

A POSSIBLE EARLY KEZIAH, FREE, AND SHELBY FAMILY CONNECTION

Research by Wanda Tucker, 1 February 2023

As far as previously known, the Free family connected to the Keziah family with the marriage of Lewis Free to Cheriah Keziah (Sandifer Keziah's granddaughter) in Edgefield County, SC about 1795. However, the families may have known each other through the Shelbys much further back.

I found on Evan Shelby, Sr.'s Findagrave listing:

“Evan then secured a warrant from the Maryland Land Office for 1200 acres across the line in Western Maryland. This was called "Maiden's Choice" and is 12 miles west of Hagerstown. A patent for this was issued to Evan by Lord Baltimore's agent on 7 August 1739. In time he had acquired some 4,000 acres all within a short distance from his home. "Maiden's Choice" now lies in the Clear Springs district of the present Washington County, Maryland. "Black Walnut Point" is in Pennsylvania although it is in the same valley. The Mason Dixon line runs between the two places. During the next 11 years he obtained other land warrants and secured patents on them until he was in possession of 2,500 acres. With the exception of Rich Lands and a 50 acre piece called "Hunt's Cabin", **all of his land seems to have been located between Conococheague Creek and the east side of North Mountain**, about 10 or 12 miles west of the site of Hagerstown. He disposed of some of his land from time to time by sale and some of it was conveyed as gifts to his sons.”

Lawrence Free, the great-grandfather of Lewis Free who married Cheriah Keziah, settled in **Connecocheague** prior to moving down to SC:

“In his introduction to the history of the Baptists in South Carolina, Morgan Edwards stated that **"In 1748 a few Tunker baptists from Connecocheague came into the northwest parts about the waters of Santee."** He amplified this statement in Part IV, which "Treats of the Tunker-baptists in South Carolina": **"About the year 1748 Michael Millers, Jacob Canomore, Lawrence Free, with their wives arrived hither from Connecocheague."**

The Brethren in the Carolinas: The History of the Church of the Brethren in the District of North and South Carolina. Roger E. Sappington. Duke University Library, 1971

Lawrence Free and his family arrived in Pennsylvania in 1736, and so would have been there when Evan Shelby, Sr. arrived in the area. These families probably knew each other all the way back then.

Multiple sources, including "A report on the first three generations of the Shelby family in the United States of America" (good records):

https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/15:23670?tid=68901442&pid=102444334346&hid=1045660586157&_phsrc=mNs1447&_phstart=default

and this Wikipage:

https://www.wikitree.com/wiki/Space:Dunker_Conococheague_Settlement%2C_1750-1790

all agree that Evan Shelby, Sr. settled in the Conococheague Valley in 1739. Lawrence Free also settled there. If you read the page linked above, you will find this:

"There were a number of Dunker settlements in the Conococheague Valley starting as early as 1739 when Peter Studebaker built a house on a hill overlooking the east bank of Conococheague Creek, but the settlement of interest here was located west of the creek toward North Mountain, straddling the modern border between Pennsylvania and Maryland. **A number of Dunker homesteads grew up around a tract called "Maiden's Choice," whose initial patent for 1,000 acres was issued to Evan Shelby in 1739.**"

The Frees were Dunker Baptists. They may have been one of the families whose homesteads are referred to above. However, even if they were not among these, they would have known the families who were.

Shelby sold 100 acres to John Williams Jr. in 1740, and Hans Waggoner had acquired most of the rest by 1751. Waggoner developed two separate tracts, which he called "Flaggy Meadow" (474 ac) and "Germania" (435 ac), each consisting of a portion of "Maiden's Choice" augmented by contiguous unclaimed parcels called "vacancies." He also bought a 53-acre tract between these tracts in 1745, evidently for his own homestead, and 279 acres from John Williams in 1748 probably as speculation."

When I was researching the Frees in SC, there was a land sale by Jacob Free (Lawrence's brother) to John Wagener. It would appear some members of the Waggoner/Wagener family migrated south, too.

The Frees arrived in SC in 1748. Evan Shelby, Sr. died at Maiden's Choice in 1750, leaving sons Evan, Jr., Moses, John, David, Rees, and Thomas. Moses, Thomas and Rees came to NC about 1760-65.

I am also very certain that the Dunker Baptist community influenced the inclusion and acceptance of the Native Americans, including the Tuscarora, by the settlers of Anson/Mecklenburg, NC. They were a pacifist religion, and as such thought of the Indians as fellow human beings.

It's possible that some members of the extended Keziah family or other Tuscarora who knew them also crossed paths with the Frees and Shelbys in Pennsylvania. The Tuscarora migrated through that area on their way north to the Five Tribes, stopping at Monocacy, and Martinsburg, Virginia (now West Virginia). There are references to the "Tuscarora Mountains" in the Shelby material.

