OLD KENT

NOTES ILLUSTRATIVE OF THE EARLY RECORDS OF KENT COUNTY, MARYLAND, BY GEORGE A. HANSON, M. A. OF RADICLIFFE HALL

The value and interest of a Work, such as I am writing, will depend upon the reliability of its accuracy, the fidelity of its research, the authenticity of the 'LIBERS' cited and the truthfulness and fullness of my citations.

For my Notes and Illustrations I must depend, mainly, upon the authors heretofore, named, in my introductory communications. Since, the writing of them, I have obtained a copy of that rare and quaint old book, "A CHARACTER OF THE PROVINCE OF MARY-LAND, Wherein is Described in four distinct Parts, (viz.) I. The Situation and plenty of the Province. II. The Laws, Customs, and natural Demeanor of the Inhabitants. III. The worst and best Usage of a Mary-Land Servant opened in view. IV. The Traffique, and Vendable Commodities of the Country. ALSO a small TREATISE on the WILDE and NAKED INDIANS (or Susquehannokes) of MARYLAND, their Customs MANNERS, ABSURDITIES, and RELIGION. Together with a Collection of Historical LETTERS, by GEORGE ALSOP. London, Printed by T. J. for Peter D ring, at the sign of the Sun in the Poultrey; 1666." For which, I am indebted to the kindness of Col. J. THOMAS SCHARF, author of "The Chronicles of Baltimore;" and I also owe to his courtesy, a copy of that valuable work, "Bacon's Laws of Maryland at Large," which will resolve many questions, concerning which I should have been forced to leave my readers without any explanation, on my part.

Having mentioned, previously, the principal sources of my information, I will not always name the writer from, whom I may glean a scrap of information, and will, only, do so when I shall state a circumstance, which I receive upon the authority of one author, alone. The most of the facts, obtained from General History are so well known, that the citation of name and page will not, materially, assist an intelligent reader. Nevertheless there are some facts, only incidentally mentioned, and, in out of the way places, and not likely to catch of the eye of a cursory reader, which when brought in close connection with the affairs of Kent county, will appear pertinent and striking. In all such cases, I will be particular to give a special reference.

The Early Records of Kent County, Maryland, which I propose to take as my Text and to illustrate, are the 'COURT PROCEEDINGS OF KENT COUNTY COURT,' from the year 1647 to 1698. They contain an authentic history, and the only authentic memorial of the most important acts and doings of our ancestors.

By their light we will be able to explore many of the obscure passages of their lives. We shall see the marks they made, while living, upon their own times and need no monumental inscriptions to reveal their characters. We will, I trust, be able to feel the very pulse of the community, in which they moved, lived and had their being. Many a noble act will be obscured in technical phraseology, only alluded to, in stiff legal language, but, which when carefully considered, will suggest, to the mind of the reader, an image of as warm flesh and blood, and of as pure generosity and of manly or womanly feeling, as ever dignified manhood. In presenting such "simple annals of the poor," for our ancesters, in this county, for the most part were, at first, poor in worldly goods, though rich in heavenly endowments, I will not attempt to hide their weaknesses, nor to conceal their necessities. I will neither varnish over their quarrels, dissensions and hatreds, nor will I touch slightingly upon their loves. If they did good deeds, and uttered noble words, I will narrate their actions and quote their language with pride and pleasure,—but, and if, their ways were naughty and they said bad words, I will tell the story with sadness and blush while I write the words. To present to you the mirror, they made and left to us, of themselves, and of their own times, will be my object. Where and as they left it broken or mutilated, so I find it broken or mutilated, and in that same condition I must show it to you, my reader. I will attempt to tell you of their birth, their marriage and of their death. And in fine, will if possible exhaust all sources of information within my power to illustrate their lives; but having done all that, I will be sorry, if I have told you the one half part, as much, as the plain Record will suggest to your mind and imagination.

And, now, as to the Records themselves. There can arise no question as to their authenticity. The mere mention of their names establishes their credibility. They are the Proceedings of Kent County Court. In many parts they are defaced and mutilated. In order to read them with absolute certainty I am often compelled to use a powerful microscope. Of course, there are some whole pages so stained with dust, smoke and age, or the ink has eaten away and destroyed the substance of the paper, that not one word can be deciphered; and here and there a fragment of a leaf and a portion of the text is destroyed; in such last named cases I will designate the missing words, thus * * * by stars, where the word or words are lost from either cause.

