

# Giles Rock House Revisited

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*Editor's Note: This research paper shows that Pittsylvania County's remarkable Bearskin Creek rock structure, which has often been called the "Giles Rock House," could not have actually been on the property of John Giles, but was more likely constructed by James Hart – or even possibly by John Pigg or Nathaniel Thacker.*

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There is a house on the farm of Mr. Caleb J. Moore, located at 2138 Weal Road, that other researchers have called the "Giles Rock House". This description and a brief history of John Giles' property are part of a book titled [Eighteenth Century Landmarks of Pittsylvania County, Virginia](#) by Madalene Vaden Fitzgerald and Frances Hallam Hurt.

For several years now, I have been researching the land of my family lines, one of which is "GILES". After researching John Giles' land, I realized that his actual land was at least a mile south of the farm of Mr. Moore and so it is not possible for the description used in the book mentioned above to be correct. The purpose of this article is to show proof for this last statement.

First, let us establish the source of John Giles' land.

D. B. [Deed Book] 10, pg. 318, 1 Jan. 1796, James HUTCHINGS & wife Martha to John GILES 200 acres.

D. B. 11, pg. 24, 12 Jan. 1797, James HUTCHINGS & wife Martha to John GILES 100 acres. (Note: James HUTCHINGS is the son of Christopher HUTCHINGS, as is proved by his will recorded in Pittsylvania County, VA D&W (Deeds and Wills) Book 11, pg. 307, 20 Jul 1807.)

Christopher HUTCHINGS is granted 2462 acres of land 19 Oct 1780 "...on Banister River and Bearskin Creek".

I have been able to establish a chain of title for this land, showing the deeds from John Giles time to present day. However, because of the complexity of the land transactions it is not possible to include all of the information in this article. This research does place the land near the intersection of Marion Road and Mitchell Road.

John Giles is also conveyed land by D. B. 19, pg. 442, 25 Mar 1816, where the heirs of Hartwell Allen sell to John Giles 185 acres. This land is from the estate of Walter Lamb and is lot #3 as shown on the survey of his estate which was recorded in Pittsylvania County, VA, Survey Book 2, pg. 61. This land goes to Margaret Lamb, who marries William A. Townes. The land is granted to Walter Lamb 14 Jul 1780 and lies west of the Hutchings' grant and adjoins it. This land is located on the Marion Road, just past where it intersects the Mitchell Road.

John Giles' son, George Giles, also buys land which originates from the same Hutchings' land grant. Because his chain of title is simpler, it is shown below to firmly establish the location of John Giles' land.

D. B. 8, pg. 359, 16 Mar 1789, Christopher Hutchings to Pirant Easley, 171 acres.

D. B. 11, pg. 298, 18 Jun 1798, Pyrant Easley & wife Elizabeth of Pittsylvania County, Virginia, to George Giles of Loudoun County, Virginia, 171 acres.

D. B. 37, pg. 448, 20 Jul 1835, George Giles to Thomas Giles, 171 acres. (Note: Thomas Giles is the son of George Giles)

D. B. 54, pg. 312, 17 Jan 1853, The heirs at law of Thomas Giles, deceased being Wilson Giles & wife Jane, Garret Giles & wife Judith, Henry Mitchell & wife Jane to Ellis Giles, 170 acres. The interest of said Wilson Giles being 3/7 in his own right and one in the right of William Dunbar & wife Elizabeth and one in the right of John Jones & wife Ann.

At the death of Ellis Giles, his widow, Mary (Fackler) Giles has a life estate to this property. Their son, Henry Ellis Giles, conveys his interest in this property in trust to Wm. Tredway for his wife Sallie D. Giles until she should see fit to dispose of it, being 162 acres and 148 acres on the waters of Green Rock Creek, by D.B. 111, pg. 231, 17 Jan 1900.

D. B. 134, pg. 326, 7 Feb 1911, Henry E. Giles, Sr. & wife Sallie and Wm. Tredway trustee, to Henry E. Giles, Jr., their interest in the 148 acres of Mary C. Giles' life estate.

D. B. 166, pg. 475, 27 Oct 1920, Henry E. Giles, Sr. & wife Sallie to Henry E. Giles, Jr., 148 acres, being a portion of the lands of Ellis Giles, deceased, they having since obtained all rights.

Will Book 24, pg. 521, recorded 30 May 1973, Will of Henry E. Giles, Jr. To wife Leola C. Giles his land for life and then to their daughter Juanita G. DeMott. Mrs. DeMott is the current owner and the land is located at the intersection of the Irish Road & Concord Road.

