

Fertile Plain, built between 1815-1820 by Samuel B. Harris
Resource History
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1760 – John Wright was granted a 398-acre tract from Thomas Lord Fairfax (NN GB K/158).

He sold the tract to Thomas Melvin, date unknown. Melvin sold the tract to Able Westfall by Lease and Release in August 1788.

Interesting side note: In May 1788, Able Westfall signed as a witness to a deposition given by Moses Hunter concerning James Rumsey's claim to the first steam-powered boat ("Remarks on Mr. John Fitch's Reply to Mr. James Rumsey's Pamphlet," by Joseph Barnes, Formerly Assistant, and now Attorney in Fact to James Rumsey, Philadelphia, Printed by Joseph James, Chesnut Street, [1788])

Westfall sold the 398-acre tract to Henry and Jacob Bedinger March 6, 1790 (all cited in JC DB 7/292).

1798 – Berkeley County House tax listed both Henry and Jacob Bedinger with houses.

Henry Bedinger was assessed only for a house in Shepherdstown valued at \$1,575.

Jacob Bedinger was also assessed in 1798 for one house in Shepherdstown, but it was tenanted by Mr. Daylong, and it was valued by the assessor at just \$210.

Additionally, Jacob was assessed for two houses at two different locations in the country, both valued at \$131.25 indicating small dwellings. One was tenanted by William Ainsworth but the other was apparently not tenanted. Could the Jacob Bedinger family have been living in that one-story stone house at the time or was this a summer retreat?

1810 – On September 10, Henry and Jacob Bedinger sold 313 acres of the 398-acre Wright grant tract to Samuel B. Harris for \$5,941 (JC DB 7/292).

The Jefferson County census for 1810 recorded Samuel Harris in what appears to be the Moler's Crossroads neighbor by August (census day was August 6 that year). He was listed as 45+ years old, as was his wife. In the household was one boy and two girls under age 9, and two girls age 10-15. There were six slaves listed in the household.

The genealogy of Samuel B. Harris was elusive but there was a William Harris who witnessed the marriage of Henry Rees to Ann Neill (dau. Lewis Neill) at the Hopewell Meeting in 1762 (O'Dell, pp.77-78). The Hopewell Friends History recorded the births of William Harris' children: Esther (1744), Martha (1746), William Jr. (1748), Daniel (1751), Hannah (1753), Jesse (1755), Samuel (1757), Mary (1759).

If Samuel B. Harris was the son of William Harris, born 1757, he would have been 53 years old in 1810.

1815 – Although Samuel Harris' 313-acre farm was obviously improved with some kind of dwelling by 1810, he was not assessed in 1815 for a house valued over \$500.

1820 – Harris' land tax with a \$2,000 building value indicates that he had constructed his brick dwelling sometime between 1815 and 1820.

Population census record listed Samuel Harris as a farmer over the age of 45 (63?) with his wife over 45, one female 16-25 years old, two females 10-15, and two females and one male under 9 years. Since it is unlikely these young children belonged to Samuel and his wife it may be that they were the children of a widowed daughter. There were also eleven slaves in the household, five occupied in agriculture.

1823 – In December, Harris sold his farm to Daniel Border for \$13,000, the huge jump in value no doubt largely due to the construction of the brick house (JC DB 12/462). The property was described as adjoining William Taylor ("Taylor hrs." 1852 map), Levi Taylor (*Lewis-Reinhart Property*), and Michael Moler (*Linden Spring*).

Daniel Border's tax assessments remained unchanged until 1841 when the building value fell to \$1,800 without comment, but it is common to see values lower after 1840. Then in 1851 the building value went up by \$1,000 to \$2,800 again without comment.

By 1860 it appears that Daniel Border and his wife were dead as both of their children, Daniel W. (age 10) and Sallie (age 7 [Sarah]) Border, were living with George Hollida near Scrabble. In 1874, a Deed of Partition was recorded between D.W. Border and Sarah (Border) Lamar. Sarah and her husband Richard D. Lamar got the 278-acre subject farm. D.W. Border got a 300-acre farm adjoining Col. Thomas Hite, J.V. Moore, and Mrs. Blackford (JC DB A/515).