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HISTORY OF
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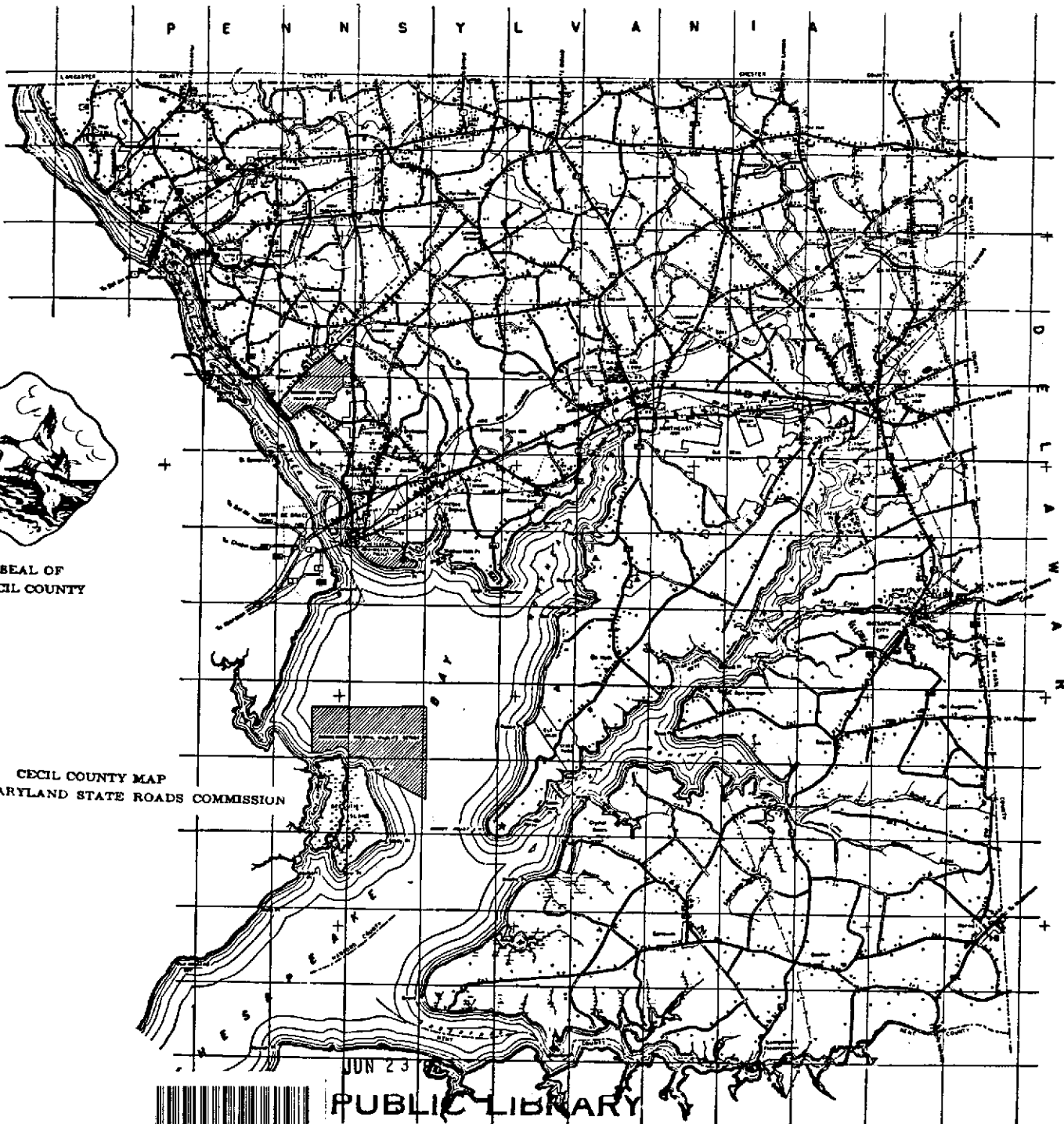
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CECIL COUNTY

A Reference Book of History, Business and General Information

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year, which is to be found among the papers in possession of the county commissioners, shows that there were three two-wheeled carriages in Charlestown at this time, one of which belonged to Rev. John Hamilton. These old-fashioned two-wheeled carriages were sometimes called "chairs." The whole number of these carriages returned in the county in 1757 was thirty-four. Five years afterwards they had increased to forty-five. In 1761 the commissioners ordered that the rent of each peddler's stall and drinking booth, when rented by citizens of the town should not exceed 5s. The records of the commissioners show that the keeper of the storehouse, during the years from 1749 to 1754, had failed to account for two hundred and fifty hogsheads that had been stored in it. In other words, he was a defaulter to the extent of £12½.

