

The Cralle/Brann Farm

By Jim Scott

February 2025

[The original draft was titled “The Brann Farm”. Since then, I’ve decided that a much more accurate and objective title is “The Cralle/Brann Farm”. As you will see, the first five owners of the property were Cralles. My original title was biased by the fact that the farm has been owned by Branns since before I was born.]

When I was a child in the 1940s, my parents often took my sisters and me on a trip to visit our maternal grandmother, Nannie Maude Cralle Brann (1874-1956). Her home was the Cralle/Brann family farm, located at 1849 Gibeon Road, in Callao, Virginia 22345.

For those who haven’t been there already, I’ll help orient you by describing the location of the farm. (The first four maps attached will help.) The nearest town, actually an “unincorporated community”, is Village, Virginia. Village is near the center of the Virginia peninsula known as the Northern Neck, which is bounded on the southwest by the Rappahannock River and on the northeast by the Potomac River. Callao, another unincorporated community, is just to the east and is technically the address of the farm.

U. S. Route 360, also known as Richmond Road, runs east-west through Village. Gibeon Road goes NNE from Village about 1.8 miles to the location of Gibeon Baptist Church, which was the Brann family’s church home. The church is on the east side of Gibeon Road, immediately next to the road. Directly across the road from the church is the entrance to the Brann farm, with a narrow straight road about 900 feet long leading up to the farm house.

This is my attempt to record as much as I could learn about the early history of the farm. As you will see, I had only limited success. But I’ve thrown in some more recent history as well.

I’ll start with my memories of the farm.

I never met my grandfather, John William (“John Will”) Brann (1872-1940), because he had died two years before I was born. Besides my grandmother, the other residents at the farm in the 1940s were Franklin Brann, a first cousin of John Will, and Franklin’s son Danny Brann. Franklin helped with the farming.

John Will and Maude's children had long since left the farm to pursue lives and careers of their own. They were:

- Susie Brann (1895-1987)
- Bernard Brann (1897-1981)
- William Cralle Brann (1901-1986)
- Raymond Ellis Brann (1903?-1991)
- Ruth Annette Brann (1919-2017) – my mother

My mother described John Will, her father, with admiration:

“My father . . . was a resourceful man. First, he was an educator. He taught a Sunday School class and wanted the teenaged boys to know about the world, so he took them to places like Richmond, the Capitol Building, and the Penitentiary. Mother and I would go with them. He also found a man who came to teach them how to sing. He wanted his own children to go to college and he found a way to do it. It was not easy in the teen years of the 1900s as there had been World War I and the Depression was looming.

“John Will was a pillar of the community. He looked after the ones less fortunate, giving them food, money and arranging for medical care. He wanted the best for our community. When I was little, Gibeon Road was a dirt road and when it rained, most vehicles got stuck, including our school bus. My father made endless trips to Heathsville by himself to convince the Highway Department that our neighborhood needed a paved road. Finally, they paved the road as far as Gibeon Church - just past our driveway.”



Maude and John Will Brann in 1933

It was indeed very much a farm in the 1940s; my sisters and I remember particularly the pigs and the chickens, who wandered around in true free-range fashion. My father, Robert J. Scott, once showed us how to hypnotize a chicken. He picked up a hen that had been wandering in the farm lane. With his hands he held the hen's wings against her body and tucked her head under one of her wings. Then he rocked her from side to side for a short time. When he put her back down on the dirt road, she continued to sleep with her head under her wing.

My mother told this story about one of the pigs: *"Daddy had a litter of pigs and he gave the runt to Susie. He did not think the pig would amount to much, but Susie loved him and he thrived and grew into a healthy, loving pig. In those days Gibeon [the Baptist church across Gibeon Road] did not have screens on the windows and doors. Susie played the church organ and she was playing away for the Sunday service. The pig came in and went up the aisle going 'Oink! Oink!' and went straight to Susie. I don't remember how Susie said the congregation reacted, but I imagine that was the end of the service!"*

There was a working windmill that pumped water for the house. One time when my family arrived for a visit, there was a sign on the bathroom door saying "Out of order till the wind do blow". The long lane, or driveway, from the Gibeon Road to the house was where my father taught me to ride a bicycle.



The Brann farm, seen from the church in 2024



Gibeon Baptist Church in 2024

Much of the following information, including the size of the farm and the identities of the first three owners, comes from “Bicentennial Farms”, published in 1985 by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation, to celebrate each Virginia farm “owned continuously by the same family for 200 years or more”. A copy is attached.

In 1985, and probably when I first visited it in the 1940s, the farm was 150 acres, although it was larger when it was purchased in 1711. Today the property where the farm house stands is a little over two acres, but another 118-acre parcel of the original farm is owned by Bill Perry Brann.

The Cralle/Brann farm is in the Lottsburg District of Northumberland County. It was originally known as “Fruit Plain”.

The farm was purchased in 1711 by Captain John Cralle (1724-78), who died while serving as sergeant in Captain Thomas Gaskin's company of the 5th Virginia Regiment Continental Line.

The second owner was his son Samuel Cralle (1761-1829), who was ensign and 2nd lieutenant of Militia during the Revolutionary War. Later he was major in the 37th Regiment, Virginia Militia. He also served in several County offices, including sheriff and coroner.

The third owner was Samuel's son Darius Griffin Cralle (1796-1848), who was a private in Captain William Henderson's company of artillery, 37th Regiment, Virginia Militia.

Thanks to a pedigree chart provided by Hilary G. Derby, Ph.D., of the Northumberland County Historical Society, we can deduce that the entire chain of ownership was as follows:

John Cralle (1724-78)
Samuel Cralle (1761-1829)
Darius Griffin Cralle (1796-1848)
Andrew Broadus Cralle (1841-1900)
Nannie Maude Cralle (1874-1956)
John William "John Will" Brann (1872-1940)*
Raymond Ellis Brann (1903-1991)
William "Bill Perry" Brann
Jeffery "Jeff" Brann

The entire six-page pedigree chart from the county historical society is attached. It's described as a "straight line working pedigree chart", showing no children except each "straight line" child. I've used a fat black arrow to indicate each of the owners listed above. Because the chart continues from one page to another, some indicated names appear twice.

(The marriage date for Andrew Broadus Cralle, given as February 11, 1827, is definitely incorrect. The Scott / Brann family tree drawn by my father in 1971 lists the date of Andrew's marriage at February 11, 1874. This seems totally consistent with his daughter Nannie Maude Cralle's birth date of December 4, 1874.)

Unfortunately, the county historical society produced only this genealogical data, and no information about the farm itself.

I was hoping to learn something about the boundaries of the original Fruit Plain farm, but I've found nothing. However, there is a Fruit Plain Road that

* I've been unable to determine whether John Will was ever actually the owner of the farm. Did he assume ownership by virtue of his marriage to Nannie Maude? In any case, it seems clear that when he died in 1940, she would have resumed (or continued) her ownership.

extends north and west from the location of the current farm, toward Hyacinth, VA. Perhaps today's Fruit Plain Road offers clues to the extent of the original farm; then again, perhaps it was just a road leading to the farm. A map is attached, with Fruit Plane Road marked in yellow. For what it's worth, the length of Fruit Plain Road as shown is about 2.5 miles.

