

## FRANK HUME AND HIS COUNTRY COUSINS

By

William H. B. Thomas\*

It is a pleasure to share with members of the Arlington Historical Society the story I have called: "Frank Hume and his Country Cousins."<sup>1</sup>

When I walked into the old Hume School, now the Arlington Historical Museum, to attend my first meeting of the Arlington Historical Society at the invitation of Sara Collins, I immediately noticed the portrait of Frank Hume and, later, the year of his birth--1843--inscribed below. I was intrigued, because there had been a Frank Hume in Orange County who would have been born about that same time. Were they, in fact, one and the same person? The answer, I realized that evening from *The Arlington Historical Magazine*, was no; but it did seem highly likely they were related. I determined to find out. And that brings me to my story.<sup>2</sup>

I was intrigued with the portrait of Frank Hume, moreover, because I already knew something of the Hume family in Virginia. Shortly after I came back from World War II, the purchaser of a farm in Orange County--Elmwood, located not far from the town of Orange on the Rapidan Road--asked me to prepare a short history of the property. I did so. While running the title, I learned that Kennedy and Hume families had been owners. Upon seeking out members of those families then living, I was directed to Mrs. Charles H. Wine of Culpeper, daughter of James Fontaine Hume Kennedy and granddaughter of Albert Kennedy who had acquired Elmwood before the Civil War, and his wife, Matilda Hume. Mrs. Kennedy graciously suggested that I get in touch with her brother, Edgar S. Kennedy of Washington, D. C., a prominent real estate developer, and at the same time introduced me to the diary of her father's first cousin, Frances Page Hume, usually referred to as Fannie Page Hume.<sup>3</sup>

Mr. Kennedy, in turn, produced for me two books--one relating to the Hume family and the other to the Hume and Kennedy families. In addition, he gave me an introduction to Alexander Willis, aged 111, a black then living in Washington, who had been a slave of the Hume and Kennedy families in Orange County. I'll come back to Alec Willis a bit later.<sup>4</sup>

From the Hume family genealogies furnished me by Mr. Kennedy, I learned something of his grandmother's people, the Humes. I learned, for example, that the Hume family had originated in Virginia in the person of George Hume, second son of Sir George Hume, Baronet, of Wedderburn, Scotland; that father and son, having "gone out in the Rising of 1715" in support of the Old Pretender, Prince James Edward Stuart, had been convicted as rebels; and that, no further action having been taken against him, young George Hume emigrated to Virginia in 1721. He became a distinguished surveyor, a militia officer, and a vestryman of St. Mark's Parish, Orange County; and he resided in the part of that county which later became Culpeper.<sup>5</sup>

I knew, then, that the Hume and Kennedy families of Orange were of the George Hume line, but I knew nothing definite of Frank Hume's ancestry that would connect them. Turning to the excellent articles in *The Arlington Historical Magazine* by David John Mays and Willard J. Webb, I learned that Frank Hume was indeed a descendant of the surveyor George Hume also; that he was the son of Charles Hume and his wife, Frances Virginia Rawlins, of Culpeper; and that after

able service in the Civil War, he, Frank Hume, had farmed in Orange County for two years before returning to Washington and the subsequent life and career you all know so well. But that information was enough to get me started.<sup>6</sup>

When Sara Collins asked me if I would consider giving a talk at a Society meeting, I agreed. I wanted that talk to revolve around Frank Hume and my own long-standing interest in the Hume family. Heeding the writer Booth Tarkington's observation that a good title is three-quarters of a book--or words to that effect--I hit on the idea of a talk called "Frank Hume and His Country Cousins." All very well and good, but I had to have a story to go along with it.

First of all, I knew I needed to refer to the Hume genealogies provided me by Mr. Kennedy so many years ago. Sara Collins and I had not made much progress in locating them--Alderman Library of the University of Virginia, among others, did not have them--when there occurred the first of a series of fascinating and fruitful coincidences that enabled me to round out the story for which I had a title.

