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Peter Jones land

To his son Abraham

Surveyed Oct 1719 by Robert Bolling
... a tract of Land Lying on the North Side
of Nottoway River in Prince George County
on the Uper Side of The Harricane Swamp
bounded Vizt: beginning at a Corner near
Dogwood marked fourways ar a Short turn
of the Watercourse of the Said Swamp...

"on the
Uper Side
of
The Harricane Swamp"

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By CHARLES EDGAR GILLIAM
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"HARRICAN" IN COLONIAL VIRGINIA RECORDS

By CHARLES EDGAR GILLIAM

The English word hurricane is derived through the Spanish from the Carib term huracan, meaning a violent wind and water storm.¹

Among the English between 1555 and 1652 it was used alone and in combination with other words to denote, among other things, (1) a large gathering of people, (2) a safe place, or (3) specifically, a shelter from high wind and water.² Another probable use would seem to have included a place where people gathered. Indeed, its use in Colonial Virginia indicates that it may well have had such a meaning here.³

Today a road, known as the Halifax Road runs from the City of Petersburg, Virginia, to Stony Creek. Possibly as early as 1695, certainly by 1720, Monkey's Neck Road⁴ followed approximately the same route from Appomattox Ferry. This ferry circa 1700 to 1752 crossed the Appomattox river from Tunstall's Neck 1638, known successively thereafter as Archer's Point 1665, John Bolling's 1732, Pocahontas 1752, to Bolling's Point on the south side, about a mile below Fort Henry 1646-1676, and about one-half mile below Peter's Point 1681-1732, which was divided into town lots as the Town of Petersburg in 1733 to become the chartered Town of Petersburg in 1748.⁵

About eight miles south of the City of Petersburg on Jones' Hole Road, not far east of the Halifax Road, in present Dinwiddie county, there are several low elevations, early known as harricans, one of which was styled the harrican.⁶

On October 22nd., 1740, the vestry of Bristol Parish ordered "that the Southern Chapel be built at the Harrican nearest to the best water".⁷ This church was commonly known as the Jones' Hole Church.⁸

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For miles around its site the land is comparatively level, low and swampy, there being but few hills of any height. Nearby rises Jones' Hole Creek and other small headwaters, which unite and find slow passage seaward through Harrican Swamp. Even today the section is poorly drained. That the general area was wetter some two hundred years ago seems certain.⁹

These harricans, among which was the hurrican upon which the church was built, lie about three-quarters of a day by wagon-train from the site of the south Appomattox Ferry landing.¹⁰

No doubt very early settlers bound for seating lands between the Appomattox and North Carolina camped about them their first night south from Appomattox Ferry. Without any doubt in very wet weather these harricans were indeed the only dry and safe places available for such over-night stops in that vicinity near old Monkey's Neck Road.¹¹

Hence, the names of these low elevations used for natural refuge from wind and water in the vicinity of Reams Station, Virginia, and of other widely scattered places known as the harrican, the herrikin, the Harry Cain, the Hurricane, etc., in at least three Virginia counties.¹²

Perhaps, as travel encreased and before there were many inns, permanent over-night shelters were built on these harricans; and, thus, they were during the earliest years of the 18th century in fact places where travelers gathered.¹³

