

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON BACON RACE ROAD AREA
From Donald Wilson, Virginia Librarian, Manassas

I found Samuel Jackson's deed to the Baptist Society, 12 May 1798 (Deed Book Z, p. 295) in which he conveyed three acres. The measurements of the boundaries are given, but they include such landmarks as "south side of the road by the meeting house," and "the road to Occoquan Mills." From this deed it appears a church was on or near the site before this date. Jack Ratclife {the late local historian) estimated the church at 1797 on his map. Frances Jones' study of local tax records showed the property had been for a church since 1794, although she judges the present building dates (on architectural clues) to ca. 1880. She says the source of the name Bacon Race is "unknown."

The earliest document I have found that gives the church its present name is John Wood's 1820 map of Prince William County, which calls it Bacon Race Meeting Housethere are a lot of discrepancies in the history of the church. Ren Conner says the present church was built in the early 19th century; Jack Ratcliffe says the first church was built about 1845. The article by Betty Calvin says the original church was built in 1782 which is probably too early for this congregation although there was a Baptist Society in the Occoquan area as early as 1776. No one has done a thorough job of sifting all the evidence, including Baptist records at other locations."

I am now of the opinion that the 1776 congregation was the forerunner of the Bacon Race congregation, perhaps at or near the same location.

The following appears in *"Folk Lore" of Early Settlers of America ...* by W. R. Morris (Carroll County, Va.), vol. 3 (1958), p. 178:

"Hammond Morris Sr., left Richmond County, Va., according to the records about the year 1760, and settled in Prince William County, Va. **He bought two hundred acres of land bordering on the Occoquan River and extending to Beachams or Bacons Run - an old horse racing track. So named because the bettors often put up bacon as a bet on horse racing. ... In 1778 he sold this same parcel of land to Bladen Blanseth {Blansett and Blanchet)"**

Page 180: "Hammond Morris took an active part in church work in that community. He was one of the organizers of Occoquan (first spelled Oconaquan) Baptist church. The first meeting house being built in 1774. His name appears on the following petition. Petition of Prince William Co. Baptist[s], May 11, 1776: To the Honorable Speaker and Members of the Honorable Convention of Va. The petition of a Baptist Church at Oconaquan, Prince William Co., hereby showeth, that whereas, this colony with others is now contending for the civil rights and liberties against the enslaving schemes of a powerful enemy." [They asked for equal rights for their denomination] [Hammond Morris moved to Surry County, N.C. in 1778/9.)

The above quote from a family that later moved to Carroll County, Virginia, supports the notion that there was a racetrack in the area, although they call it Bacon's Run instead of Bacon Race. As for the name "Bacon" - the author contradicts himself by suggesting that the name is both for a person (named Beacham or Bacon) and for a bacon prize. No explanation as to the source of this information, so it should be suspect.

I do find the following deed, dated 2 Feb. 1779: William Veale of Loudoun County and Lydia his wife sold to Alexander Henderson of Fairfax County 248 acres in Prince William County, which mentions as a boundary "a white oak standing at the head of Bakon Race being a corner tree of Capt. Burdit Ashton." William Veale was the heir of Morris Veale. [Prince William Deed Book T, p. 520-525)

6/7 Sept. 1764. John Ashton of Westmoreland County, gent., to Hector Ross of Fairfax County. Whereas Burditt

Ashton of Westmoreland County obtained a deed from the Proprietor dated 3 May 1728/9 [sic] for all that parcel of waste land being in Stafford County, now Prince William on the south side of main Branch of Occoquan ... (adjacent to) land of Morrise Veale and extending thence southeast to a white oak at the head of a raceground commonly called Boxing race [sic] thence east to hickory ... [Prince William County Deed Book Q, p. 164-168]

It appears that the race track was in existence at least as early as 1764. Have looked at the handwritten recorded copy and it does look like "Boxing race". I don't know the significance of the name.