Not long ago, after a talk I had given to a group of Orange County teachers, one of them, referring to a book on New England history, at the same time remarked that she was a Virginian, descended from an early surveyor. I asked the question that literally leaped out: "Was that surveyor, by chance, George Hume?" It was, and she not only had the elusive Hume genealogies but loaned them to me. With their aid, I worked out the line of Frank Hume's descent from George the surveyor--with the exception of Frank Hume's grandfather's name.<sup>7</sup>

At that point Sara Collins had talked with Mrs. Susan (Hume) McIntosh and had secured the name, address, and telephone of the latter's father, Mr. William Haywood Hume, the grandson of Frank Hume. I called Mr. Hume, we had a delightful talk, and I learned that Frank Hume's grandfather was Armistead Hume. Mr. Hume's father, by the way, was Dr. Howard Hume, who, as a boy, attended the Hume School, the Historical Society's headquarters in which we meet tonight.

I was now able to determine the relationship of Frank Hume and his country cousins of whom I was already knowledgeable--Fannie Page Hume, the diarist; her brother, the other Frank Hume, Francis Dade Hume; and James Fontaine Hume Kennedy, father of Mrs. Wine and Edgar Kennedy mentioned earlier. They were third cousins, which is quite close really, especially in Virginia.

From the beginning I have been interested in the Hume and Kennedy families of Orange, among other reasons, because of Fannie Page Hume and the diary she kept from 1858 at least through 1862, and because of Albert Kennedy and James Fontaine Hume Kennedy and their former slave, Alec Willis.

Fannie Page Hume and her brother Francis Dade Hume were the children of Col. David Hume, described as an "elegant Virginian", great and generous of heart, handsome and wealthy, and second cousin of Charles Hume, father of Frank Hume. David Hume operated a mercantile business in Orange and Alexandria, no doubt facilitated by the Orange and Alexandria Railroad which reached Orange in the early 1850s. He had moved to Alexandria after the death of his wife, leaving his children in the care of their grandmother Mrs. Peyton Grymes and her husband Dr. Peyton Grymes at Selma on the Rapidan Road. Col. Hume was a Mason, a member and warden of the Alexandria Lodge. With the information that David Hume was a Mason, Sara Collins found a memorial notice about him, from which I quote:

#### David Hume

was born March 8, 1808, near Oak Park, Madison County, Va., and became a resident and merchant of Alexandria about the year 1850.

He died suddenly in the city of Washington, on Saturday, February 28, 1857.

The sudden death of this greatly-esteemed gentleman caused a great sensation in the city of Washington, and cast a gloom over the community in which he had lived, and where he was very popular with all classes of society. On the sad intelligence being telegraphed to Alexandria, hundreds of its citizens repaired to Washington and escorted the remains to Alexandria, where they were received with every demonstration of respect by an immense concourse of the people.

On the following morning (Sunday) the body was taken in charge by the Lodge (No. 22) of which he had been the Junior Warden and, accompanied by Lodge No. 120, and a long line of citizens, was conveyed to the railroad depot, whence it was taken by the pallbearers. . . and large delegations from both Lodges, and many citizens, to the former residence of the deceased, Orange Court House, for interment. On the same day the remains were interred by Independent Orange Lodge, No. 138 (Major Lewis B. Williams officiating as Worshipful Master), at Rose Hill--the seat of the Taliaferros, on the Rapid Ann River. In token of respect of his memory, the Lodge was clothed in mourning, and the Corn Exchange, the Banks, and the citizens adopted resolutions eulogistic of the deceased.

Further research has revealed that Col. Hume was accused by a Mr. Lee of robbing him during a White House reception at the time of President James Buchanan's inauguration. When Colonel Hume, later called on Mr. Lee to convince him that he, Colonel Hume, was not a thief, Mr. Lee continued to insist that he was. The Colonel then struck Mr. Lee violently, and Mr. Lee drew a revolver and shot Colonel Hume, killing him instantly.<sup>8</sup>

After her father's death, Fannie Hume continued to live at Selma, her grandmother's home on the Rapidan Road between Orange and Elmwood, the home of her aunt Matilda (Hume) Kennedy.