Late in her life, when she visited the farm and Gibeon church for what would be the last time, Mother told me an anecdote from her childhood. She said that sometimes she and one or more friends would head off through the woods, away from the farm, to visit the spot where three counties came together. They enjoyed being able to stand in three counties at once! I've determined where that spot is. About 0.68 miles WSW of the farm, in an area known as "Marshy Swamp", three counties converge at one point (beyond the farm property). Northumberland County, which includes the Cralle/Brann farm and Gibeon Baptist Church, is to the northeast of this point. Westmoreland County is to the northwest. And Richmond County is to the south. A satellite-view map is attached.

The farm house that I knew as a child was not the first on the Cralle/Brann farm. It's believed that it was built around the turn of the century, i.e., about 1900. Before that, John Will and Maude lived in a house on the other side of Gibeon Road. I don't have any information about any houses on the farm before those two.

The old farm house that I knew burned in 1990. Jeff Brann, the current owner, built the present home in 2016. The barn is original, built in the 1930s, but has been repaired by local Amish workers. Bill Perry Brann put a new roof on the barn after Isabelle blew the old one off in 2003. Jeff painted the barn red with the help of a motorized lift and power paint sprayer.

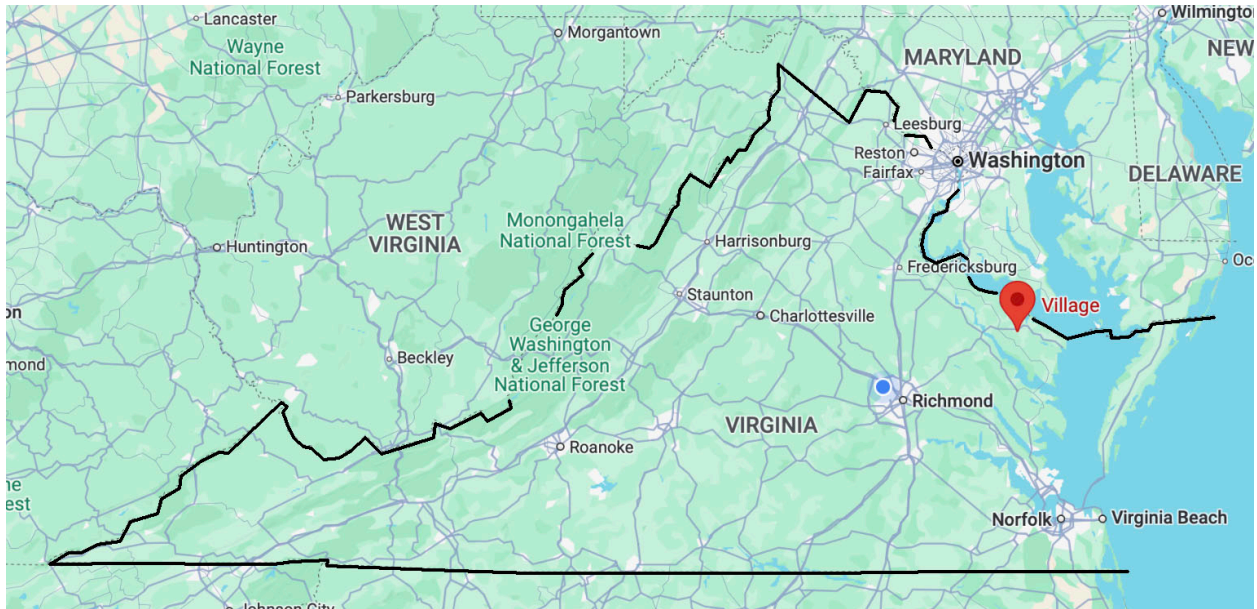
Current information about the farm is available in the Northumberland County, VA Real Estate record. A three-page copy is attached.

Appendices

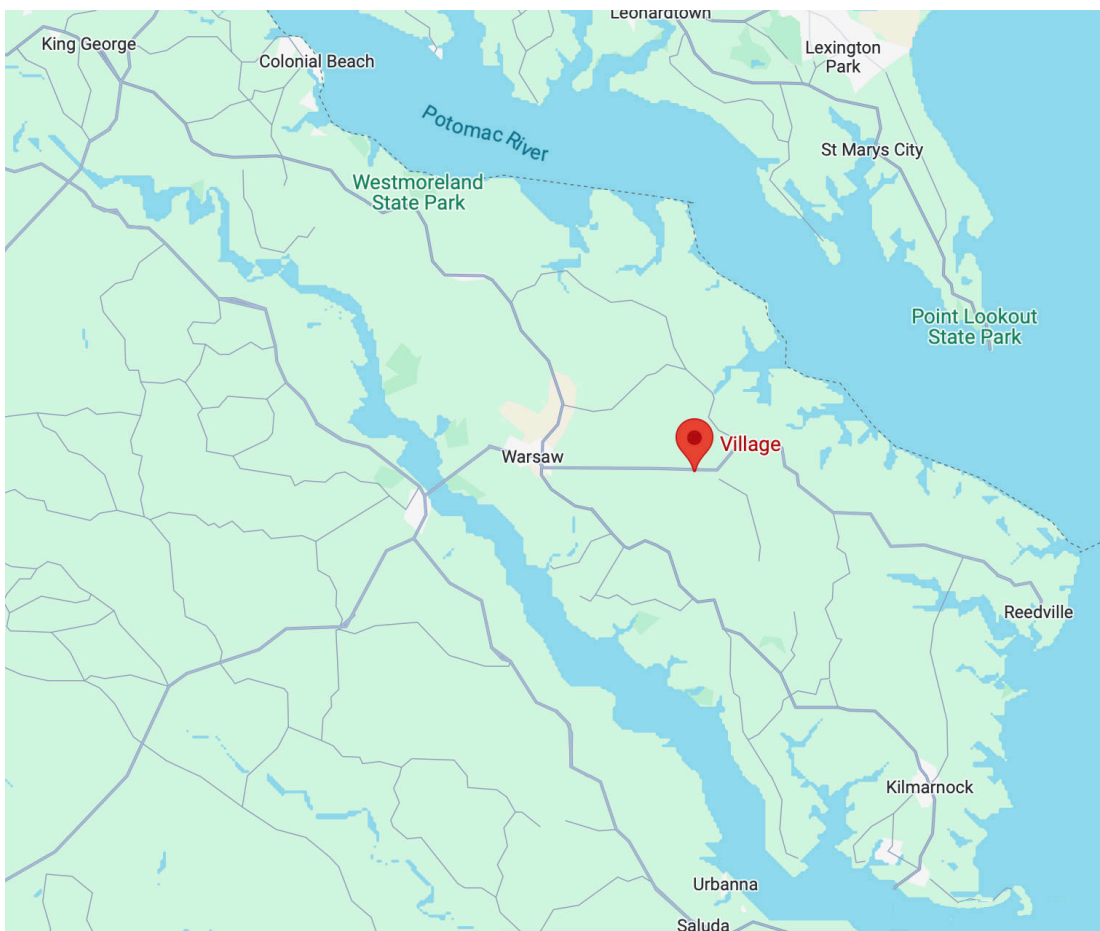
The following appendices are attached:

1. Map of Virginia, showing the location of Village, Virginia

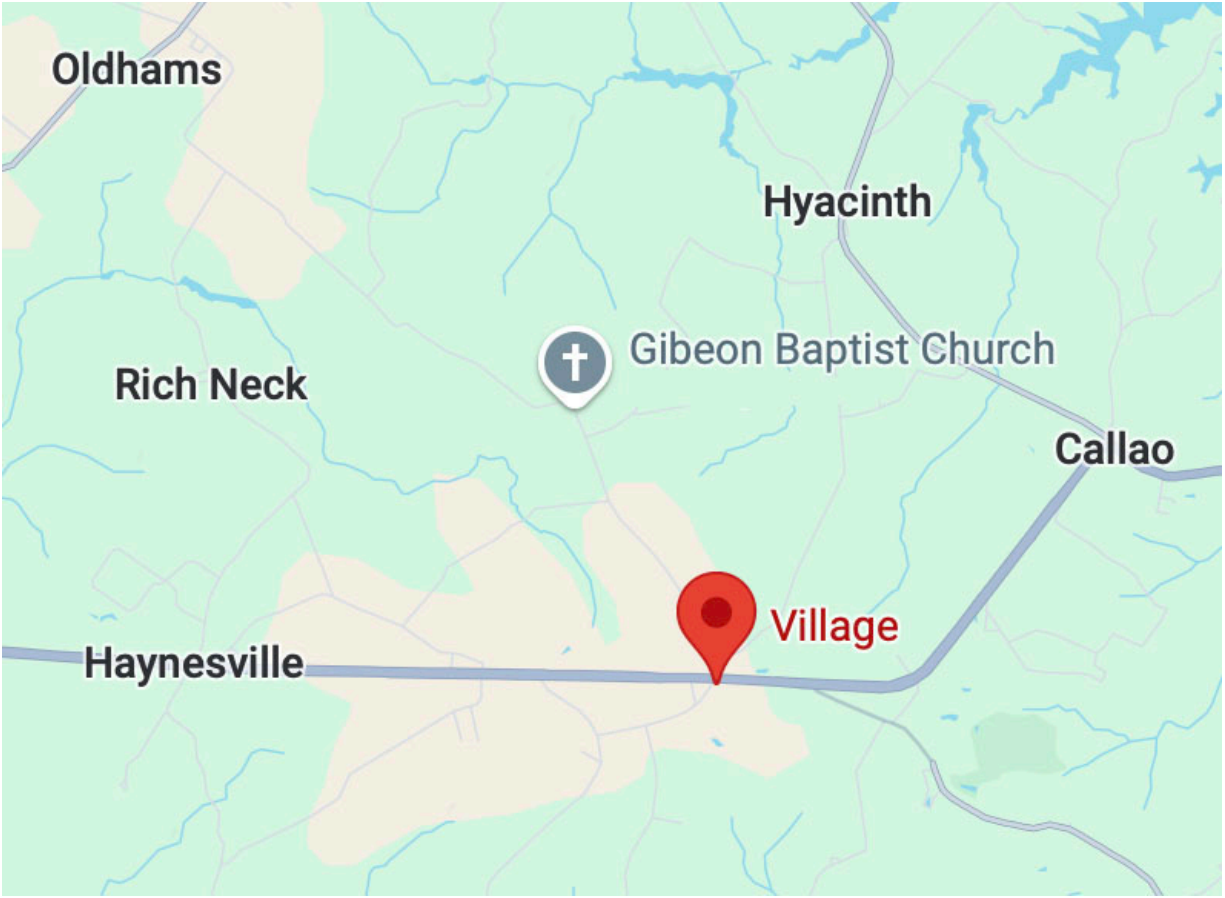
2. Map of the Northern Neck peninsula
3. Map showing the relative locations of Village, Callao, Hyacinth, and Gibeon Baptist Church
4. Map of Gibeon Road, in relation to Village, Gibeon Baptist Church, and the Brann Farm
5. Map showing the location of Fruit Plain Road
6. Satellite view of the convergence of three counties
7. Brann / Cralle pedigree chart, six pages (I assume that "Start Brann" is just a tag for the starting point of the chart, and is not meant to suggest that a person named "Start Brann" exists.)
8. "Bicentennial Farms" (1985), four pages including scan of news article
9. Northumberland County property record for the Brann farm, three pages



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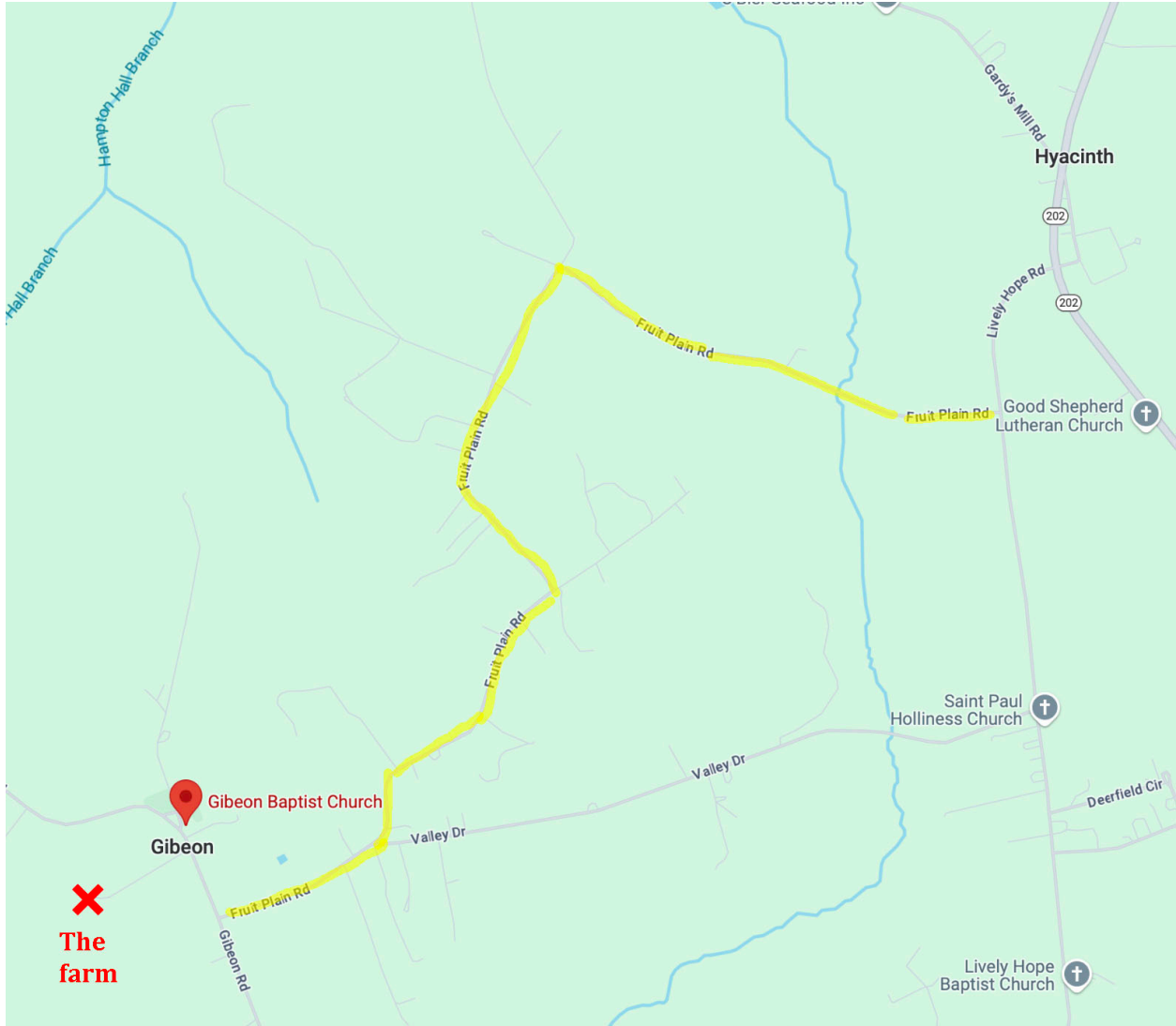
2. Map of the Northern Neck peninsula



