

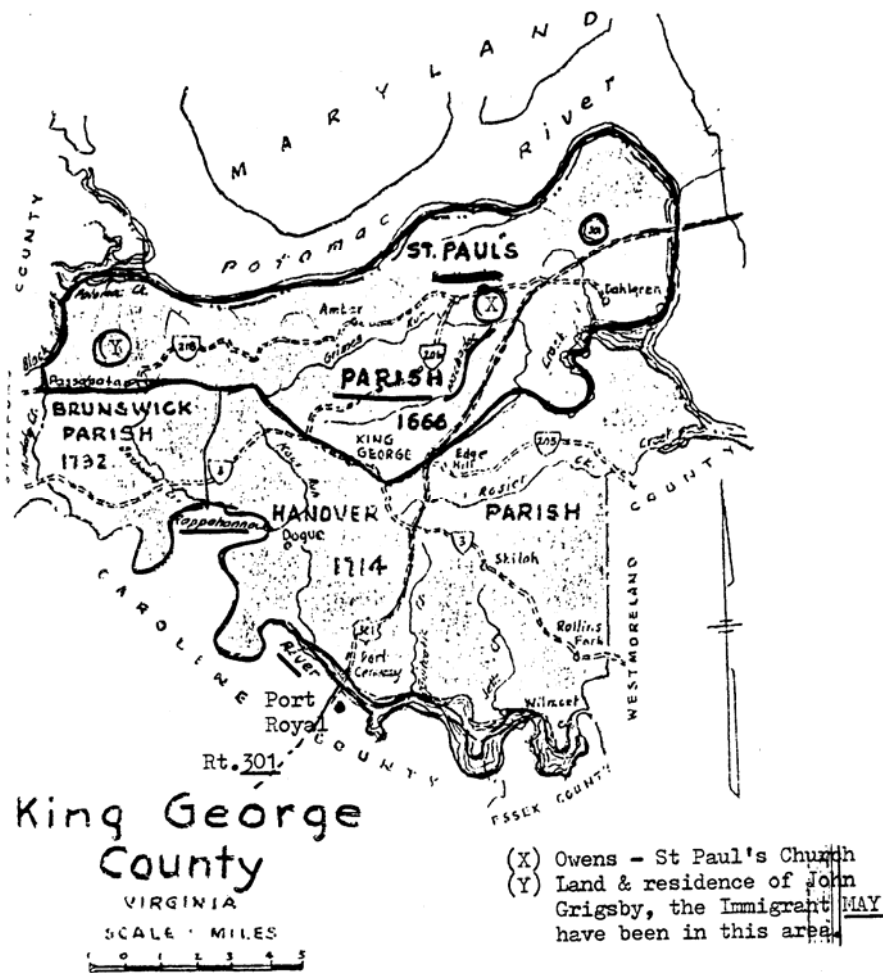
## “Immigrant John” Grigsby - Location of his Residence

By Matthew Beard and Bill Grigsby

Over the years, several attempts have been made to locate and document the residence of John Grigsby, the immigrant ancestor of most of the NGFS membership, in Virginia. The problem is that, unlike the existing homes in areas such as Rockbridge County, there does not seem to be a structure still existing in Stafford or King George Counties that appear to have been occupied by John and his family.

One of the earliest known structures in the area that John and his family lived is St. Paul's Episcopal Church located in King George. According to the history provided by its website, <http://stpaulskgva.org>, the church was first established in 1667 and met in the home of Robert Townsend of Chotank, about three miles from the current church building. Two wooden structures were built in 1690 and 1725 for church services in the current location. The present building was built from about 1766 to 1769, so John would not have attended services in that building since he died in 1730. However, from the listing of past rectors of the church, John would have seen the first six Reverends which led the church services while he was alive in that area.