So, by the above information, we have established the location of John Giles' actual land. As can be seen by looking at a current map of Pittsylvania County, this land is not close to Mr. Moore's property on Weal Road.

Now let us establish the source for Mr. Moore's property so that we may connect some of the family history that was mentioned in the book by Fitzgerald & Hurt. They correctly give the line of ownership back through Mr. Moore's mother to Daniel Motley and to him from Joseph W. Eaton. Mr. Eaton is sold the land by D.B. 52, pg. 410, 4 Nov 1850, Wade H. Hodges, a commissioner in the chancery suit of Wade H. Hodges versus James L. Giles, to Joseph W. Eaton the land on which Hezekiah Giles lived and died supposed to contain 463 acres...the boundaries being more fully set forth in the deeds from Benjamin Walker & Lent G. Lovell. It is at this point that the previous research goes astray. In the book by Fitzgerald & Hurt, Motley family tradition is quoted as saying that the rock house was built by a "HART" family, but they are unable to connect the Giles' land to a Hart. This is because the actual land of John Giles does not go back to a Hart family as we have already established. However, the land of Mr. Caleb Moore does, as we will now show.

D. B. 43, pg. 36, 3 Jun 1839, Lent G. Lovell & wife Priscilla to Hezekiah Giles 375 acres lying on both sides of Bearskin Creek.

D. B. 36, pg. 145, 27 Feb 1834, John M. HART & wife Elizabeth to Lent G. Lovell 375 acres on both sides of Bearskin Creek. (Note: Both deeds have the same metes and bounds)

A map is made of the Daniel Motley estate and is recorded in D. B. 112, pg. 547. When the 375 acres sold to Hezekiah Giles is drawn to scale and compared with the map of Daniel Motley's estate, some of the lines are very comparable. (Note: All of the deeds mentioned in this article have been drawn to scale and further prove the statements made in regard to them)

John M. Hart was the son of James Hart as proved by Pittsylvania County, VA, Will Book 1, pg. 10, recorded 18 Jun 1821. James Hart owned much land in this area and deeds show his land adjoining that of Joel Thacker.

At this point, it is necessary to establish the source for James Hart's land that is sold by his son John M. Hart to Lent G. Lovell.

Nathaniel Thacker is granted 220 acres 19 Jul 1797 which lie on the branches of Bearskin Creek. John Pigg is patented 400 acres 3 Aug 1771 that are west of the above 220 acres and adjoin it. Nathaniel Thacker sells to Peter Thacker 160 acres by D. B. 11, pg. 299, 18 Jun 1798. Part of the 160 acres comes from the 400 acres patented to John Pigg which Nathaniel Thacker has at least part of per his 23 Dec 1796 survey for the 220 acres and part of it comes from the 220 acres. Peter Thacker sells this to James Hart by D. B. 11, pg. 492, 18 Jan 1799, as 150 acres.

The balance of the 375 acres comes from several sources, one of which is the upper part of John Pigg's 400 acre patent. No deed is found on record conveying this land to James Hart, but by reading several other deeds, it can be determined that James Hart does have possession of this land. This may be what is shown in the land book of 1802 in the name of James Hart as 100 acres "by decree". The chancery records of that time period no longer exist, so the answer is not known. Other deeds convey additional land to him in this area also.

We have now shown the source for part of the land that is sold to Hezekiah Giles. Now, let us establish the source for that which Benjamin Walker sells him.

D. B. 38, pg. 274, 21 Apr 1836, Benjamin Walker & wife Nancy to Hezekiah Giles 88 acres on Bearskin Creek. This land lies due south of the above mentioned 375 acre tract and adjoins it. This land is sold to Benjamin Walker by the heirs of Joel Thacker, D. B. 25, pg. 88, 21 Oct 1822, Nathaniel Price wife Patsey, Emmanuel E. Thacker & wife Millicent and Pleasant Thacker to Benjamin Walker 150 acres on Bearskin Creek. This land is sold to Joel Thacker by Nathaniel Thacker by D. B. 11, pg. 300, 18 Jun 1798 as 160 acres. This land is also comprised of part of the land patented to John Pigg and part of the 220 acres granted to Nathaniel Thacker.

So, we have established the source for Mr. Moore's property, which shows the connection to the Hart family and plainly shows that it does not connect to John Giles at any time. It can be concluded, then, that the rock house on Mr. Moore's property is not the "GILES ROCK HOUSE" as it has been referred to for many years. If Motley tradition is correct, it was probably built by James Hart. If tradition is only that, then the house could have been built by John Pigg or Nathaniel Thacker. The cemetery on Mr. Moore's farm has only field stones for markers, so it is unknown who lies there.