Early in 1858, Fannie was visiting in Washington, D. C. On January 5 she noted the arrival of her cousin, Carter Braxton, great-grandson of the Virginia signer of the Declaration of Independence of the same name. She confided: "I am so much pleased with him" and the next day she entertained him and wrote: "I do like him so much, he is really intelligent and pleasant." A few weeks later she went to a fancy dress ball at Captain John Newland Maffitt's, a naval officer and later a well-known Confederate raider and blockade runner, and jotted down in her diary afterwards: "A Mr. Rhind arrived at Capt. Maffitt's today, was merely introduced to him." At this time, by the way, Fannie was 19 going on 20, Carter Braxton, 22; and Mr. Rhind (as she invariably called him), 37.<sup>9</sup>

From early February until late March, Alexander Colden Rhind, also a naval officer, either called upon or escorted Fannie with regularity. On February 15 Fannie learned, much to her surprise, that Mr. Rhind was not a married man; later, she found that he had sent her "a charming valentine"; and on the 26th she had a "real funny time" while Mr. Rhind was escorting her home, and Capt. Maffitt "threw out many insinuations," and a bit later Mr. Rhind "made himself so very agreeable." After Mr. Rhind had left town, however, Fannie was worried: "That affair weighs so in my mind; fear I have acted wrong."<sup>10</sup>

Later, there were messages and letters, including a "nobly written" letter; and

in December 1858 Mr. Rhind arrived in Orange for a visit. "How I dreaded the interview," Fannie wrote. Mr. Rhind was using "the same old arguments," which suggests that he had already proposed to her. And Fannie noted: "I could not revoke my decision, in spite of persuasion. I do feel too miserable for anything."<sup>11</sup>

Two years later, 1860, although she was still writing to Mr. Rhind, who by then was at sea in distant parts of the world, Fannie was thinking very much of "Cousin Carter," Carter Braxton. "He is as charming as of old . . . a real splendid fellow. I do like him so much. . . ." Then, with the coming of 1861, Virginia's Session Convention met in Richmond. War followed.<sup>12</sup>

Fannie Page Hume reported the war with as much concern and in as much detail as she had reported more peaceful days. On Saturday, August 2, 1862, two days after her 24th birthday, she wrote: "Another memorable day. Last night we all had a quiet comfortable sleep, but alas, it was the calm before the storm. Soon after breakfast, Pickets rushed by (one of them carrying a dying man before him), exclaiming 'the Yankees are coming' and sure enough, they soon came rushing by in immense force, firing in every direction on our Pickets. A sharp fight took place in the Village; a Yankee Colonel or Major was killed just before Mr. Robinson's door and many were wounded on both sides. They took twenty-five or thirty of our men prisoners, brought many of the wounded in our yard. . . . It was a sickening sight, blood in every direction. . . Had Col. Jones, who commanded a portion of the 7th Va. been supported, he could've bagged the whole concern . . . Grandma [Mrs. Peyton Grymes] bore the excitement better than we expected, though she suffered much."<sup>13</sup>

On the following Monday Fannie wrote: "The force here Saturday have sworn to shell the Village when they come next time. Many of the Villagers are leaving. Oh, that the day of retribution would speedily come. How long, O Lord. How long!"<sup>14</sup>