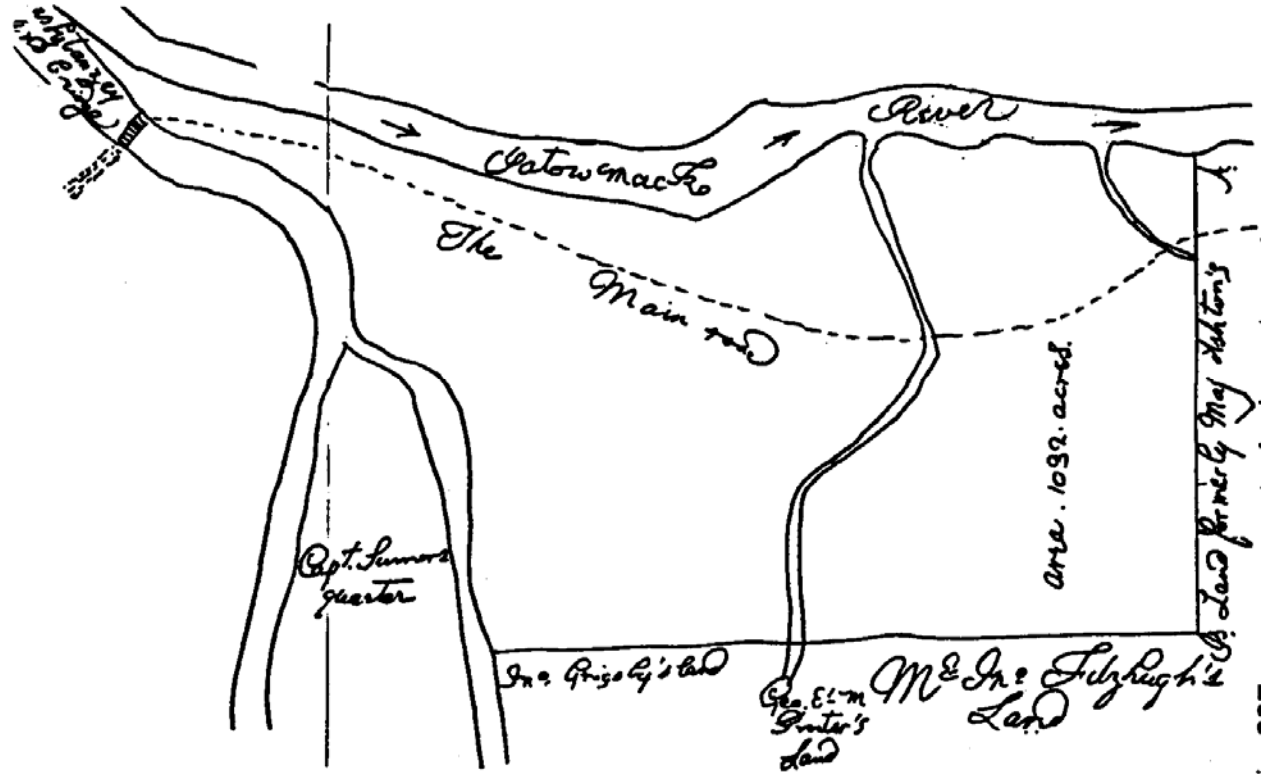
Robert E. Grigsby, in his article of “John Grigsby, The Immigrant—His Residence?”<sup>1</sup> provided a good summary of the information known at that point. He included a map provided the Virginian State Archivist, Louis H. Manarin in 1978 which shows an estimated location of the residence and the location of St. Paul's Church. This map is shown below:



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The discussion was continued in the July 1985 newsletter<sup>2</sup> with the article "The Stafford County Residence Of John Grigsby, 1685-1730". A 1718 map is shown with the note showing the border of one edge of "Jno. Grigsby's Land" in relation to the Passapatanzy Creek and a distance from the Potomac River. This map is shown below:



This article thus gives a good idea of one of the boundaries of John Grigsby's land in 1718. It should be kept in mind that his son, John, would have been in his mid to late 30's at the time and may have been the owner of the land, but it is not likely. Therefore, we will assume that this is Immigrant John's property.

