, held in trust until the youngest child turned 21. The Mill Farm and Shady Side Farm to be “kept in the family by my lineal descendants so long a practicable.”

“Mill Farm” ~ 2 miles northwest of Shepherdstown, 121 acres, “inherited from my father.”

“Shady-Side” farm, ~ 2 miles west of Shepherdstown, 260 acres.

Orchard Farm near Bunker Hill in Berkeley County.

By this will, Barbara (Lemen) Morrow was given $\frac{1}{4}$ interest in the Mill Farm. On March 8 & 12, 1956, the other $\frac{3}{4}$ interest in the farm was conveyed to Henry W. Morrow by Ethel B. Lemen Downs & Judith A. Downs, and Elizabeth B. Dudrow, Daniel D. Dutrow, and Margaret L. Bransford. (ref in DB 212, page 105)

DB 212, page 105

18 May 1956

To: H.H. Zand, trustee for Steven & Matthew Williams

From: Henry and Barbara Morrow

113 acres, 3 roods, 15 poles for \$9,375 – appears to be security for a mortgage (DB 212, page 101).

Beginning at a stone corner to Hill, in a road then S & W to corner of Hill and John Billmyers heirs, then S & W to stake in road and corner to Joseph Randall, then N & E to stake, then N & E to stake, then, S & E to Millers line, then N & W to stone, then S & E to corner Miller, then S & E to stake in stone fence on west side of Shepherdstown Road, then along road N & E to stake, then N & W to corner Huyett, then N & W to stone, then N & W to stake in middle of road, then N & W to stake near and east of Mill, corner Martin Billmyer lot, line of Mill lot, then S & W to stake, then N & W middle of road passing in front of Mill, then corner Mill lot, S & W to Hill then to beginning.

DB 257, page 337

14 December 1962

To: Henry & Barbara Morrow

From: H.H. Zand, trustee

Two tracts with improvements commonly called Millbrook Farm

1) 113 acres, 3 rood, 15 poles partly in Jefferson Co. and partly in Berkeley Co.

2) 9.15 acres in Berkeley Co.

DB 671, page 94

9 February 1990

To: Henry W. Morrow, Jr.

From: Henry W. & Barbara L. Morrow

For value received and grantee’s assuming complete responsibility for the maintenance, care and upkeep of the property, partly in Opequon District, Berkeley Co., “Millbrook Farm” 91.934 acres, excepting outsales and subject to life estate. (see attached plat)