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Kent County--the Garden of Eden

SEEK sequestered vale and mountain; tread the Globe from pole to pole,
Not one spot like "Old Kent County" has the charm to reach the soul.
'Tis the bourne at which men marvel, 'tis the one supremely blest,
'Tis the "fairest of ten thousand" and of God's creation—Best.

The Isle of Kent, the proud but beautiful Virgin Queen of the Chesapeake. On the 16th day of December, 1642, Mr. Giles Brent was appointed, by commission, to be the Commander of the Isle and County of Kent; to be Chief Captain in all matters of warfare; and to be Chief Judge in all matters, civil and criminal, happening within the said Island, not extending to life or member or freehold. In the same commission also, William Ludington, Richard Thompson, and Robert Vaughan were appointed to be commissioners within the said Island to all powers and effects as to commissioners of a county by the law of the province do or shall belong. Governor Calvert, the 18th day of April, 1647, commissioned Robert Vaughan to be chief captain and commander of all the militia and of the Island of Kent, and invested him with the power of martial law. The first parliament of Maryland assembled April, 1649, at St. Mary's, fifteen years after the landing of the Pilgrims under Governor Calvert. Kent was the only other county within the limits of the principality. Capt. Nicholas Martin represented the county in the parliament and was paid 26 pounds of tobacco each day ($1.56).

This county was named after the English shire from whence came most of the early settlers, who saw in its smiling landscape a replica of the fairest county of England.

It has an area of 315 square miles, of which about 75 miles are water. It has 435 miles of county roads.

In 1648 the county had 135 persons. In 1652-3 there were 66 white males and 330 white souls in Kent. In 1910 there were 10,795 white inhabitants and 5,162 colored.

It is separated from Delaware on the east by a line run by Mason and Dixon. The western boundary is formed by the upper portion of the Chesapeake Bay, while the Sassafras River separates it from Cecil and the Chester River from Queen Anne's County. The county is located between the parallels of 39 degrees and 39 degrees 22 minutes, south latitude, and between the meridians of 75 degrees 42 minutes and 75 degrees 16 minutes, west longitude.

In 1910 the farms in Kent were estimated at 956, the average acreage 179.

Total Assessment of Property, 1919.

Real and personal.....	$12,171,754 00
Shares of corporations..	81,181.35
Ordinary business corp..	53,427.07
Securities.....	$701,031.00
Bank shares.....	314,210.16

Expenses of county, $168,301.31; $1.32 tax rate

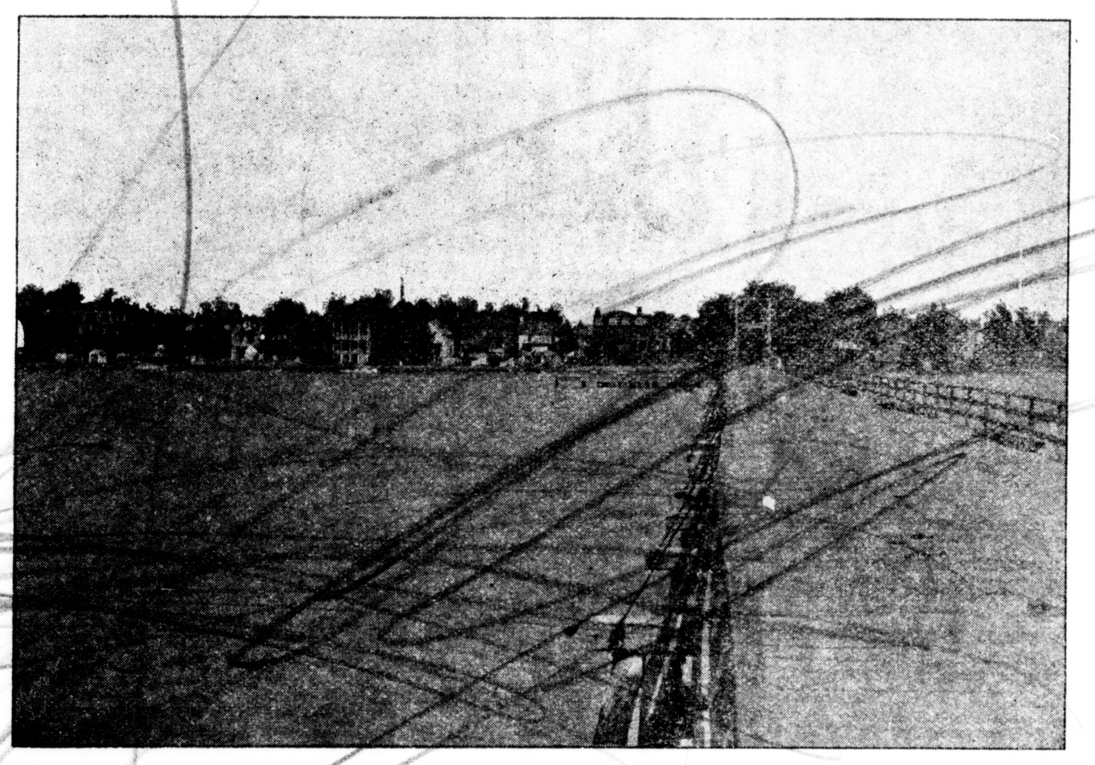
It is indeed pleasant to wander amid these historic scenes, but the Good Book says, "Where there is no vision, the people perish," and we must pass on to the Elysian fields made by those who have caught the vision.