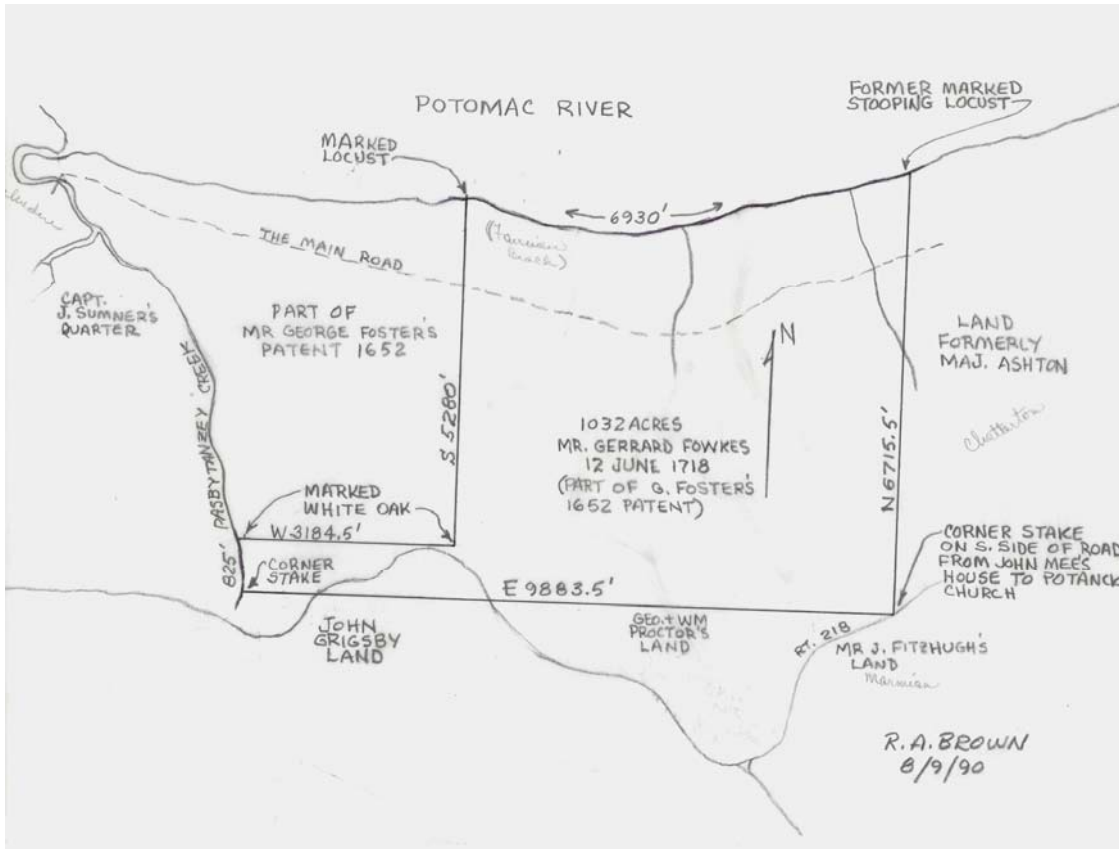
Mr. William "Bill" R. Grigsby, of Denver, Colorado, has spent some time looking at the various descriptions provided and has come up with some valid theories of the location of the property. He first references Lutha Grigsby's description in the January 1994 newsletter that states:

"All tracts of John's land were located in close proximity to each other, a short distance from the Passapatanzy and the Potomac River in Stafford County. The land was less than a mile from the Potomac, lying south of the current intersection of Route 696 and Route 218."

Lutha continued to describe the work that Robert and JoAnn Brown had performed in platting the land, so I spent some time looking through the files and found some of their work. One of those pieces of work includes the above mentioned map, but with a more detailed layout. This map is shown on the next page.