Soon after, following the battle of Cedar Mountain, Carter Braxton "walked in to breakfast" one morning. Fannie recalled in her diary: "We had one of our *old talks* this morning, but with rather a different result. The future, though, is much too uncertain to come to anything decisive; we will leave it so. I feel sorely perplexed and troubled. . . ." On August 16, when the family at Selma were leaving for Gordonsville to seek safety, Fannie and Carter met between Howard Place (now Mayhurst) and Litchfield (the Mustoe property) on the old Gordonsville Road). "We had another conversation, rather more explicit, but still nothing definite. . . ." It was about this time that Fannie, as she put it, summed up the day, a typical day: "A little fancy work, some reading, walking, laughing, talking, singing, eating and sleeping." Several months passed. In December 1862, the 8th, Carter Braxton was at Selma and Fannie noted: "It would have been better, I fear, to have postponed this matter, but too late now- 'The die is cast'." Then on Christmas Eve she received a letter from him, "enclosing a ring, a simple circlet of gold, with initials." And on Christmas Day, 1862, Fannie, in her own words, "summoned up courage and consigned Mr. Rhind's letters to the flames, every one. . . ." On February 16, 1865 Fannie Page Hume married Lt. Col. Carter Braxton at Selma. On June 16, 1865, four months to the day afterwards, Mrs. Fannie Page (Hume) Braxton, 27 years old, died in Richmond.<sup>15</sup>

With the respect to Alec Willis, the former slave whom I mentioned earlier, I remembered some of the things he told me and seemed to recall that there had been a newspaper article about him before the time I went to see him. But, as I began to collect material for my talk, I realized I didn't remember his name. Sara Collins initiated inquiries in the Washingtoniana Collection at the Martin Luther King Library

in Washington with a mutual friend of ours, but no luck. Sara checked with other institutions, but again with no results. Then, remembering that Edgar Kennedy's daughter was a lady named Mrs. Henning Nelms, I was able to get her telephone number from Mrs. Wine's grandson. She happily, remembered Willis's name. With that information, the Washingtoniana Collection found several newspaper articles, in fact, from both the *Washington Post* and the *Star* about Alec Willis.<sup>16</sup>

When I went to call on him back about 1950, I found him sitting quietly in a darkened living room in a house in Northwest Washington. "Alexander Willis, Former Slave, Admits He's 'Pretty Old' at 111" read the caption of one of the news articles. He did, indeed, seem very old. It was a strange feeling, I assure you, realizing that this man before me, talking quietly about a time almost unimaginable to us today, had been a slave, had been owned by another human being. It was a sobering experience. He was very pleasant, very willing to talk, though I did have the feeling that some of his memories may have been the result of what he had heard or been told or whatever over the years. Some of what he told me undoubtedly had a ring of authenticity, of what he himself had seen or experienced, of what he knew from firsthand knowledge. This was particularly true when he talked about the war, for that is the sort of thing that would leave an everlasting impression.<sup>17</sup>

We have learned of Fannie Page Hume's reaction to the happenings of the Saturday, August 2, 1862. Alec Willis was remembering the war when he described the fear of the people when the Federal troops came down the Rapidan Road in front of Elmwood on their way into Orange, probably on Saturday, August 2, 1862, and when he told of the gunfire and the cannonading which, the newspapers quoted him as saying, "sounded like Judgement Day." In fact, I recall his saying something like that when I interviewed him. But he would remember that sort of thing.<sup>18</sup>

I do remember also that he spoke of carrying his young master on his shoulder, and again the news articles reported that; and he did mention the whippings he had had for running away. According to the newspapers, he described his master, or his "boss man," as a "bad one." He described the scars down his back from whippings and how vinegar would be thrown into the cuts. The Kennedy family seemed to have good memories of Alec Willis, however; and Albert Kennedy is supposed to have ridden away from Elmwood, purportedly to pay a social visit, when one of his slaves had to be whipped. Such conflicting views could illustrate the divergent perceptions of the whites and the blacks; they could also indicate that the Hume-Kennedy family were not personally harsh on their slaves, which probably they were not, but that punishment was meted out by an overseer.<sup>19</sup>

Frank Hume of Washington, D. C. enlisted in the Confederate army in 1861 at the age of 18. It is interesting to us that he served in the Orange area, and in fact there is an anecdote about him. While on duty in the town of Orange, he accosted a stranger not in uniform and demanded to see his papers. The stranger produced them, and in turn asked Frank Hume to see his. Frank had none, but, thinking fast, tapped his revolver and said, "I am traveling on these papers." The other responded: "They are damned good papers."<sup>20</sup>