The levy list for 1768 shows that the taxables, as returned by the constable for that year, numbered eighty-nine, of whom twelve were negro slaves. The whole population of the town at this time was probably about three hundred and fifty. In 1771 the taxables numbered one hundred and two, of whom seventeen were slaves. In 1774 they numbered ninety-two, of whom eleven were slaves. In each of these years, the Rev. John Hamilton is returned as one of the taxables and the owner of one of the slaves.

Charlestown and Baltimore are nearly of the same age, and for a long time after the former was laid out they were rivals, and continued to be such until about the time of the Revolutionary war, when the latter, owing to the trade with the western part of the State and the superior facilities for foreign commerce, outstripped the former, and it gradually sank into obscurity and neglect. Many of the inhabitants who had erected substantial houses in Charlestown tore them down and shipped the material to Baltimore, where it was used in the construction of other buildings; thus the successful rival gained what the unsuccessful one lost, and as the one diminished, the other increased in size.

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NOTTINGHAM CHURCH

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OTIS R. MONGER

Tydol Garage

ACETYLENE and ELECTRIC WELDING

RADIATOR REPAIRING
FARM TRACTORS
MACHINERY

RIDGE ROAD — RISING SUN, MD.

PHONE 75-R-1-2

It seems proper in this connection to notice an error or two into which Mr. Scharf has inadvertently fallen in his History of Maryland, when writing of Charlestown, "of which," he says, "no vestige now remains, unless possibly a chimney or two, but of which the story is told that about 1750 a British merchant having some money to invest and full of faith in the Maryland province, came over in person to select the place to put his money where it would turn over most rapidly. He examined Annapolis, Baltimore, Charlestown, Elkridge and Oxford, and after mature deliberation, put his money in town lots in Charlestown, as the most promising site of all the great cities of the future."* Unfortunately for the truth of this scrap of history Charlestown, by the census of 1881, contains 235 inhabitants, 48 dwelling-houses, a church and school-house, and a number of shops.

A diligent search among the records of the town, which have always been kept in books separate from the other land records of the county, reveals no evidence that the English merchant, nor any other person, ever held more than two or three town lots at one and the same time.

*Scharf's History of Maryland, Vol. II., page 68.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Presbyterian Church at Bethel—Visit of Rev. George Whitehead—Preaches at Elkton and on Bohemia Manor—Presbyterian Church at Elkton—Disruption of Nottingham Presbyterian Church—Rev. Samuel Finley—Nottingham Academy—The Free School on Bohemia River—Rev. John Beard—The present church buildings—Name changed to Ephesus—Rev. James Magraw—Revival of Nottingham Academy—The Rock Presbyterian Church—Disruption—Rev. James Finley—Murder of Hugh Mahaffey—Rev. James Finley goes West—Present church buildings—Rev. John Burton—Rev. Francis Hindman—Lotteries for church purposes—Manners, customs and character of the early Presbyterians—The Alexanders, and other emigrants to South Carolina.

The Presbyterian church at the head of Broad Creek, near Bethel, there is reason to believe, was founded by the Lawsons and Alexanders from Society and New Munster, a few of whom had settled in that neighborhood. The meeting-house stood near the old graveyard, the site of which is marked by some old tombstones which stand in the field a few yards from the State Line and a short distance east of Bethel church, at what is known as the Pivot Bridge. The creek, the name of which was applied to this church, has been nearly obliterated by the construction of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal, the channel of which is identical with the channel of the creek.