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Bill spent some time figuring out the dimensions of John Grigsby's 887 acres that was mentioned in Lutha's article. Here are the steps he took:

1. I have assigned my choice for the "greater branch" of the Passapatanzy Creek using the United States Department of the Interior Geological Survey map (1972 survey) for the Passapatanzy Quadrangle. I designated that branch near and southwest of the intersection of the 100° longitude and 44° latitude lines as the "greater branch." This is my arbitrary beginning point for the boundaries as described in the 1709 Deed for this property. The distances in poles and the directions the boundary lines run were taken from John Grigsby's 1709 deed for this property.
2. The point labeled A on my map is the arbitrary beginning point that I have positioned on the "East side of the Passapatanzy Creek and near the mouth of the greater branch of the Passapatanzy Creek. The boundary extends "up" the "branch South by South West" 462 poles to point B on my map. The boundary turns "East by South" for 240 poles" to point C. The boundary then runs "North half a point Westerly" for 96 poles to point D. The boundary courses East 178 poles to point E. The boundary then runs North by East 386 poles to point F. The boundary then runs North 60 degrees West for 90 poles to point G. Finally, the boundary runs West 212 poles to the beginning point A.

Boundary	Poles	Yards	Feet	Miles	Inches*	Direction
A → B	462	2,541	7,623	1.44	3.78	South South West
B → C	240	1,320	3,960	0.75	1.97	East by South
C → D	96	528	1,584	0.3	0.79	North 1/2 point West
D → E	178	979	2,937	0.55	1.44	East
E → F	386	2,123	6,399	1.21	3.18	North by East
F → G	90	495	1,485	0.28	0.74	North 60° West
G → A	212	1,166	3,498	0.66	1.73	To beginning point

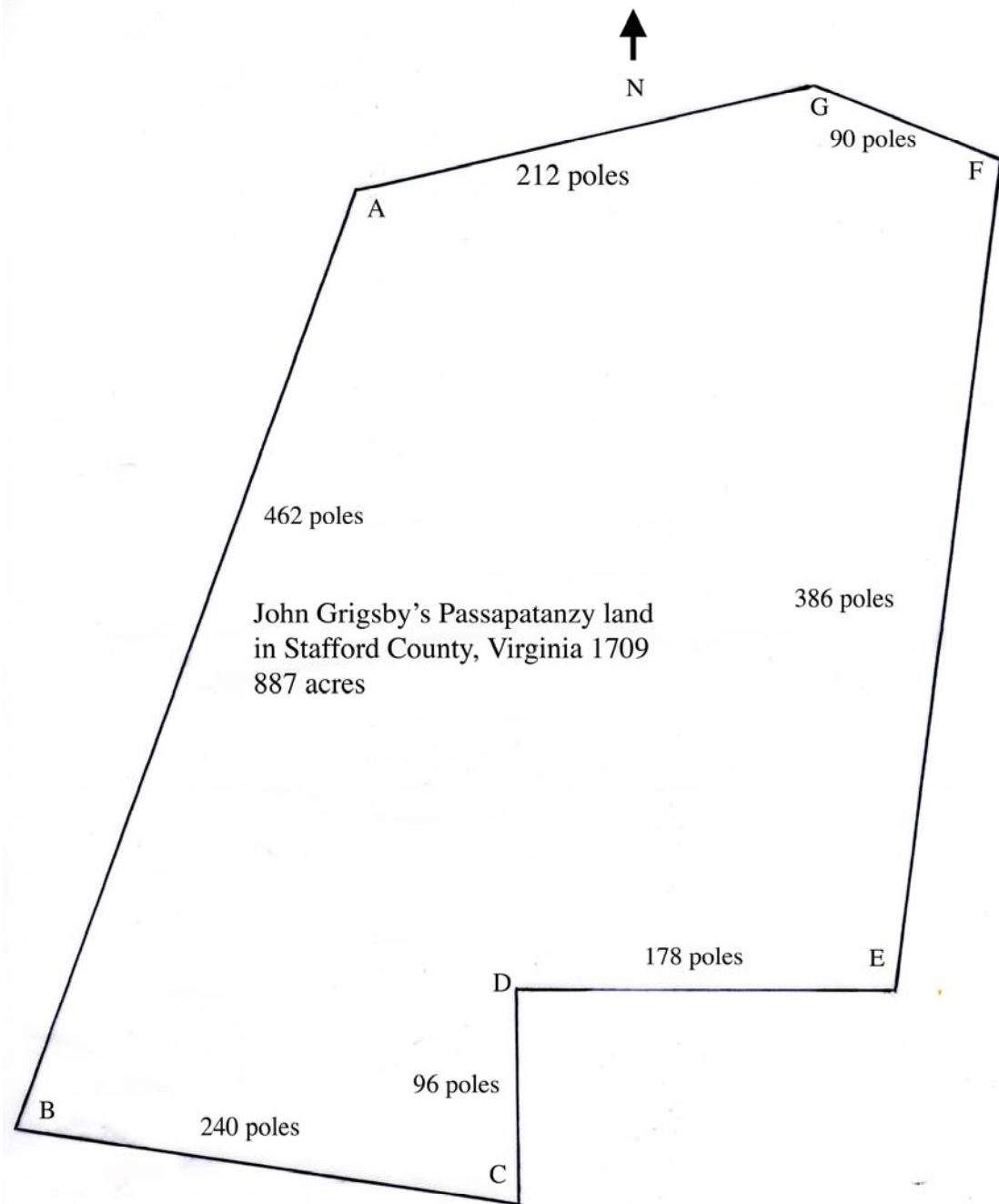
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3. I have converted the measurements in poles from the 1709 Deed into yards by using the conversion factor of 1 pole = 5.5 yards. These values were converted to feet and then to miles and subsequently to square miles which was converted to acres using 1<sup>2</sup> mile = 640 acres. My estimate for the number of acres in my model of this parcel of land is 912 compared to 887 as stated in the 1709 deed.