Following the war, Frank Hume, I learned, engaged briefly in farming in Orange County. That interested me. Where did he farm? Wondering if he owned a farm, I checked the records in the Clerk's Office. I could find no indication of that, but I did find that a deed of trust, executed in 1873, ran in his favor, securing the payment of a loan of \$1,000. The makers of the deed of trust were Mrs. Mary A. Parker and her children, including her daughter Annie and the latter's husband, Henry Ashton. The property conveyed as security was a farm of 222 acres on which Mrs. Parker resided, situated on the road from Orange Court House to Barnett's Ford



(present Route 15 from Orange to Madison Mills).<sup>21</sup>

At first I didn't pay much attention to this, although the deed of trust did specifically recite that Frank Hume was of Washington, D.C. But after thinking about it, I asked myself: Why would Frank Hume loan \$1,000 to just one person in Orange County, when there was no other record of his involvement there? It seemed to me that there was some specific reason, but what? Then it occurred to me that Mrs. Parker was possibly a relative of Frank Hume's, or at least a close friend, a family friend perhaps.

Suddenly, the names Parker and Ashton hit me. I remembered a girl I had known slightly when I was first in Orange after World War II--Betty Parker Ashton. She had worked for the National Bank and Shackelford & Robertson, and then went to Richmond to do newspaper work and had married. I had only seen her once or twice since. I got her married name and address from Shackelford & Robertson and called her.

"Betty Parker," I asked, "were the Parkers and Ashtons of Orange living out on Route 15, your people?" The answer was yes. Then I wanted to know if they owned a farm somewhere out there. The answer was again, yes, but Betty Parker was not sure which farm it was. She remembered it as being next the Wambersie land. I asked if she had ever heard of Frank Hume of Washington. Yes, indeed, he was a relative, a cousin perhaps; and she remembered being told that he had given an Ashton uncle, who was considered rather worthless, a job in Washington when no one else would hire him.

I then called Mrs. Ernest Wambersie in Orange, whom I had long known, and asked her if she could tell me which the Parker farm was. Yes indeed, again. It was the farm, Pembroke, later owned by the Bresee's and now owned by the Allens. Mrs. Wambersie had also heard of Frank Hume of Washington, as a cousin who had helped the Parkers and Ashtons.

But I still wanted to know the exact relationship of Mrs. Mary A. Parker and Frank Hume. From the Orange records I knew that Mrs. Parker's husband, William Parker, had died in 1866. At that point, I began to suspect that Frank Hume had come down to Orange to the Parker farm, since he had no land of his own, at least of record. But what was the reason? What was the connection?<sup>22</sup>