This church is notable on account of its failure. Of its early history but very little is known, except that in 1723 Richard Thompson leased an acre of land to Samuel Alexander and Peter Bouchell for twenty-one years, for the use of the Presbyterian congregation at that place, for an annual rent of one ear of Indian corn. The first pastor was the Rev. Alexander Hutchinson, a Scotch Irish Presbyterian, who was installed in 1723. It appears to have always

1723

been feeble, for during the most of his pastorate he was directed by the Presbytery to supply the Presbyterian church on Elk River, as the Rock congregation was then called. Peter Bouchell was one of the first elders, as was probably Samuel Alexander, and certainly also John Brevard. This church seems to have been almost, if not quite, extinct in 1740, when Rev. George Whitefield visited Bohemia Manor. Most of its members probably joined the Forest Church in Delaware, when that church was organized in 1750. Whitefield first visited this section of country in 1739, as is stated in his journal, a copy of which, containing his autograph, may be seen in the library of Pennsylvania Historical Society. On the 3d of December of that year he preached at North East; but little notice having been given, there were only about 1,500 persons present. On the 14th of May, 1740, he addressed a large meeting at Nottingham, after which he went south, visiting Georgia and the Carolinas, and returned the following autumn and preached at Nottingham again to an audience of 8,000 persons. After this he visited Bohemia Manor, and on the 24th of November preached at the house of Mrs. Bayard to an audience of 2,000 persons. He does not mention the Broad Creek church in his journal, from which it is inferred that the church had ceased to exist at that time, or was so very feeble that it did not exist much longer.

It was no doubt during this interval, when journeying from Nottingham to Bohemia, that Whitefield stopped at Elkton, or the Head of Elk, as the place was then called; for the town, if there was one then, was so small that it had no name. Tradition says that he preached to a large audience at this place, which was assembled under the shade of an oak tree that stood a short distance west of Bow street, and probably about a hundred yards north from the river. While he was preaching here, some of his audience for some reason are said to have started away from the crowd he was

the meadow across the brook, a short distance west of the other one, and in 1744, presented a call to the Rev. Samuel Finley,* who, in that year, became their pastor. Such was the bitterness of feeling engendered by the schism that rent this church in twain that each party kept its church organization intact till about 1792, when most of those who had taken an active part in the controversy having died and time having somewhat mellowed the feelings of their descendants, the two congregations were reunited. Mr. Finley was a native of the county Armaugh, in Ireland, and one of the most distinguished scholars and divines of the eighteenth century. He was pastor of the New Side Nottingham Church for seventeen years and founder of Nottingham Academy, at which some of the most eminent physicians, statesmen and divines of the eighteenth century received their early education. Mr. Finley remained in charge of this church, till 1761, when he was chosen President of the College of New Jersey, now called Princeton College, and shortly afterwards removed there.

Among the many distinguished men that received their early education at Mr. Finley's Nottingham school, the names of Dr. Benjamin Rush, so well known by his connection with the University of Pennsylvania, and the Rev. John Ewing, who was one of the commissioners that assisted in adjusting the boundary lines between Maryland and Pennsylvania, and who was born in the Eighth district of this county, not far from Porter's Bridge, are the most eminent.

The location of the site of the building in which Mr. Finley taught school is involved in obscurity, but there are some reasons that indicate that it may have been a short

* Rev. Samuel Finley was a brother of Rev. James Finley, who was pastor of the churches of the Rock and Head of Elk. C. B. Finley, one of the elders of the Elkton Presbyterian church, is a great-grand nephew, and Miss Martha Finley, the distinguished authoress, is a great-grand niece of these distinguished men.

addressing, and he is said to have cried out, in stentorian tones, "The devil's at your heels!" It was owing to the preaching of this great evangelist that the first Presbyterian church was organized in Elkton, for the next year (1741) William Alexander and Araminta, his wife, deeded an acre of land, the same wherason Whitefield had preached the year before, to "Robert Lucas, Zebulon Hollingsworth, Thomas Ricketts and Robert Evans, of Cecil County, and David Barr, of New Castle County, upon which to build a meeting-house convenient for people assembling to worship God and hear His Word preached, and for the use of such ministers of the Protestant persuasion or religion, and particularly the Presbyterian ministers, as shall from time to time attend there to preach and officiate in the service and worship of Almighty God." This deed contained a stipulation that if the meeting-house ceased to be occupied as a place of worship for three consecutive years, the land was to revert to the grantor. It was owing to this stipulation, and the fact that the Presbyterian congregation at Elkton afterward became quite small and feeble, so much so that most of the members joined the church at Glasgow, that this land reverted to the heirs of the persons who gave it to the congregation.