The first Book I will quote from is LIBER A. Court Proceedings from 1647 to 1656. It consists of two parts, each containing about one hundred folios. The first part extending from 1647 to 1654, and the second part from 1654 to 1656. Many years ago they were removed from Chestertown, with many other documents. About the year 1865 or 1866 I saw them in Baltimore, and borrowed them, at different times, to complete my private collection of notes on my native county. From the first part I obtained copious extracts and with LIBER No. 1 Land Records, in which is transcribed all that is important relating to land, I believe I possess all that is of any historical interest contained, in the said first part of LIBER A. Court Proceedings. The first part of LIBER A. cannot now be found. I have recently visited Baltimore and Annapolis, for that purpose, and searched every place where I thought it might be. I am afraid that it is lost. If so, the extracts I made, and now propose to publish are the only memorials extant of that interesting and valuable manuscript. I shall publish them in perfect confidence that if the originals shall be found my reputation for accuracy will not suffer. The second part is accessible, and when I quote from it will take care that the correctness of my extracts will be certified, to by the proper officer of of the Court. I am, gratefully, glad to be able to say to my readers that both the Clerk and the Register of the county, have cheerfully consented to assist me in laying before my readers certified copies of all the papers in their offices, I may desire for publication. This therefore, will be as authentic a presentation of all that is interesting in the Early Records of Kent County as can possibly be prepared by the author.

As a matter of obvious convenience, I will arrange my quotations and extracts from the Records, in Sections, so numbered that they can be readily distinguished by the reader. The Notes and Illustrations will also be arranged in sections properly numbered and designated by LETTERS.

I have said that from Liber A. No. 1 Land Record I can obtain many facts, originally, recorded in part first of Liber A. Court Proceedings. The Liber will be so often used by me, that I will give its history, and then the reader can form a just estimate of its value and authenticity.

The Legislature of Maryland in the year 1716 awoke to the vast importance of making a better provision for the preservation of the State and County Records, which were, even then, in a very bad condition.

I will let the Book, now, tell the rest; it is of age and can speak for itself.

Section 1. "By virtue of an Act of Assembly Entituled An Act for Repairing the Damages already sustained in the Records of the Land, Secretary's, Commissary's and County Court Offices and for the security of the same Records for the future, made at a Session of Assembly begun and held at the City of Annapolis the Seventeenth Day of July, Anno Dom. seventeen hundred and sixteen.———

By Virtue whereof the Commissioners for Kent County mett at the Court house in the Town of Chester in said County this Day of in the twelfth Year of the Dominion of CHARLES Absolute Lord and Prop'ry of the Province of Maryland, and Avalon Lord Baron of Baltimore—Anno Dom. seventeen hundred twenty and seven, Being present Mr. Lambert Wilmer, Mr. Thomas Ringgold, Mr. Abraham Redgrave, Mr. William Frisby, Mr. Frederick Hanson, Mr. James Wilson Junr., Mr. John Evans, and Mr. George Skirven. The above Commrs.

Inspecting into the Record Books of the aforesaid County do adjudge that reparations are needfull in what relates to Land and that the same be Transcribed by James Smith of the aforesaid County which are as follows viz:—

May 15, 1727.
The Worshp'll.
Mr. Lambert Wilmer,
Mr. Thomas Ringgold,
Mr. Abrm. Redgrave,
Mr. William Frisby,
Mr. Fredk. Hanson,
Mr. Jams. Wilson Junr.
Mr. John Evans,
Mr. Geo. Skirven,
Commrs. Present.

The aforesaid James Smith proceeds to Transcribe out of an old Record Book what relates to Land as follows viz— Liber A. No. 1 page 1.

State of Maryland, Kent County, Sct:

I hereby certify that the aforegoing is a true and correct extract, taken from Liber A. No. 1, folio., a Land record book of Kent County aforesaid.

In testimony whereof I hereunto set my hand and affix the seal of the Circuit Court for Kent County, on this first day of April in the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and seventy-five.