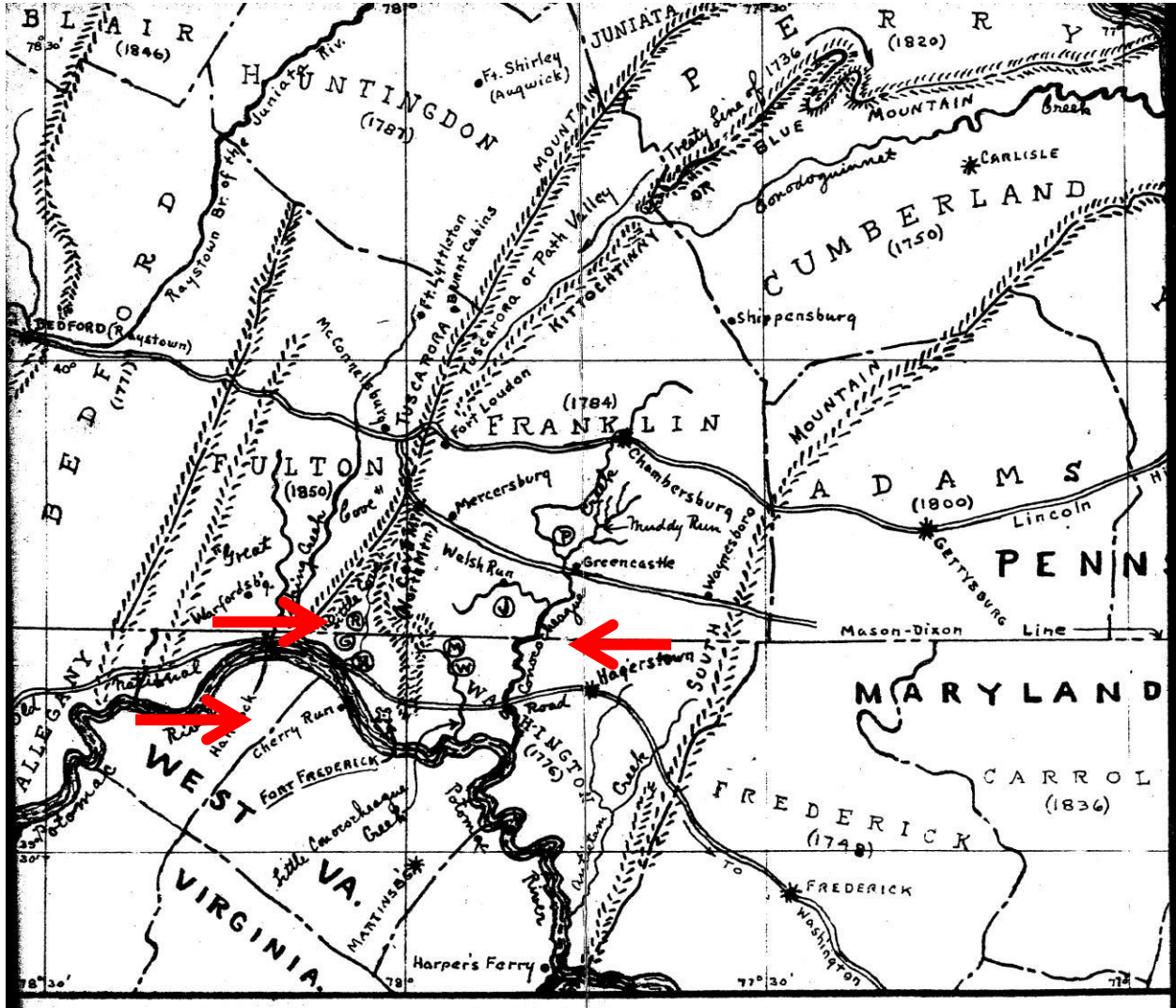
"Beginning about 1713 after the war, contingents of Tuscarora began leaving North Carolina for the north. They established a main village at present-day Martinsburg, West Virginia, on what is still known as Tuscarora Creek. Another group stopped in 1719–1721 in present-day Maryland along the Monocacy River, on the way to join the Oneida nation in western New York.^[16] After white settlers began to pour into what is now the Martinsburg area from around 1730, the Tuscarora continued northward to join those in western New York. Other Tuscarora bands sojourned in the Juniata River valley of Pennsylvania, before reaching New York."