The preaching of Whitefield was productive of much good to many individuals, inasmuch as many were converted by it; but it certainly did more harm than good to the Presbyterian congregations in this and the adjoining counties, many of which were rent in twain by the dissensions that it engendered. This was the case with Nottingham and Rock churches. But little of interest to the general reader occurred in the history of the Nottingham church till the arrival of Whitefield, at which time the meeting-house stood on the brow of the hill a short distance northwest of the village of Rising Sun. After this disruption of the church (1741), the new side (as those who adhered to the doctrine of Whitefield were called) erected another meeting-house in

distance southwest of the centre of the village of Rising Sun, and near the brook west of which the New Side Church was built. It was no doubt a log building, for there were few of any other kind at that time. Though the place where it stood is forgotten, it matters little, for the reputation of the master and many of his pupils is so illustrious that it will endure while sound theology, brilliant scientific acquirements and pure statesmanship are respected and appreciated. This academy was one of the most celebrated of its time, and its history is in striking contrast with that of the free school of this county, that probably was cotemporary with it, and proves the superiority of the voluntary over the involuntary system of education quite as well as the success of the Presbyterian church proves its superiority over the Established one.

As early as 1723 the colonial legislature passed an act to encourage education and also named a board of visitors in each county, who were to hold office during life, and who were authorized to perpetuate the board by filling vacancies as they might occur, by death or otherwise, from the "principal and better sort of inhabitants." The board of visitors for this county were Colonel John Ward, Major John Dowdall, Colonel Benjamin Pearce, Mr. Stephen Knight, Mr. Edward Jackson, Mr. Richard Thompson, and Mr. Thomas Johnson, Jr. These gentlemen were authorized to purchase one hundred acres of land for school purposes, and were invested with full power and authority to employ teachers and attend to all things that in their judgment were necessary and proper to successfully inaugurate and carry on the enterprise. They accordingly purchased a hundred acres of land on the south side of the Bohemia River, in Sasfras Neck, which included the point next above the Bohemia Bridge, which was long known as Free School Point. It is believed that they started a school there; how long it lasted, who taught it, and who were taught in it, after diligent investigation has not been ascertained. So little attention



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cessor, was inharmonious, and in June, 1789, some of his congregation preferred charges against him for "irregular, imprudent and indecent conduct," and after a trial which occupied the presbytery three days, he was found guilty and suspended till the next October. Having in the meantime expressed much sorrow and penitence he was restored, and subsequently dismissed from the care of the presbytery. During this time the congregations maintained their separate organizations: the First, or Old Side, worshipping in the church near the road northwest of the village of Rising Sun, and the New Side, in the meeting-house which stood in the graveyard on the north side of the road west of the creek.

In 1796 the congregations having been reunited resolved to build a new meeting-house, but they disagreed about its location, and it was not until 1800—presbytery, at their request, having in the meantime sent a committee there to endeavor to unite the congregations upon the choice of a site—that the location of the present house, which some years ago was enlarged and improved, was begun. The work of erecting the new church on account of the poverty of the congregation was an herculean task, and in 1803 they obtained an act of the legislature authorizing them to institute a lottery for the purpose of obtaining the requisite funds to complete it. Samuel Miller, Robert Evans, Thomas Williams, David Patton, James Cummings, James Sims, John Porter and Jonathan Hartshorn are the names of the commissioners designated in the act for the purpose of putting the lottery in operation. Their bond for \$3,000, conditioned for the faithful performance of their duties, may be seen among the land records of the county. On the 26th of September, 1801, Andrew Ramsay conveyed two acres of land to James Evans, Robert Evans, David Edmiston and James Cummings, who were then trustees, and who purchased it from him for the use of the church for £15. On the same day Captain William Johnson also conveyed two acres to the same persons, which had been purchased for the same

was paid to the land that a commission was appointed by the court in 1784 to ascertain and mark its boundaries, which at that time had become so obscure that they were found with much difficulty. The school visitors at this time were Peter Lawson, John D. Thompson, Rev. William Thompson, John Ward, Sidney George, and William Mathews. Rev. William Thompson was at that time rector of St. Stephen's Parish, and Sidney George was a lawyer who resided in Middle Neck. John Dockery Thompson was one of the justices of the court, and was no doubt a descendant of the Thompson who married the daughter of Augustine Hermen, from which it would seem that the vacancies in the board of visitors had been filled from time to time as they occurred by selections from the "principal and better sort of inhabitants."