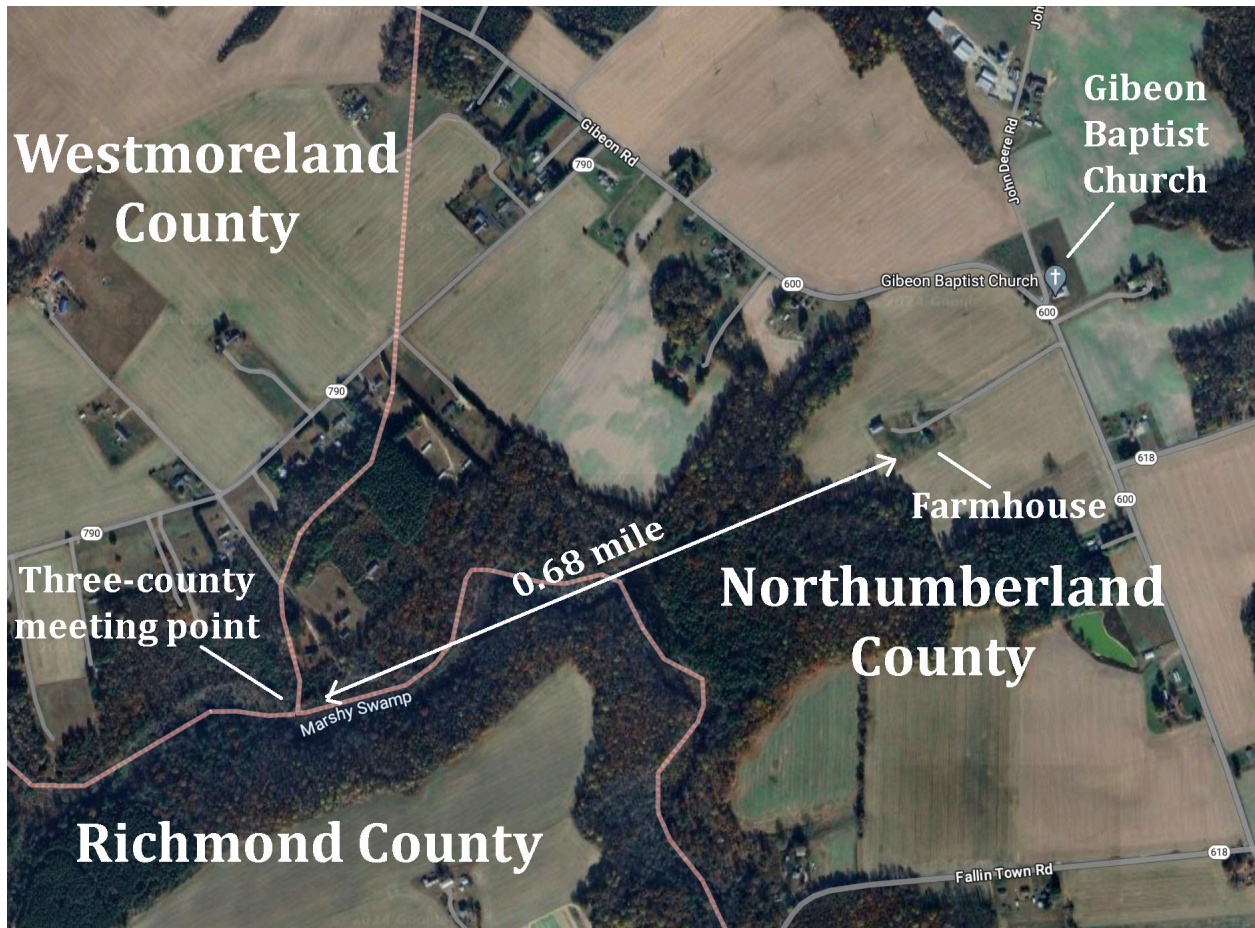
3. Map showing the relative locations of Village, Callao, Hyacinth, and Gibeon Baptist Church