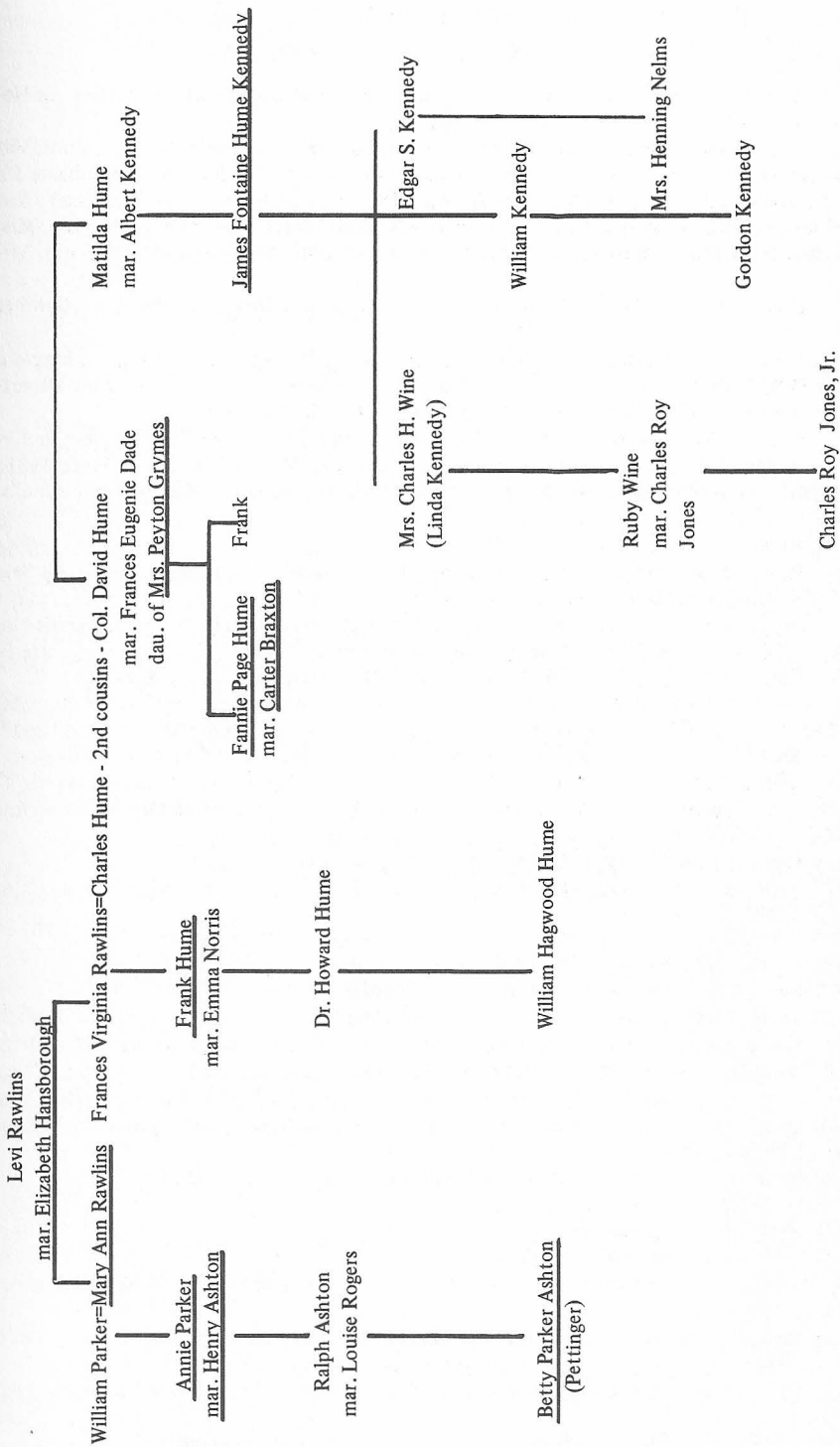
I went to Richmond to the Virginia State Library and checked to see if there was a Hansborough genealogy. This was a last hope, I felt, based on the fact that Frank Hume's mother, Frances Virginia Rawlins, was the daughter of a Hansborough. My luck held. There was a Hansborough genealogy, published only a year or so ago. And there was my answer: Mrs. Mary A. Parker had been Mary A. Rawlins, sister of Frances Virginia Rawlins, Frank Hume's mother. Mrs. Parker was Frank Hume's aunt.<sup>23</sup>

At William Parker's death in 1866, I have guessed, Frank Hume came down to the Parker farm to help out, possibly at his mother's or his aunt's suggestion, or on his own. He stayed for two years, and then returned to Washington and engaged in a very successful business career.

Frank Hume's portrait hangs in the Arlington Historical Society's museum, in the old Hume School building adjoining land given by Frank Hume for the cause of education in Arlington County. I have been delighted to share something of his life and that of his country cousins with members of the Arlington Historical Society, to whom Frank Hume and the Hume family mean so much.



Fannie Page Hume





## FOOTNOTES

\* This paper was presented to the Arlington Historical Society at its meeting on November 12, 1982.