After Mr. Finley's removal to Princeton the new church rapidly declined and never had another settled pastor, though it existed for many years as a separate church organization.

In 1745 Rev. James Steel became pastor of the Old Side Church. The length of his pastorate cannot now be ascertained with certainty, but he probably remained in charge of the church till 1753, when he emigrated to the Cumberland Valley, which was then the western frontier of Pennsylvania.

In 1762 the congregation called the Rev. John Beard. He is believed to have been a native of Ireland. His relations with the congregation were not harmonious, notwithstanding which he ministered to them till 1771, when he was deposed from the ministry. His will was proved in 1802. He resided at "College Green," which he devised to his sons, James, Hugh and George.

In 1786 the two congregations, both of which had for some years been depending upon supplies, united in a call to Rev. James Munro, which he accepted, and was installed in August of that year. His pastorate, like that of his prede-

cessor for the same price. Each of these tracts are described as being part of a larger tract called Ephesus, and the church is designated in the act authorizing the lottery as the Presbyterian Church at Ephesus, though it was known upon the records of presbytery at that time as West Nottingham.

Rev. James Magraw was installed pastor of this church April 3d, 1804, and continued to minister to the congregation until the time of his death, which occurred in 1835. With the exception of Rev. Hugh Jones, who ministered so long to North Sassafras Parish, Dr. Magraw was probably the most influential and successful minister that ever exercised the pastoral office in this county.

The Upper West Nottingham church was organized in 1810, out of a part of this congregation that was too far distant to attend after the removal of the church from Rising Sun. Mr. Magraw became pastor of the new organization, and gave it one-third of his time until 1821, when he resigned. In 1822 he became pastor of the Presbyterian church in Charlestown, which had recently been organized mainly through his efforts and those of Rev. Mr. Graham then pastor of the Rock church. Mr. Magraw also preached sometimes during the summer season to the raftsmen at Port Deposit, who at that time were probably as much in need of the gospel as any other class of people in the world.

He was a fine looking, athletic man, and had a stentorian voice; and is said by those who have heard him, to have been an eloquent and powerful preacher. He cared so little for the conventionalities of society that if the weather was very warm he would take off his coat and preach in his shirt-sleeves; or if the church was not properly warmed, as was too often the case in winter time, he would preach with his cloak on. He took an active part in the erection of the fort at Port Deposit just previous to the burning of Havre de Grace; and was at the fort and harangued the soldiers when the British were burning and pillaging the village of

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HISTORY OF CECIL COUNTY.

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Lapidum. It was during his pastorate, and mainly by his exertions, that the Nottingham Academy, which had become extinct after the departure of Mr. Finley, was revived.

In 1812 the legislature of the State made an appropriation for an academy in each county. Through the agency of Dr. Magraw, the people of West Nottingham and vicinity had a board of trustees elected and a building, which was intended to be part of a larger edifice, erected, and secured the State appropriation of eight hundred dollars. Dr. Magraw was the first president of the board of trustees.

Reuben H. Davis was the first principal. He had charge of the academy for two or three years, and was succeeded by William McCrimmen. He was principal one year, and was succeeded by Mr. Isaac Bird, and he by Samuel Turney, each of whom acted as principal for one year.

In 1820 Dr. Magraw was chosen principal, and remained in charge until the time of his death. Dr. Magraw was succeeded by his son, Samuel M. Magraw, who continued in charge until 1840. He was followed by Rev. George Burrows, who had charge of the institution for ten years. George K. Bechtel, A. M., the present (1881) principal, was elected in 1862. This academy has sustained quite as good a reputation as its predecessor, which was established by Rev. Samuel Finley. At least twenty-four ministers of the gospel, and a large number of other distinguished men who have added lustre to the bench and the bar, and many others who have graced the medical profession, have also received a part or all of their education at this institution.