4. Map of Gibeon Road, in relation to Village, Gibeon Baptist Church, and the Brann Farm (upper left)

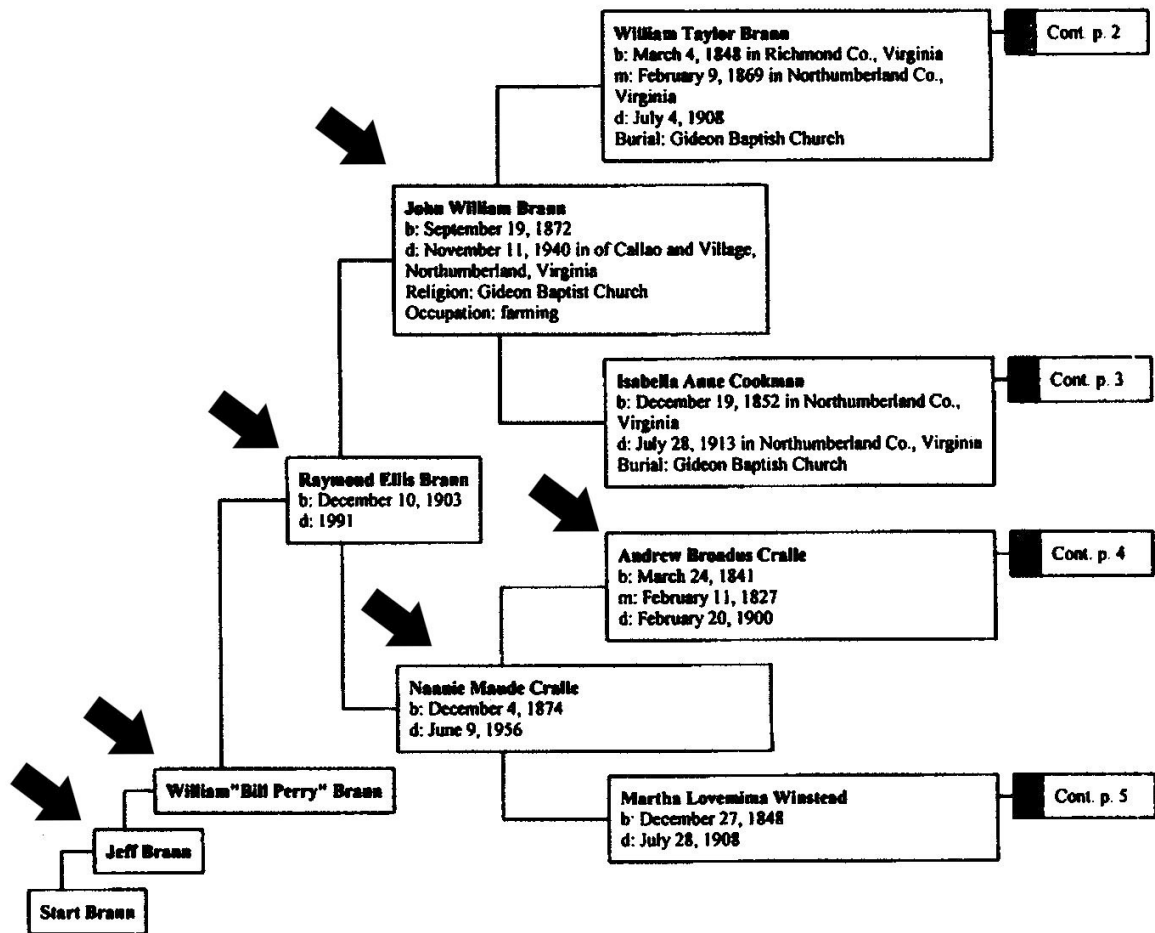


5. Map showing the location of Fruit Plain Road (in yellow)

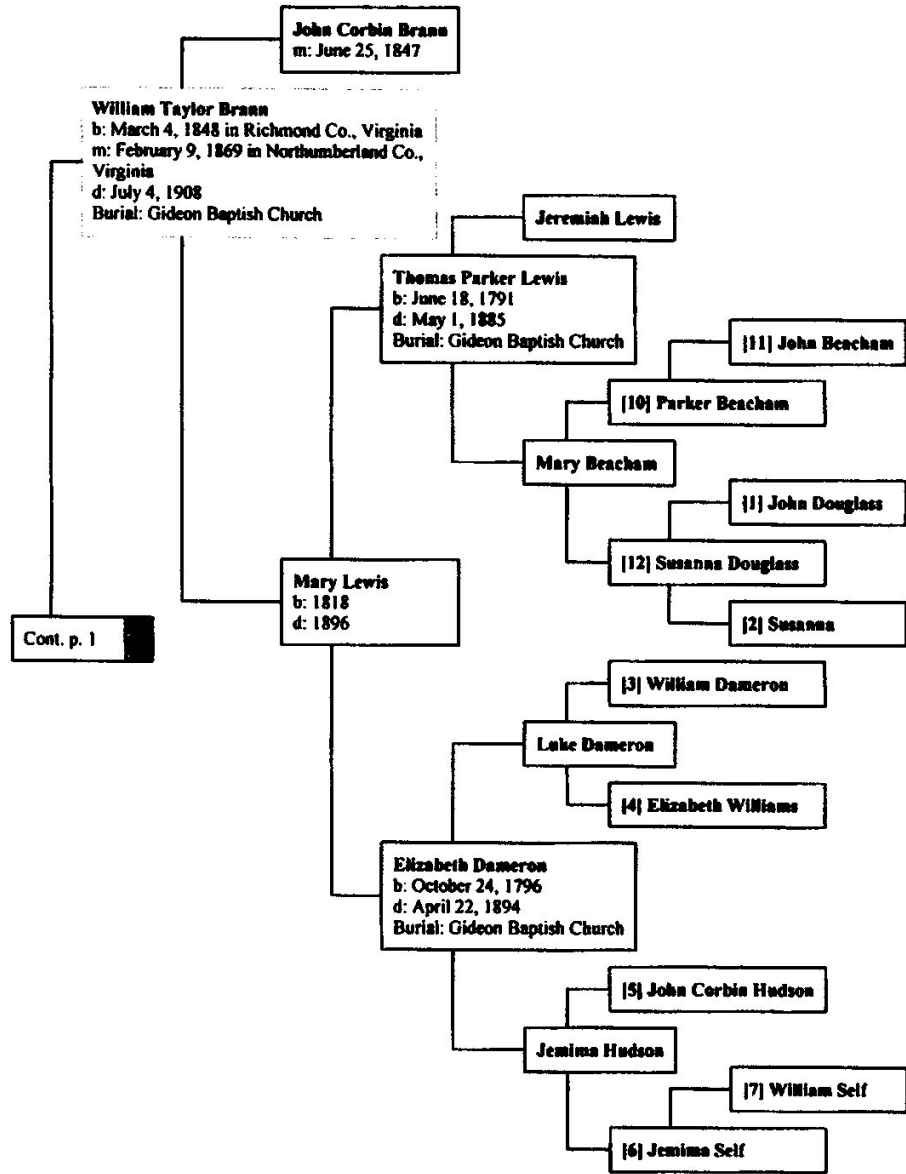


