

Mad Anne Bailey

Pioneer Anne Bailey's place in West Virginia history is tied to an event that may not have happened. She is often credited with carrying gunpowder from [Lewisburg](#) to relieve a 1790 siege on [Fort Lee](#) at the site of present Charleston. Contemporary chroniclers make no mention of this siege, and subsequent historians consider the tale apocryphal. Nevertheless, "Mad Anne" Bailey remains a powerful symbol of the fortitude required of frontier women.



Bailey was born Anne Hennis in Liverpool, England, in 1742. How she came to Virginia is a subject of some debate; however, it is certain she lived in Staunton by 1761 and married Richard Trotter in 1765. After Richard was killed at the 1774 [Battle of Point Pleasant](#), Anne became a scout and spent 11 years roaming the Western Virginia wilderness, relaying messages between frontier forts. About 1785, she married John Bailey, a Greenbrier County soldier, but she did not give up scouting.

Regardless of the veracity of the Fort Lee story, Anne Bailey's services to frontier settlements were invaluable. When the 1795 [Treaty of Greenville](#) ended the border wars between Indians and European settlers, Bailey continued her wanderer's life, carrying mail between Staunton and Gallipolis, Ohio. She has also been credited with driving livestock from the Shenandoah to the Kanawha Valley.

Bailey spent her last years in Gallipolis, living near her son, William Trotter. According to tradition, and in keeping with the many accounts of her eccentricities, she refused to live in William's house and built her own cabin from fence rails. She died in 1825.

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Citations

1. Hall, Grace McCartney. "Anne Bailey in West Virginia Tradition." *West Virginia History*, (Oct. 1955).