The Rock congregation, like that at Nottingham, was divided by the controversy that arose from Whitefield's preaching. The new church was organized in 1741, and this led to the erection of the meeting-house at Sharp's graveyard, which is about a mile north of Fair Hill. Very little is known of this church, except that it was a frame building covered with clapboards. Tradition says that it was removed to a farm in the neighborhood, and converted

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into a barn. When the Old and New Sides united, in 1761, they worshiped in this house for a short time.

The New Side congregation was without a pastor for eleven years, when they obtained the services of Rev. James Finley, who was a younger brother of the Rev. Samuel Finley, and who was installed pastor of this church in 1752. Mr. Finley also had charge of the Presbyterian church in Elkton for a few years after he became pastor of the Rock Church, but in 1760 the pastoral relation was dissolved, probably on account of the reunion of the old and new sides of the original Rock congregation, which took place the following year. During part of the time of the division of this church the Rev. James McDowell had charge of the Old Side branch, which continued to worship in the old church at the stone graveyard* near Lewisville, Pa. During his

* A tombstone in this graveyard contains this inscription: "In memory of Hugh Mahaffey, who was murdered November 18th, 1747." He lived in New Munster, on the west side of Big Elk Creek, about a mile south of where the road from Fair Hill to Newark crosses that stream, and was a blacksmith. Tradition saith that a person who lived with him became enamored of his wife, and that he and she entered into a plot to kill him, which they executed in this wise: While Mahaffey and wife were seated near the fire, early in the evening, the cowardly murderer, who had been momentarily absent from the room, stealthily entered it and struck Mahaffey with an axe. The blow knocked him senseless to the floor, but did not kill him. An apprentice boy, who was in bed in the loft of the house, heard the noise, and coming down stairs, the guilty pair compelled him to dispatch his master, threatening, if he refused, to do it themselves and charge him with it and have him hanged. The body was then buried in the smith shop, where, after the lapse of some weeks, it was found, in this way: Some of the friends of the murdered man, who resided at some distance, hearing of his disappearance, came to assist his neighbors in removing the mystery that enshrouded it, and hitched one of their horses in the shop near where the corpse of the murdered man was buried. The horse, knowing by instinct that something was buried there, or being impatient of restraint and wishing to get loose, pawed the earth away from the corpse, which of course was discovered. No record of the trial is now extant, but tradition says that the guilty man escaped, that the equally guilty woman and boy were tried for the murder, and that the boy was hanged. Another one of the tombstones in this graveyard contains an image of a panther clutched upon it in bas-relief. Another one contains the figure of a man's hand, the thumb and forefinger of which are represented as holding, in order to exhibit to view, the ROCK OF DIAMONDS. Why these curious devices were placed on tombstones is a mystery that will probably never be unraveled. For the inscriptions on them shed no light upon it.

pastorate he taught the classical school which had been founded at New London some years before by the Synod of Philadelphia, but which was removed to his residence, about a mile southwest of Lewisville, in 1752. This school was removed to Newark, Delaware, in 1767, and was chartered by the Penns two years afterwards. It was the germ from which Delaware College sprang. Mr. Finley's pastoral connection with this congregation extended over a period of thirty years, and so much was he endeared to his congregation, that it successfully resisted his efforts to obtain a dissolution of the pastoral relation and his dismissal from the Presbytery of New Castle for some years. He finally appealed to the synod, which set aside the action of the presbytery, and he removed to western Pennsylvania, in 1783. Eighteen years before that time he had visited the western frontier, accompanied by Philip Tanner, one of the elders of his church, who lived in Nottingham, near Mount Rocky. Mr. Finley is said to have been the first preacher (except those who had been there as chaplains of the army) that preached west of the Alleghany Mountains. Some years after this the synod of Philadelphia sent him to western Pennsylvania as a missionary. While there upon one of these visits, he purchased a farm in Fayette County, Pa., and in 1772, placed his son Ebenezer, then a youth of fourteen years of age, in charge of it. Mr. Finley was twice married. His second wife was a daughter of Robert Evans, a sister of Captain John Evans, who owned the rolling-mill west of Cowantown. He resided, during part of his pastorate, on the White Hall Farm near Andora, or Poplar Hill, as it was formerly called.