6. Satellite view of the convergence of three counties

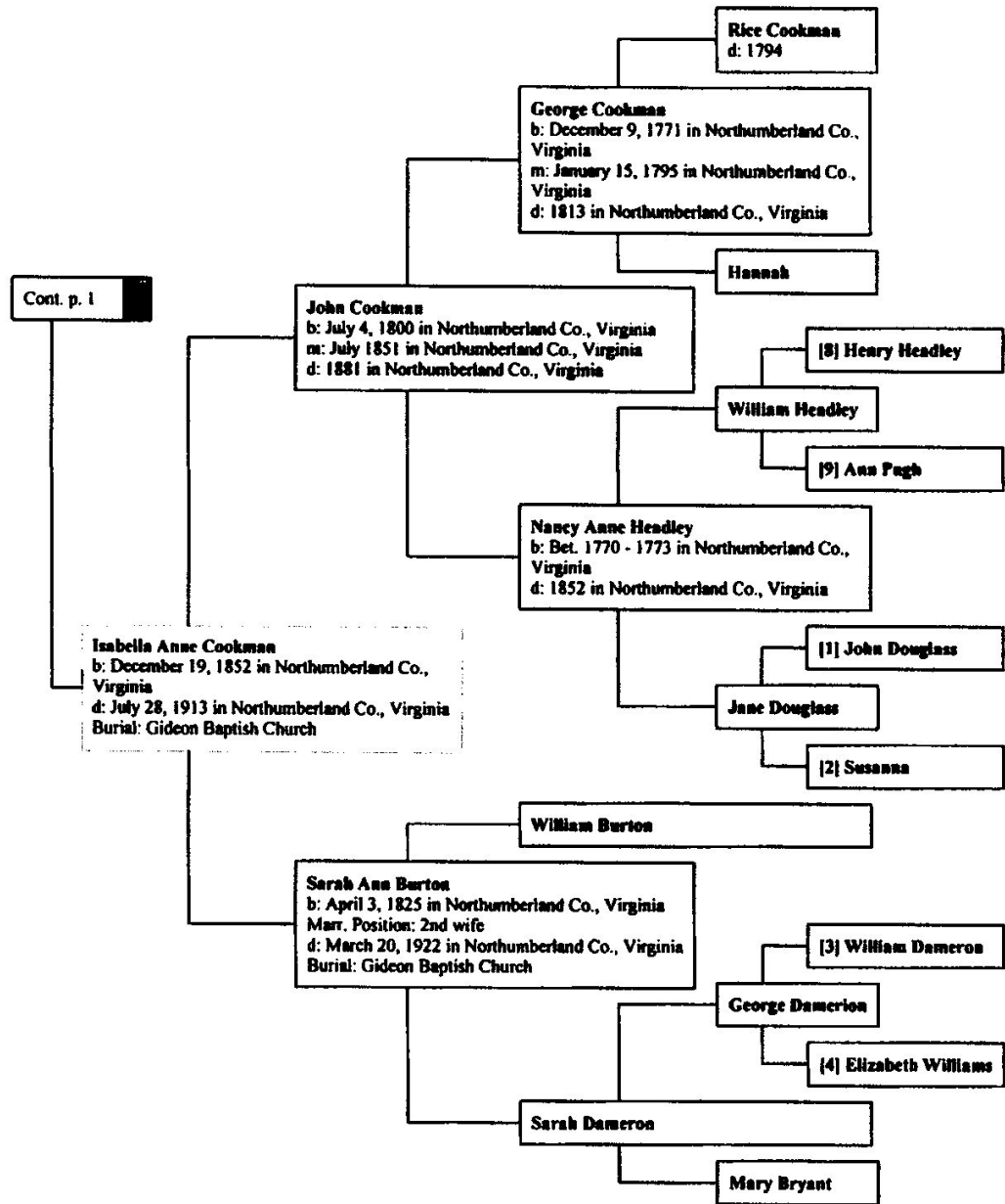
Ancestors of Start Brann (1 of 6)



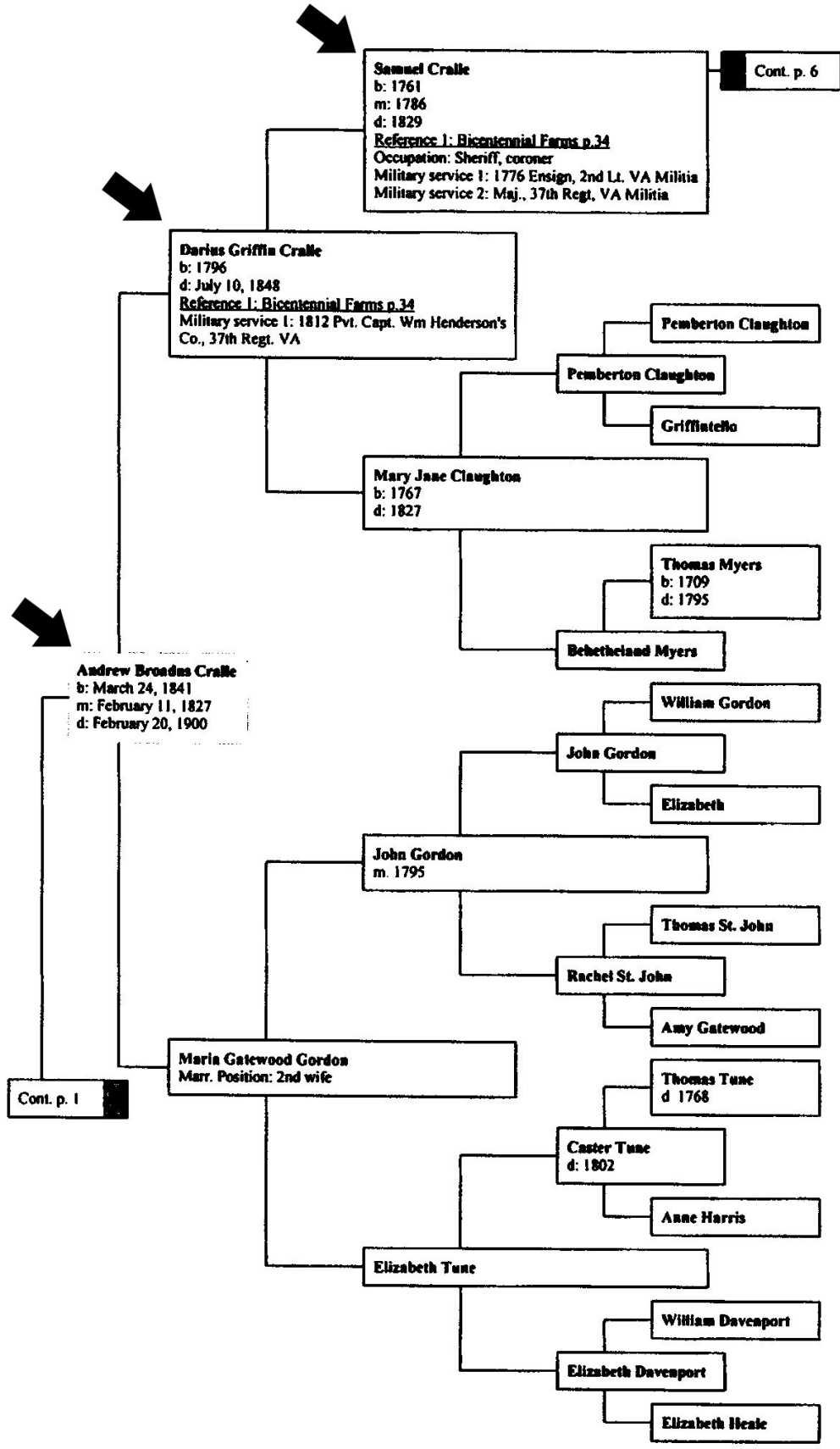
Ancestors of Start Brann (2 of 6)