SEAL

D. C. BLACKISTON, Clerk.

Sec. 1. a. The reader will remark that in 1727, Chestertown was not called by its present name. In the year 1706 an Act was passed, "An Act for Advancement of Trade, and erecting Ports and Towns in the Province of Maryland." (Act of 1706 chap. xiv.) "By this Act, From and after the End of this present Session, the Towns, Ports and Places hereafter mentioned, shall be the Ports and Places where all ships and vessels, trading into this Province, shall Unlade and put on Shore, all Negroes, Wares, Goods, Merchandizes, and Commodities whatsoever," and the following Towns were erected in Kent County, viz:

One, "In Chester River, on a Plantation of Mr. Joce's, between Mr. Wilmer's and Edward Walvin's Plantation."

One, "In Worton Creek, on a Tract of Land where Francis Barnes lives, formerly laid out for a Town."

And one, "At Sassafras River, where Shrewsbury Town was."

This Act was disallowed by "our Sovereign Lady Anne" and did not have any force.

In the year 1730 an Act was passed "An Act for laying out the Town a-new, commonly-called CHESTER Town, in Kent County, and for ascertaining the Bounds thereof." (Act of 1730, Chap. xv.)

This Act (1) sets forth that a Town was formerly (viz: by the Act of 1706, chap. 14) laid out in Kent County, on Chester River, commonly called Chester-Town, or New-Town, containing one hundred Acres of Land; the Bounds whereof were very uncertain, and the Improvement very much hindered, by Reason that all the Lots were not taken up and improved in time, etc. (2) Appoints and Impowers certain Commissionerse to survey and lay out the One Hundred Acres of Land as agreeable, as conveniently may be, to the Original Survey where first laid out for a Town. (3) The Commissioners, with the Assistance of a skilful Surveyor, sometime before the 1st November next; (was it hard to find?) to meet at the Town, and carefully survey and lay out the said One Hundred Acres, into 100 convenient Lots, divided, marked and number'd from 1, to 100, with Streets, Lanes, etc. (4) The Commissioners to cause the Survey to be made as near as possible to the Original Plan of the Town, unless the Lines by the said original Survey. make any considerable Variation Encroachment on the Lots therein already improved and built upon: In which Case, the Commissioners to make the same Survey, in such Manner that the Owners of such improved Lots, be not damnified in their Improvements. And to set up Posts, etc., to settle and distinguish the same Survey forever. (5) The Land so surveyed, &c., is hereby erected into a TOWN, to be called CHESTERTOWN. (6) The Owners of Lots formerly taken up, and not already built on, shall (within Eighteen Months after such Survey made, and a Record thereof entered according to this Act) build on such Lot or Lots, One House, to cover 400 square Feet of Ground, besides sheds. And any such Owner refusing or neglecting to build as aforesaid, the Right, Title, etc., of such Owner to such Lot, at the Expiration of the said Eighteen Months, shall cease and determine; and such Lot shall become the Property of the Proprietor of the Town Land, in as ample manner as if the same had never been sold or conveyed. (7) But if the Owners of such Lots be under Age, or out of the Province at the time of such Survey, etc., such Owners have Liberty to improve and build, etc., at any Time within Eighteen Months after arriving at Age, or returning into this Province. (8) The Commissioners to appoint a Clerk, to make fair Record and Entry of all their Proceedings, in a Book, to whom the Surveyor shall deliver a fair Plat of the Lots, etc., which Clerk shall transmit to the Clerk of Kent County the whole Proceedings of the Commissioners, together with the said Plat, to be lodged amongst the County Records. And upon the decease, etc., of such Clerk, the Commissioners have power to appoint another, as often as need shall require. (9) The Commissioners empowered to agree with the Owner of the said Land, not already taken up, for the price of the same, etc., in which Case, when the Lots are laid out, they shall set a price on each Lot not already taken up, which the taker up shall pay. But in case they cannot agree, they are impowered to cause the same to be valued by a Jury; and the payment of such Sum, as such Lot or Lots shall, by the said Jury be adjudged worth, to the Proprietor aforesaid, or a Tender thereof by Persons desirous to take up such Lot or Lots, and Refusal by such Proprietor, and such Payment, or Tender and Refusal being duly proved by the Oaths of one or more lawful Witness or Witnesses before two of the County Justices, by the person intending to take up the same, and an Entry or Record thereof made by the Town Clerk, and returned by him to be lodged with the other Proceedings in the County Court Office as aforesaid, shall give such Person, paying or tendering as aforesaid, an absolute Estate in Fee-simple in such Lot; such Persons complying with the other Requisites in this Act mentioned. (10) There being a Quantity of Land left out, in the original Survey, between the Town Line that runs along the River side and the Water, convenient to build Warehouses on; the commissioners are impowered to lay out the Breadth of 60 Feet from the Extremity of the Lots next the River, along the River Side for a street! and to divide the Strand, lying between the said street and the Water, into convenient Lots, distinguishing them by certain Numbers, always Extending the Town Streets that lead to the River, through the same Strand, to the Water Side; which Lots, being built upon as before directed within Eighteen Months, after taking up the same, and paid for, or Tender of Payment made as before provided, shall be the Right, Property, and Estate of such Persons so taking up, improving and paying, their Heirs and Assigns for ever. (II) All Persons to have Liberty to take up and enter Lots in the said Town, for the space of Twelve Months after Survey thereof; But in case all the Lots should not be taken up within 12 Months after the Survey made, the Proprietor shall be no way divested of his Right to such Lots, so not taken up. (12) The Proprietor of the Land not taken up, to have the Preference of taking up any Five Lots he shall think fit, so that he make his Election within Four Days after the Survey be made. (13) All Possessors of Lots to pay the Right Honorable the Lord Proprietor One Penny Current Money per Annum, for each Lot so taken up, paid for, and built on, forever: And the Clerk of Kent County to transmit yearly to his Lordship's Agent, an Account of all Lots taken up, etc." (5).