It was during Mr. Finley's pastorate that the present church, which a few years ago was remodeled, was erected, as is shown by the petition of Robert Macky and George Lawson, which they presented to the court in 1766, stating that the congregation had purchased a piece of land in 1762 from Michael Wallace and David Elder, near where the westernmost branch of Elk River crossed the road leading

from Nottingham to Christiana Bridge, and had erected a meeting-house thereon for public worship, and praying that the said house might be registered. This was in accordance with the act of Parliament requiring all places of public worship to be registered by the civil authorities.

Though the first meeting-house at Louisville had been erected previous to 1725, it was not till fifty-one years afterwards that they obtained a deed for the land upon which it stood. This land was donated to the congregation, which was then called "Upper Elk Erection," by David Wallace, but for some reason it was not deeded to them. Wallace disposed of his property in 1736, but reserved two acres which he had given to the church, and subsequently removed to Kent County, Delaware, where he died. On the 21st of May, 1776, Solomon Wallace, his son and heir, "in order to make good and confirm the generous and pious intentions of his father," deeded the land to the trustees of the church, who were as follows: Philip Tanner, of Chester County; David Macky, John Lawson and Thomas Maffit of Cecil County.

After Mr. Finley removed to the West, the congregation was without a stated pastor for twenty-six years, during which they depended upon supplies; often they had no preaching for months at a time. Mr. Finley was succeeded by Rev. John Burton. He was a Scotchman and joined the Presbytery of New Castle in 1775, and in the fall of that year was called as pastor of the Rock Church, being at that time serving it, as stated supply by the appointment of presbytery. He remained about a year, when he declined the call they had given him, and accepted one from the congregation of St. George's, Delaware. Rev. Mr. Johns states in his history of this church that he had a little farm advertised for sale, and when a certain party went to buy it he told them it was a wet, sorry soil and they would starve on it. He is said to have been so absent-minded as often to drive home from church in

other peoples conveyances, and that his parishoners had to see him safely away from church.

Mr. Burton was succeeded by Rev. Francis Hindman. He was a native of this county and spent his boyhood a mile or so southwest of Cecil Paper Mill. He was a cooper in early life, but subsequently studied for the ministry, and was called by this church and the church at New London in 1790. Owing to the fact that he was accused of conduct unbecoming a minister of the gospel he was never installed. He resided for some time in a large, old-fashioned stone house that stood until recently about three-fourths of a mile northwest of Centre school-house. While there he taught a classical school, which he subsequently removed to Newark, Delaware, where he continued to teach for many years.

Rev. John E. Latta, who is remarkable for being one of four brothers all of whom were ministers of the gospel, succeeded Mr. Hindman and remained till 1800, when he accepted a call from the congregation at New Castle. He was never installed as pastor of the Rock Church.

Mr. Latta was succeeded by the Rev. Samuel Leacock, who ministered to the congregation as stated supply from 1800 to 1804. He was followed by Rev. John Waugh, who at that time was principal of Newark Academy, and who officiated as stated supply from 1804 to 1806.

After being without a pastor for twenty-six years the congregation, in connection with New London, gave a call to Rev. Robert Graham, on the 12th of September, 1808. He was to give the Rock congregation one-third of his time. He was installed pastor December 13th, 1809. He resided at New London and had charge of the united congregations until the time of his death, on the 5th of November, 1835. During his long pastorate he frequently preached at Charles-town and was instrumental in starting the first Sunday-school at that place. In 1803 the church needed a new roof and other repairs, and such was the poverty of the congregation that they obtained an act of the legislature

authorizing them to raise the money for those purposes by means of a lottery. No persons are named in the act to carry it into effect, and no bond for the performance of that duty can be found among the records of the county. It therefore seems probable that the scheme was never put into operation.

This method of raising money for church purposes may seem highly reprehensible at this time, but it was not considered to be so then. As early as 1791 the vestry of North Sassafras Parish had resorted to the same method, and for a long time subsequently whenever money was needed for any purpose of public utility, such as the digging of a public well, or the founding of a village library, this method of raising money was resorted to. Those who are disposed to find fault with our forefathers for indulging in this practice, should remember that they acted under the sanction of law, and that many professing Christians of the present time find means to evade it, by resorting to cunningly devised schemes which are quite as demoralizing and uncertain as lotteries.