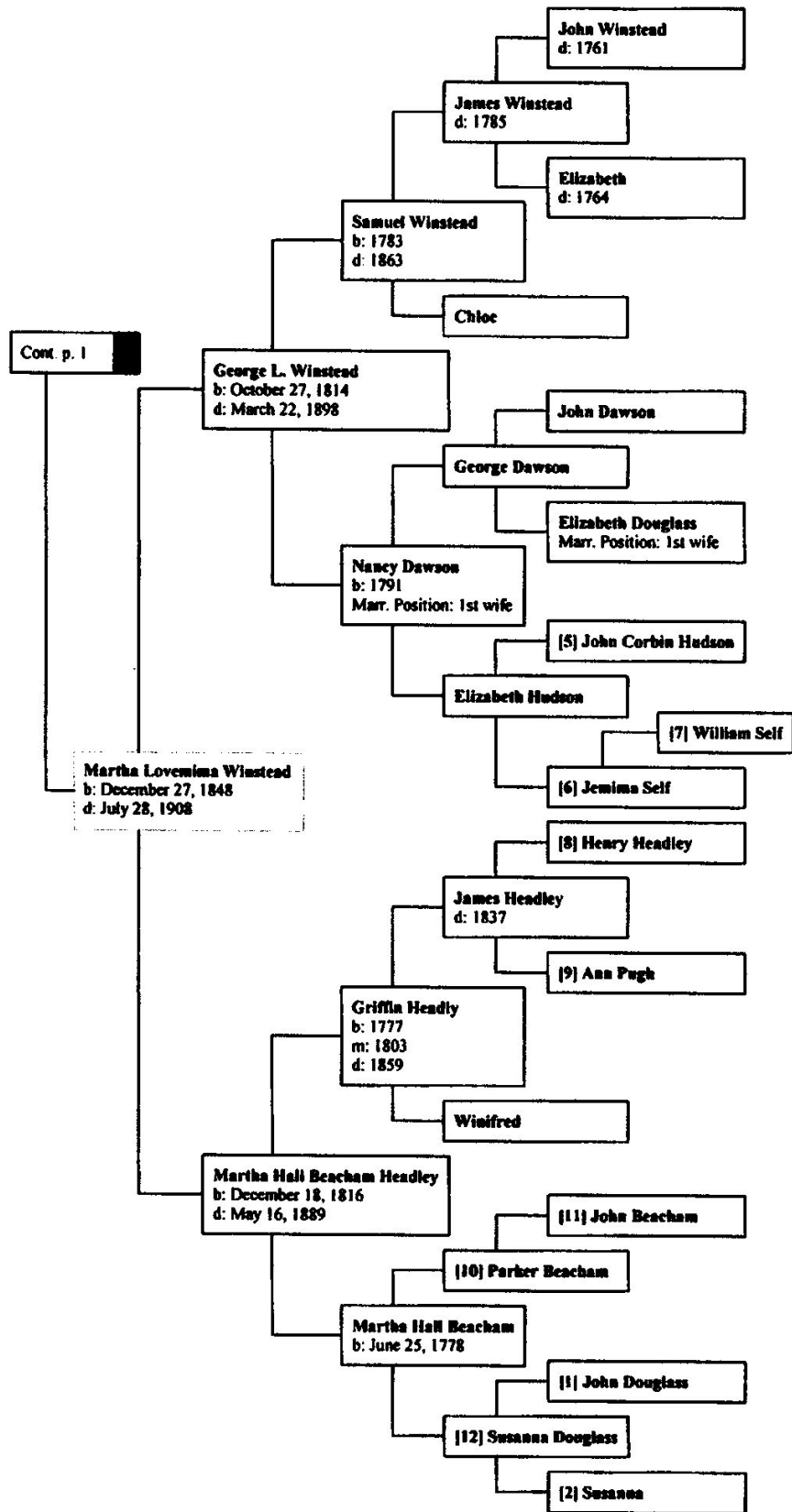
Ancestors of Start Brann (3 of 6)



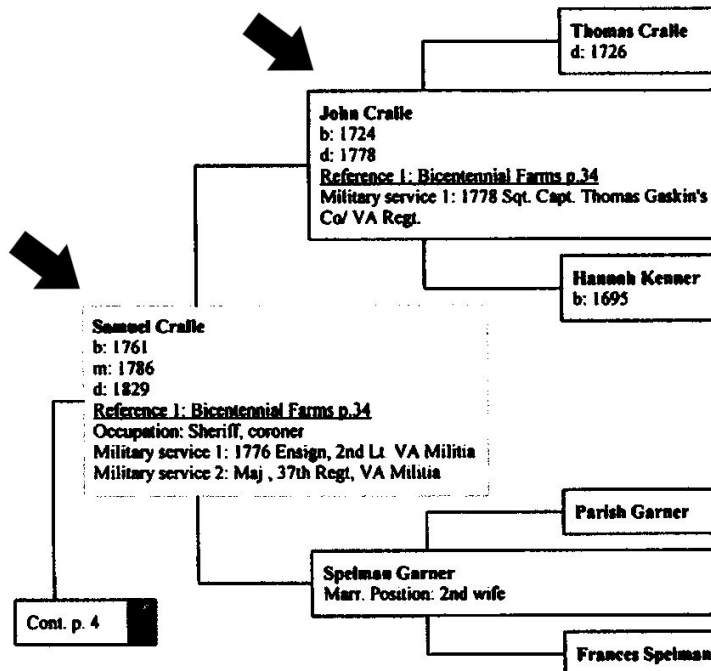
Ancestors of Start Brann (4 of 6)



Ancestors of Start Brann (5 of 6)



Ancestors of Start Brann (6 of 6)





BICENTENNIAL FARMS

"... to recognize farms which have been owned continuously by the same family for 200 years or more."



FRUIT PLAIN

- OWNER:** Raymond E. Brann
- LOCATION:** Rt. 600, Lottsburg District,
Northumberland
- FIRST PROPRIETOR:** Capt. John Cralle by purchase in
1711
- CURRENT USE:** 150 acres in cultivation and timber

John Cralle (1724-78) died while serving as sergeant in Capt. Thomas Gaskin's company of the 5th Virginia Regiment Continental Line.

Samuel Cralle (1761-1829) was ensign and 2nd lieutenant of Militia during the Revolutionary War. Later he was major in the 37th Regiment, Virginia Militia. He also served in several county offices, including sheriff and coroner.

Darius Griffin Cralle (1796-1848) was a private in Capt. William Henderson's company of artillery 37th Regiment, Virginia Militia.



Virginia Farm Bureau Federation

200 WEST GRACE STREET P. O. BOX 27552 RICHMOND, VIRGINIA 23261 804-788-1234

December 2, 1985

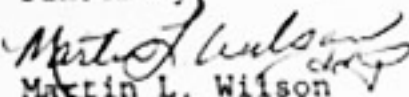
Dear Bicentennial Farm Owner:

It's a pleasure to send you this complimentary copy of "Virginia Bicentennial Farms" in appreciation for your cooperation in making this book possible. Each entry featured met the Farm Bureau's requirement as a farm "owned continuously by the same family for 200 years or more." That makes your farm very unique, and we're proud for the opportunity to honor it by inclusion in this book.

Additional copies will be available soon at a price as yet undetermined. Please see the December issue of the FARM BUREAU NEWS for details.

Again, thank you for your cooperation, and I hope you enjoy this tribute to you and other "bicentennial farm" owners.