\*The inches column represents the distance on the Geological Survey map where the scale is 2.625 inches equals 1 mile.

From this conversion, Bill came up with the following drawing:



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Bill then estimated a location that he believes is representative of the property owned by John Grigsby. This location is close to the intersection of Highways 218 and 696. Bill went to that location on a research trip in the last year (June 2004) and determined that he was searching too far east of the location.



He now believes that the location is further east from Highway 696 along Highway 218; closer to Fredericksburg. As a side note, while he was looking in the area, he did find Redman Drive as shown in the picture to the right.



Highway 696 is the one labeled as Fairview Drive going into Fairview Beach. Bill now shows the property of John Grigsby covering the intersection of Highways 218 and 694 and covering the towns of Goby and Mustoe.

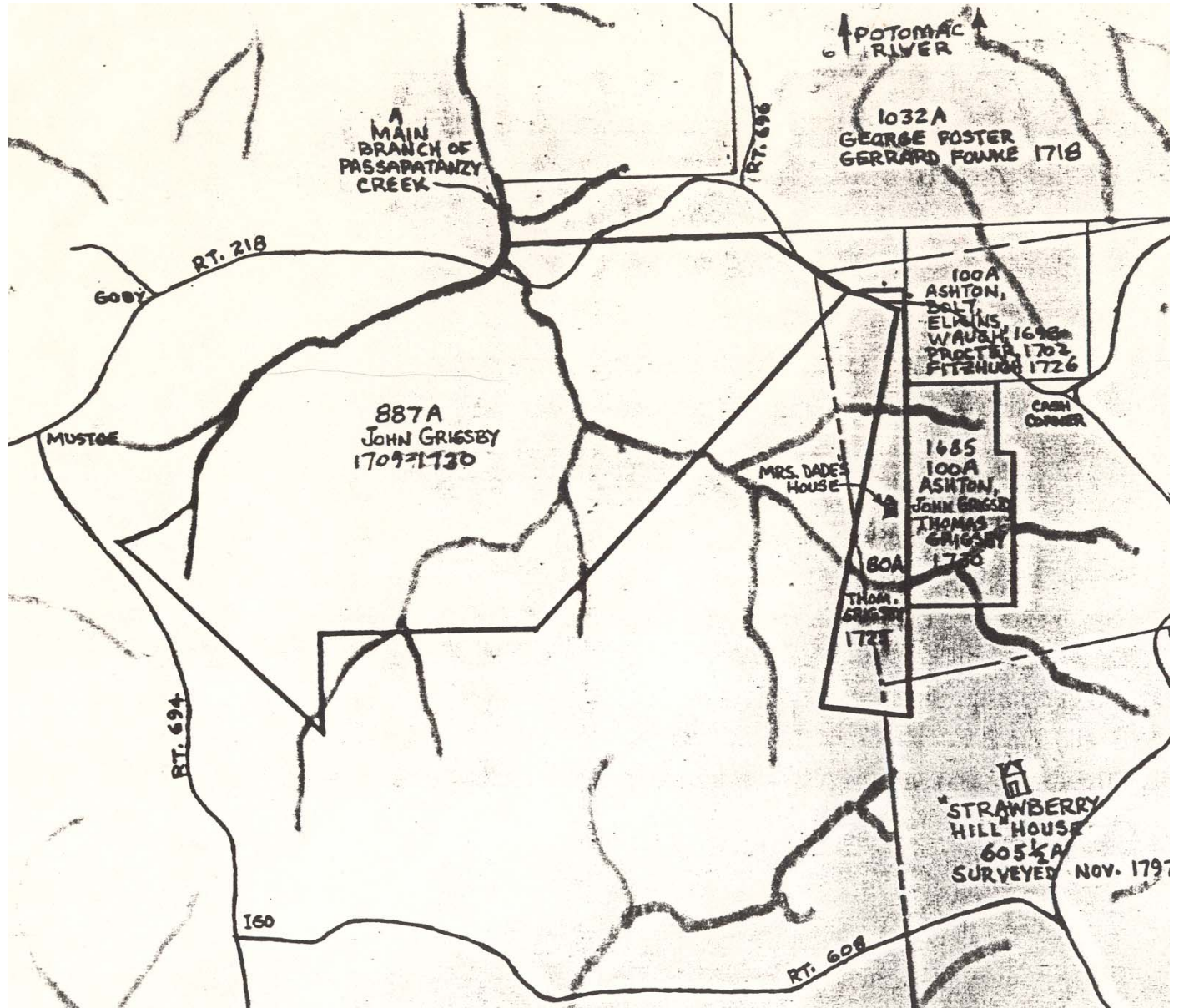
The map on the left that Bill is using is a U.S. Geological Survey map of the area that he has scanned in and drawn the estimation of John's property upon.

The general shape of the property is similar to that drawn by the Brown's as can be seen on the next page.

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As you can see in the map drawn by the Brown's in 1990, they also believed that the location is near the intersection of Highways 218 and 696. I believe that this was done based on the creek shown in the map due to a belief of it being a branch of Passapatanzy Creek as it is labeled. However, the Geological Survey map clearly shows that particular creek as being labeled Dirt Bridge Run Creek and thus not the one that is desired.