HELP PREVENT ACCIDENTS

HAND TURN RULE SHOULD BE OBSERVED

An increasing number of accidents caused by the disregard of hand signals were reported last week, according to Col. E. Austin Baughman, Commissioner of Motor Vehicles.

"If autoists would follow the simple and reasonable system of signals many accidents could be avoided," Colonel Baughman said. "For instance, the straight extended left arm with the finger pointing to the left cannot mean anything but that the operator is going to make a left-hand turn. In doing this the driver should ease himself over to as near the middle of the street as possible.

"The signal for a right-hand turn, that of extending the arm well out so that it can be seen from the rear and making a slowly circling forward movement with the forearm, is equally easy to understand.

"When this signal is made and the intention is to turn right the operator should draw as close to the curb on the right-hand side of the street as possible as he approaches the intersection.

"This will clearly indicate to the following cars 'came on, I am getting ready to turn out of the way and you may pass me.'

"Needless to say, the extended left arm, at a slight downward angle, with the palm facing the rear, will indicate that the operator is going to stop."

"There is really no excuse for accidents which occur because of the failure to use these signals."

Good government is the product of a well informed citizenship.

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned has obtained from the Orphans' Court for Kent County letters Testamentary on the personal estate of

MARY ELIZABETH CAPEL

late of said county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased's estate are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchers thereof, to the undersigned on or before the 25th day of August, 1933, otherwise they may by law be excluded from all benefit of said deceased's personal estate.

All persons indebted to this estate must settle at once.

Given under my hand this 21st day of February, 1933.

ELIZABETH TAYLOR, Executrix.

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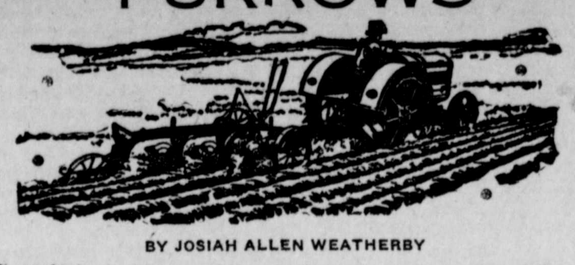
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FURROWS



BY JOSIAH ALLEN WEATHERBY

It would be a right good thing if the courts wuz to decide that all the laws passed in Annapolis after they started turning the clock back wuz unconstitutional. That wuz just another case of beating the devil around the stump. If the legislature would git down to work at the proper time and not spend so much time and breath in arguments that don't git nowhere they would do more for the people to the State. They spend the entire session playing hoss and then when time is up they turn the clock back and jam through a lot of laws that nobody knows much about and that they don't know much about theirselves.