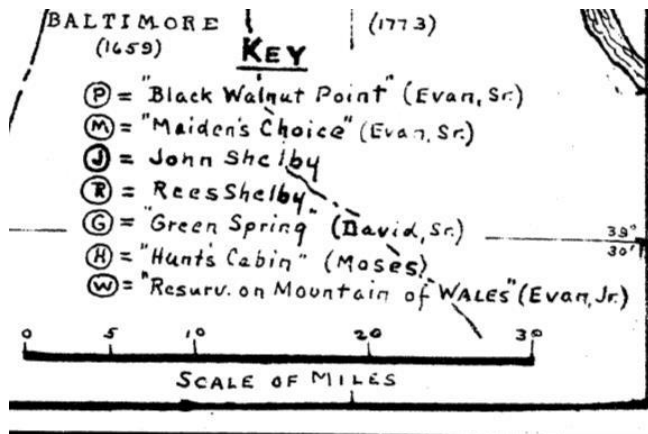
[/https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuscarora_people](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tuscarora_people)

If John Cozear and Elizabeth were fleeing NORTH when Dunning [Keziah] was born in Bristol Parish, VA, they may have been headed for the area around Martinsburg. If they were passing through on their way north, and made it as far as Conococheague, this may be where they met the Shelbys and the Frees. It

is a literal *straight line* north from Bertie County, NC, to Blandford Church (Bristol Parish church) to Conococheague Creek.

Here is a map with a key to where Rees Shelby, and all the other Shelbys Maryland land was. I put a red arrow on Rees's land, and a red arrow on a place called Cherry Run just under his land:

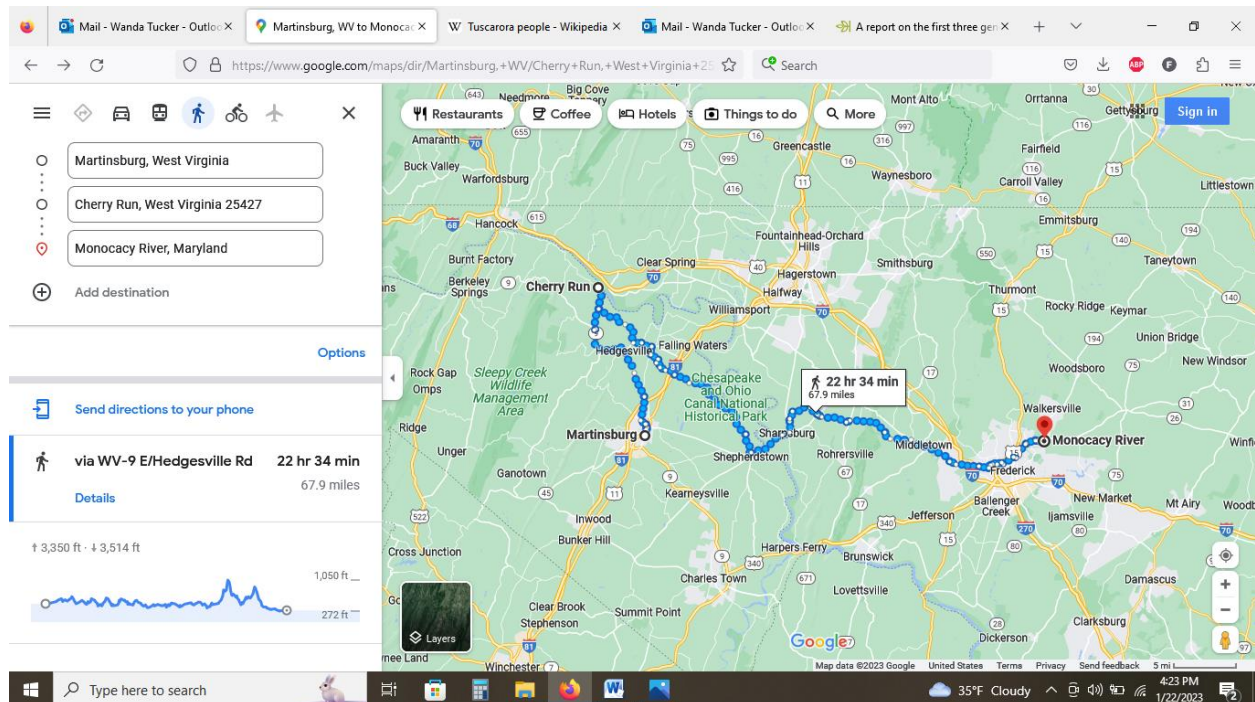




The map is from little book I found at Ancestry:

<https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/15:23670?tid=68901442&pid=102444334346&hid=1045660586157&phsrc=mNs1447&phstart=default>

Now check out Martinsburg and Monocacy, West Virginia and Cherry Run on a modern map:



They are all very close together. Cherry Run is only about 15 miles from Martinsburg.

John Coziear and family would never have even had to leave Virginia to have lived next door to the Shelbys, Frees, and others who eventually went to North Carolina, as the Keziah children did. Even Adam Alexander, commander of the Clear Creek, North Carolina militia where Sandifer and Dunning Keziah served in 1766, married his Shelby wife in Maryland! Conococheague Creek is the third arrow on the map above. It was only ten miles away, on the other side of the Potomac, from the area where the Shelbys settled. And the Monocacy River mentioned above, where the other Tuscarora settled, is less than 40 miles to the west.