Superb Old Kent! Her fruitful fields all aglow with the pink flush of prosperity.

Her orchards making a painted picture as the trees bend with their precious crops.

Her valleys and hills covered with velvety green, affording fine pasture for the flocks and herds that are owned by an industrial people.

Bay and river surround and hug the county as lovingly as a devoted mother lays her arm about her offspring, while fish, oysters, and wild fowl make rich food for our happy people.



CHESTER BRIDGE AND CHESTERTOWN WATER FRONT

No better climate can be found—changes occur to suit all tastes. Cold in summer at times and peach blossoms at Xmas occasionally.

Transportation swift and all to be desired, while city markets are at our very doors.

Schools of the highest class and churches to attract all believers.

In short, old Kent is the ideal spot in which to make your home, with its happy and contented people, cultured society and jovial spirits.

A View From Airplane.

Sailing across the Chesapeake we first pass that noted resort, Tolchester, and linger a while over the battle grounds at Caulk's Field only a few miles away. There on the last night of August, 1814, the Twenty-first Regiment of Maryland Militia, under Col. Philip Reed, engaged a detachment of British soldiers and sailors off the ship "Menelaus," under the command of Capt. Sir Peter Parker. Captain Parker was killed and the British defeated with a loss of 43 dead and wounded. The American forces had only 3 men wounded and none killed.

From Caulk's Field we go to old St. Paul's Church, which is at the head of the northeast branch of Lankford's Bay. This church was built in 1713 and is the oldest building in this State that has been in continual use as a place of public worship. The grove of oak trees that surrounds the church has been recently trimmed and treated by a trained forester. Not far from the largest of the oak lies the slab marking the grave of Thomas Tilghman once Provincial Councillor of Pennsylvania, the father of Col. Tench Tilghman, who was confidential secretary and aide-de-camp of General Washington. When Col. Tench Tilghman carried the news of the surrender of Cornwallis to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia he crossed the bay at Annapolis to Rock Hall. There he was furnished a horse, and in his ride to Philadelphia he followed the old post road through this county by way of Forktown (now Edesville), passing by old St. Paul's Church, then to Chestertown and on to Georgetown, where he crossed the Sassafras River.

Our ride has taken us through Chestertown, Still Pond, to Betterton, where we had a beautiful view of the Chesapeake Bay. From this pretty little summer resort we come to old Shrewsbury Church. The whole of this beautiful country is dotted with places of historic interest. Here at Shrewsbury we are reminded of the time when William the Third was the King of England and of his assuming the government of the Province of Maryland, sending to Annapolis the first Royal Governor, Sir Lionel Copley. Under this Governor the law to establish the Church of England was enacted. This was in 1632 and Shrewsbury was one of the thirty such parishes erected within the province.

By the proclamation of the Proprietary in 1674 the county of Cecilton was erected, including within its bounds the whole of the upper part of this county, as far south as a line drawn from near Fairlee Creek to Morgan's Creek at about Goose Hill. This proclamation met with a storm of protests from those people living in this section and in 1706 the territory was given back to Kent by the act of the Assembly. The Sassafras became the boundary between the two counties. Howell's Point was taken up by Thomas Howell, at whose house mention is made in the early records of one county of "court" being held there. This property had been surveyed in 1667 for Col. Nathaniel Utie, the father-in-law of Thomas Howell and contained 600 acres of land. Colonel Utie was a great man in those times and lived on the Island now called "Spesutia" Island, so named by him, the word being Latin, meaning Utie's Hope.

To the south of Howell's Point lies that pretty stream of water called "Still Pond Creek," and whose name is ascribed to a very deep pond at its source, which is said to have never been frozen over. This tradition may be taken for what it is worth, but in the land records at very early times, as well as on the map of Maryland made in 1673 by the famous Augustine Herman, of Bohemia, the name of this stream is spelled "Steelpone" Creek.

To the Assembly records of 1674 we are indebted for the mention of a town laid out to the north of us on the Sassafras River, near Turner's Creek, at Meeting House Point. This town is called Shrewsbury and was ordered in 1706 to be abandoned and laid out further up the river and to be called Georgetown. At the mention of this pretty old town we naturally think of the burning of the homes there by the British in 1814. We recall also the heroism of Kitty Knight, who successfully defied the British to burn her home.

It was at this house on the 28th of October, 1718, that there was held a meeting of the prominent men of the provinces of Maryland and Pennsylvania to settle the dispute which had arisen about the boundary line of the two provinces. Governor Hart, of Maryland, and Governor Wm. Keith, of Pennsylvania, were there, and with them were Col. Thomas Smyth and Maj. James Harris, of Kent, and Col. John French, of Pennsylvania.