They tried to cut down on spendin, but they tried to take it all out of the schools. Maybe too much money has been spent on schools, but that ain't the place to take it all from. The counties wuz all tryin to cut down the tax rate fer schools. They better cut down the assessments on farm lands and put on a small income tax to make up the difference. The farmers ain't never had a square deal on taxes. And as long as they keep on votin fer the same old gang of politicians they ain't goin to git any better deal.

Well, election comes next year and it is time now to begin preparin the seed bed for a good corp of changes next year. It's time fer the farmers to git together now and begin to demand a reassessment of farm lands for taxes. If they don't they won't git nothin. And they ought to demand that the rest of the people of the country chip in a little more on the taxes to help run the county. The best way to do that is to pass some kind of income tax law. There is a lot of people that don't pay no taxes hardly and they git about as much benefit from the government as the farmers do.

But as long as the same crowd runs the government there won't be no change to help lighten the farmers' burdens. With all the cuttin down expenses goin on down at Washington we ought to begin some cuttin down in the States and in the counties. There wuz a lot of talk some time ago and some feelins over this cuttin business but I ain't seen much that come from it. A lot of us folks that didn't do none of that talkin is wonderin now if it wuz worthwhile. Talk don't count nothin unless it is put into practice.

Well, as I said before, now is the time to git together along the lines of findin some way to git relief. The republicans is holdin rallies and tryin to whoop up the sick spirit of their party members, and the democrats will be done the same pretty soon now. So the farmers ought to start right in holdin meetins and layin plans fer next year's election. Find somebody that will give us fairer treatment and then go about gittin votes fer him. That's the only way to git what we want in the counties.

We got a good man in Washington now and if we can git Mr. Ritchie to see things the farmers' way we might put him back as Governor. If he won't see things our way, then let us hunt somebody else that will. If things is left to the politicians they will be just the same next year. Most all the farmers goes to town Saturday nights anyway, and it woud be a right good thing to organize a farmers' Saturday night club to discuss our political problems. Who will take the lead?

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If this bile is not flowing freely, your food doesn't digest. It just decays in the bowels. Gas bloats up your stomach. You have a thick, bad taste and your breath is foul, skin often breaks out in blemishes. Your head aches and you feel down and out. Your whole system is poisoned.

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NOTICE TO CREDITORS

NOTICE is hereby given that the undersigned has obtained from the Orphans' Court for Kent County letters Testamentary on the personal estate of

ETHELINE P. HACKETT

late of said county, deceased. All persons having claims against said deceased's estate are hereby warned to exhibit the same, with the proper vouchrs thereof, to the undersigned on or before the 1st day of October, 1933, otherwise they may by law be excluded from all benefit of said deceased's personal estate.

All persons indebted to this estate must settle at once.

Given under my hand this 28th day of March, 1933.

SARAH H. HACKETT, Executrix.

Dr W. H. Moyer
CHIROPRACTOR
Chestertown Maryland

STEPHEN R. COLLINS
ATTORNEY AT LAW
Court St., Chestertown, Md.

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NOTICE TO CITY TAXPAYERS

The time limit for the payment of city taxes will expire on April 1 according to law. All taxpayers who have not yet paid their taxes on their real estate, personalty, and automobiles are urged to do so at their earliest convenience. On all taxes unpaid as of January 1, 1933, interest is due from September 1, 1932. The time is approaching when spring and summer work will begin, and in order to make needed improvements and to meet outstanding obligations promptly, it is necessary that all outstanding taxes be paid on or before April 1. Please give this matter your prompt attention.

By order of
THE MAYOR AND COUNCIL.
Thos. D. Bowers, Clerk mr25-2t.

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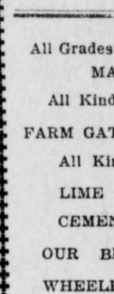
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