1 The author wishes to acknowledge, in particular, the assistance of Sara J. Collins, Virginiana Librarian, Arlington County Public Library; Miss Kathryn C. Ray, Washingtoniana Division, Martin Luther King Library, Washington, D.C.; William Haywood Hume, Hume, Virginia; Mrs. Malcolm T. Moore, Orange, Virginia; Mrs. Ernest Wambersie, Orange, Virginia; Mrs. Betty Parker (Ashton) Pettinger, Richmond; Virginia; and Mrs. Henning Nelms, Oakton, Virginia.

2 See David John Mays, "Frank Hume," *The Arlington Historical Magazine* (October 1963), p. 5-7.

3 William H.B. Thomas, "Elmwood, Orange County, Virginia" (typescript, Washington, D.C., 1950); Frances Page Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862" (typescript copy, Manuscripts Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia).

4 Edgar Erskine Hume, *A Colonial Scottish Jacobite Family: The Establishment in Virginia of a Branch of The Humes of Wedderburn*. Richmond, Va., Old Dominion Press, 1931; William Everett Brockman, *Early American History: Hume and Allied Families*. Minneapolis, Minn., 1926.

5 Hume, *op. cit.*, p. 10, 61-69, 72-82.

6 Mays, "Frank Hume"; Willard J. Webb, "Frank Hume : An Arlingtonian for All Seasons," *The Arlington Historical Magazine* (October 1980), p. 4-13.

7 Additional material furnished by Mrs. Malcolm T. Moore, Orange, Virginia, included an article by Edgar Erskine Hume, "Memorial to George Hume, Esquire . . ." *Tyler's Quarterly Historical and Genealogical Magazine* 21, nos. 1 and 2 (July-October 1939); p. 6-54, 70-120.

8 For Col. David Hume and Hume family, see Brockman, *Hume and Allied Families*, p. 170-178, 182, and typewritten notes accompanying Fannie Hume "Diary, 1858-1862"; for memorial notice of Col. Hume, see Franklin Langdon Brockett, *The Lodge of Washington*. . . . Alexandria, Va., George French, c. 1875, p. 164; for killing of Col. Hume, see Homer T. Rosenberg, "Inauguration of Pres. Buchanan a Century Ago," *Records Columbia Historical Society*, 57-59 (1957-1959), p. 126.

9 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," Jan. 5-6, 1858; Feb. 6, 1858.

10 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," Feb. 15-16, 1858; Feb. 26, 1858; Mar. 8, 1858; Mar. 23, 1858.

11 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," May 20, 1858; Dec. 28-30, 1858.

12 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," May 6, 1860.

13 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," Aug. 2, 1862.

14 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," Aug. 4, 1862.

15 Fannie Hume, "Diary, 1858-1862," Aug. 12, 1862; Aug. 16, 1862; Aug. 20, 1862; Dec. 8, 1862; Dec. 24-25, 1862. For marriage of Fannie Page Hume, see Orange County Court Records, Marriage Register No. 1, 1757-1867, page 192. For death of Fannie Page Hume, see typewritten notes accompanying her diary, Manuscripts Department, Alderman Library, University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

16 *Washington Post*, Mar. 3, 1950; *Washington Evening Star*, Mar. 2, 1940.

17 *Washington Post*, Mar. 3, 1950.

18 *Washington Post*, Mar. 3, 1950.

19 *Washington Post*, Mar. 3, 1950.

20 Mays, "Frank Hume," p. 5; for Orange episode, see *Alexandria Gazette and Virginia Adviser*, Aug. 14, 1899.

21 Mays, "Frank Hume," p. 6; for deed of trust, see Orange County Court Records, *Deed Book* No. 48, p. 393.

22 For William Parker's death, see Orange County Court Records, *Deed Book* No. 46, p. 145.

23 John W. Hansborough, *History and Genealogy of the Hansborough-Hansbrough Family* . . . Austin, Texas: 1981, p. 64.