Due to the evidence of the U.S. Geological Survey map, it is my belief that Bill is probably correct in his estimation of the location of Immigrant John Grigsby's property, though the location of the house will probably always be a mystery. I am planning on going through that area before the Natural Bridge reunion. I am hoping to get some decent photographs of the location and the church to share with the society in the near future.

As a side note, the location identified by Bill Grigsby is about 10 miles from the St. Paul's Church and about 40 miles from the Washington residence in King George County. It is also about 12 miles east of Fredericksburg and the Washington's would have had to pass within a couple of miles of the property when traveling to or from Fredericksburg, which was the largest town within a couple of days journey.

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I would like to thank Bill Grigsby for taking the time and effort of sharing his research with me and allowing me to share it with the rest of the society. It helps when several different people look at the same information and come up with similar results as he and the Brown's did.

#### Sources:

- <sup>1</sup> - Nicholson, Elizabeth M. (ed), 1979, "*John Grigsby, The Immigrant - His Residence?*", Memorabilia, The Grigsby Family Reunion Book, 1779-1979. Wampeter Press, Green Harbor, MA., pp. 25-29.
- <sup>2</sup> - Grigsby, Lutha, and Mottley, Margaret (ed), 1996, "*The Stafford County Residence of John Grigsby, 1685-1730*", National Grigsby Family Society Newsletter, 1981-1995. The National Grigsby Family Society, pp. 25-29.