



# Barry Lawrence Ruderman Antique Maps Inc.

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## **[Plat for a large parcel in Fairfax County, Virginia, belonging to Captain Willoughby Newton] - Manuscript Survey of 6,420 Acres owned by Captain Willoughby Newton, Surveyed by Elias Davis == dated January 17, 1748**

**Stock#:** 37582mb  
**Map Maker:** Davis  
  
**Date:** 1748  
**Place:** Fairfax County, Virginia  
**Color:** Pen & Ink  
**Condition:** See Description  
**Size:** 23 x 21.5 inches  
  
**Price:** SOLD



### **Description:**

Rare 18th-century plat describing a large area of Fairfax County, Virginia, at a far larger scale and in greater detail than on any map published in the 18th century.

The area depicted is located in Fairfax County, Virginia, along the Bull Run creek, an area that would in the following century become important as the setting for the skirmishes that presaged the First Battle of Bull Run (July 21, 1861), the first proper land battle of the U.S. Civil War. At the time, the region was a moderately prosperous agrarian region, not far from the Potomac River, one of the great transport corridors of Virginia and Maryland.

The plat describes a 6,420 acre parcel in the vicinity of the present-day town of Centreville, in Fairfax County, Virginia. Owner Captain Willoughby Newton had assembled it in the 1740s by combining a large grant of 3,600 acres with the purchase of adjacent land, including parcels owned by his brothers in law Samuel and Thomas Eskridge.

The plat depicts the parcel bounded by Bull Run Creek to the south, Cub Run to the west, and Little Rocky Run to the east. In addition to showing the geographic features and boundary measurements common to such surveys, the plat identifies the road to the warehouse on the Occaquan River, more than a dozen



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residences (presumably occupied by tenants of Newton), neighboring land owners, a mill along Rocky Cedar Run, and the "new church."

The extensive accompanying text lists the sources of the various parcels assembled by Newton and describes the boundaries of Willoughby's holdings using the traditional "metes and bounds" method. This involved selecting a starting point (in this case "a marked gum tree") and measuring the boundary as a continuous sequence of bearings and distances connecting known landmarks around the perimeter until returning to the starting point.

The verso is docketed "Captn. Willoby. Newton's including Deed for ,6421 Acres of Lnd in the County of Fairfax Deed drawn." The plat originally may have accompanied a deed, but the latter is no longer present.

On July 18, 1861 the property once owned by Newton was the site of Union General McDowell's failed attempt to cross Bull Run Creek and flank Beauregard's Confederate army. Just a few days later, of course, the Union Army experienced a shocking defeat at the First Battle of Bull Run, just a few miles to the west.

#### **Willoughby Newton and Elias Davis**

Willoughby Newton (1702-1767) was the eldest son of Captain Thomas Newton of Westmoreland County. When the elder Newton passed in 1727/28 his son's substantial inheritance included the family plantation in Cople Parish, several pieces of land totaling perhaps one thousand acres, a mill at Totaskey in Richmond County, and at least seven slaves. Records show that Newton continued to acquire property throughout his life, and at his death he left a very substantial estate, with the contents of his homes alone valued at over 2,000 pounds.

Elias Davis was a surveyor from Westmoreland County. He is mentioned in connection with a couple of Northern Neck property surveys in the early 1740s. An article in the *Virginia Magazine of History and Biography* (vol. 10 no. 3) mentions an Elias Davis in Westmoreland owning 3 slaves in 1782.

The survival rate for plats from the mid-18th Century is very low. As no printed map of the era depicted this area in such detail, this map is perhaps the only surviving comprehensive visual record of the area, and is a fine and authentic artifact relating to property surveying during the Colonial period.

#### **Detailed Condition:**



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Manuscript in ink on 4 joined sheets laid paper. Docketed in ink on verso. Condition: Numerous separations and small losses along old folds, obscuring several words of the text and crudely repaired on the verso with cellophane tape. Rectilinear pattern of circular stains from red, waxy substance used to join sheets.