Sincerely,


Martin L. Wilson
Editor

MLW/ddj

Enclosure

Three farms in county honored

Three farms in Northumberland County have been singled out as Bicentennial Farms by the Virginia Farm Bureau Federation. Two of the farms are near Village, and the third is located near Wicomico Church.

They are the only three farms in the Northern Neck so designated.

A Bicentennial Farm is one which has been owned continuously by the same family for 200 years or more.

The owners of the farms—Raymond E. Brann, Willard Andrew Cralle, and William F. and Lucille D. Deitz—were to

be recognized along with 54 other Bicentennial Farm owners in the state of Virginia today, when the Farm Bureau holds its annual meeting in Roanoke.

The Raymond Brann farm is located about a mile north of Village on state route 600, across from the Gibeon Baptist Church. At 150 acres, the farm is not as large as it was back in 1711, the date of the original deed to the land. Mr. Brann said the farm came to him on his mother's side. One person—a first cousin to the Brann's—farms the wheat, beans and corn the land produces.

A hop, skip and a jump away is the Willard Andrew Cralle farm, which also dates back to 1711. Mrs. Cralle said that the Cralle farm, too, is smaller than the original 600-700 acres 265 years ago; so much smaller that the farm was barely able to qualify. She said that the house—not the farm—was sold last year. "The sad part of it is," she said, "that this is the last generation the farm will be in the family."

The third farm, owned by the Deitz's, is located near Wicomico Church, and dates back to 1753.

The Deitz farm was originally 332 acres in size, and according to Mrs. Lucille Deitz, was divided in the early 1900's between two children. The present owner, William Deitz, is the grandson of Eugene Barrett, one of the children, and is the fifth generation to have occupied the farm in its 223 year history. The farm now is 166 acres in size. The farming is diversified there, from cattle to wheat, barley, corn and beans, and it is a family operation, with no outside help. William and Lucille Deitz, with the parttime help of their two sons, do all of the farming.

In Virginia, 57 farms were found to still be in the family for 200 years or more. Three of those 57 can go back over 300 years. The oldest, at 311 years, is a King and Queen County farm owned by J. Henley Walker, Jr., which dates to 1665.

[Back to Search Options](#)**PROPERTY****Parcel Information**

Parcel Record Number (PRN) **36702078** District **LOTTSBURG DISTRICT**

Account Name **BRANN JEFFREY D OR**

Account Name2 **PAULINE S**

Care Of

Address1 **1849 GIBEON ROAD**

Address2

City, State Zip **CALLAO, VA 22435**

Business Name

E911 Address(es) **1849 GIBEON ROAD**

Map Number

Map Insert **07** Double Circle **1** Block Parcel Number **019B**

Total Acres **2.104**

Deed **NONE**

Will **NONE**

Plat **PB--PC5-472**

Route

Legal Desc 1 **PART FRUIT PLAIN**

Legal Desc 2 **#201414000470**

Zoning

State Class **SINGLE FAMILY RESIDENCE (SUBURBAN)**

Topology

Utilities **NONE**

Assessed Values

Type	Current Value (2024)	Previous Value (2023)
Land	\$18,400	\$18,400
Main Structures	\$275,000	\$275,000
Other Structures	\$5,400	\$5,400
TOTALS	\$298,800	\$298,800

Sales History

Grantor	Sale Price	Instrument	Number of Tracts	Sale Date
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No data to display

Land Segments

Seg	Description	Avg Cost/Acre	Size	AdjRate	Value
1	B/S - LOT (1500-26000)		14500.00	1.00	\$14,500
2	OPEN LAND (3000 - 4000)		3500.00	1.10	\$3,864

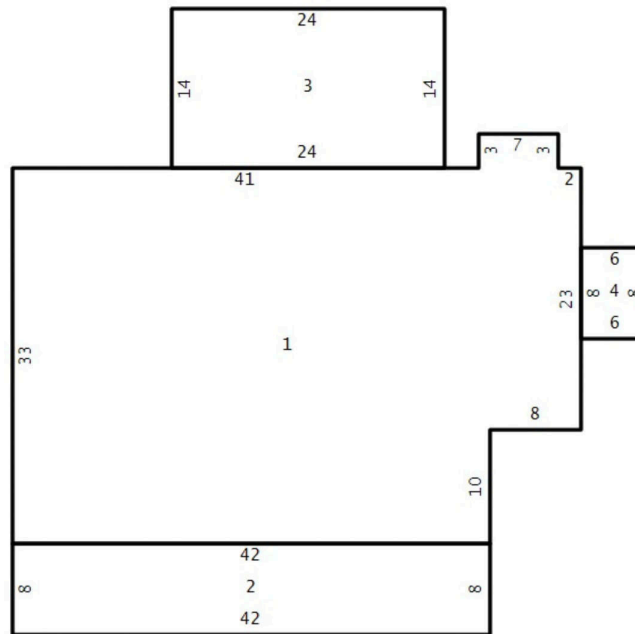
Main Structures

Main Structure 1	Rooms	0	Deprec Schedule	RES EXCELLENT DEPR
	Bedrooms	3	Heated Sq Ft	2,511
	Cost/Heated SqFt	\$85.12	Constr Style	CONVENTIONAL

Main Structure Photo



Main Structure Sketch



Main Structure Attributes

Type	Code	# Of
CHIMNEYS	1 STORY PREFAB	1
FLOOR	CARPET	2,511
FLOOR	HARDWOOD	2,511
FLOOR	TILE	2,511
FOUNDATION	BRICK	2,511
FOUNDATION	CONCRETE BLOCK	2,511
FUEL	ELECTRIC	2,511
FUEL	GAS	2,511
PLUMBING	2 FIXTURE BATH	1
PLUMBING	3 FIXTURE BATH	2
ROOF MATERIAL	COMPOSITION SHINGLE	2,511
ROOF TYPE	GABLE	2,511
WALL	DRY WALL	2,511

Main Structure Sections

Sec	% Cmpl	Description	HVAC	Ext Finish	Grade	Area	Story Hgt	Wall Hgt	Yr Built	Eff Yr
1-0	100	SINGLE FAMILY	CENTRAL HEAT & AIR CONDITIONING	ALUMINUM/VINYL	B+10	1,591	1.00	1.00	2015	2015
1-1	100	SINGLE FAMILY	CENTRAL HEAT & AIR CONDITIONING	ALUMINUM/VINYL	B+10	920	1.00	1.00	2015	2015
2-0	100	OPEN FRAME PORCH			B+10	336	1.00	1.00	2015	2015
3-0	100	OPEN FRAME PORCH			B+10	336	1.00	1.00	2015	2015
4-0	100	WOOD DECK			B+10	48	1.00	1.00	2015	2015

Other Structures

Sec	Description	Grade	Area	Story Height	YearBlt	Value
1	SHED - STORAGE - FRAME/CIN BLOCK	SOUND VALUE	252	1.00	0	\$0
2	BARN	SOUND VALUE	3,200	1.00	0	\$3,000
3	LEAN TO	SOUND VALUE	420	1.00	0	\$0
4	SHED - STORAGE - FRAME/CIN BLOCK	C	160	1.00	2015	\$2,400