The church at the head of Christiana was not divided by the schism that resulted from Whitefield's preaching, but its pastor, the Rev. George Gillespie, for a short time favored the New Side, for the reason that he thought those who adhered to it had been treated with too much severity by the other side. Mr. Gillespie died in 1760. He was pastor of Head of Christiana church for forty-seven years, and was succeeded by Rev. John McCreary, who, in 1769, was installed pastor of the united churches of Head of Christiana and White Clay creek. Mr. McCreary was a zealous and popular preacher, and well worthy to be the successor of Charles Tennent, who preceded him as pastor of White Clay Creek church.

Having thus briefly glanced at the ecclesiastical history of these ancient churches, a few words respecting the manners and customs of those who worshiped in them will not be inappropriate.

The first Presbyterian meeting-houses were generally built of logs and had no fire-places in them. The churches were far apart, and the congregations that worshiped in them were scattered over large districts of country; some of these people probably traveled a distance of twelve or fifteen miles in order to attend meeting. Many of the original members of the Head of Christiana Church were members of the church at New Castle, and no doubt worshiped there before the organization of the former church. It is said that some pious young men who lived near Deer Creek, in Harford County, were in the habit of crossing the Susquehanna River in a boat which they used for that purpose and kept moored to the river bank, near the mouth of that stream, and then walking the remainder of the way in order to attend the Nottingham Church. As the first meeting-houses had no fire-places in them they must have been cold, and being poorly lighted by windows must have necessarily been somewhat cheerless and gloomy. But the ancestors of many of the people who worshiped in them had been hunted like wild beasts by Claverhouse and his dragoons among the highlands of Scotland, and many of them were afterward judicially murdered by the infamous Jeffries. They had worshiped upon their native heaths and in the seclusion of their native glens at the silent hour of midnight, with sentries posted to give notice of the approach of the hired soldiery, who, if they had found them, would, with merciless fury, have shot them down like dogs, or consigned them to the keeping of the gibbet or the prison. It meant something to be a Christian then, and the stories of these wrongs and persecutions were yet fresh in the minds of the founders of these old churches. No wonder they made no provision for warming the interior of the houses in which they worshiped. The ardor and zeal of their religious convictions made it unnecessary, and had this not been the case, they were a stern, uncompromising sect that were ever ready to endure any hardship or submit to any sacrifice in order to

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enjoy the privilege of worshiping God as they pleased. So it was only after the erection of the meeting-houses that superseded the original ones, that any provision was made for the comfort of the congregations in the winter time. Then a small house in which the session met, which was called the session-house, was usually erected near the churches. A rousing fire would be made in it on Sabbath morning, and those who wished to do so had an opportunity of warming themselves before they entered the meeting-house. Foot-stoves were introduced in the latter part of the last century. They were simply tin boxes with lids, and were filled with live coals from the session-house fire, and placed on the floor underneath the feet of the worshipers. The pastors of these churches in the early days preached twice every Sabbath to the same congregation, there being an interval of an hour or so between the morning and afternoon services, during which the congregation partook of a slight repast, which they generally carried with them to church to satisfy their hunger. The members of these churches nearly all lived in rude log-cabins, which were generally built in a valley near a spring. They were a frugal, industrious and pious people, different in many respects from those who had settled in the southern part of the county and in Elk Neck. They raised their own wool and flax, from which they manufactured their wearing apparel. They planted large apple and peach orchards, from the fruit of which they distilled their own liquor. Those of them who lived in Nottingham and New Munster disposed of their surplus wheat at Christiana Bridge, which was then a place of much importance, and contained a population of probably about four hundred. Their method of transporting their wheat to this place may seem odd to those who live in this age of railroads and steamboats. When they wished to send their wheat to market they put it into bags or sacks, which were large enough to hold two or three bushels each. These sacks were placed upon pack-saddles on the backs of

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horses, upon one of which a lad was mounted, who led two or three of the animals beside the one on which he rode, and thus the curious cavalcade journeyed to the place of its destination.

Another custom that has long since fallen into disuse was much in vogue among these people, namely, the irrigation of the meadows along the streams, which were so fertilized by this means that they produced a reasonably good crop of natural grasses, which were cut for hay, where otherwise not a blade would have grown. Timothy and clover were not introduced at this time, and it was very desirable to have as much natural meadow as possible upon each plantation; this no doubt led to the ill-shape of some of the early grants of land. The method of irrigating a piece of land was to construct a dam across a stream and turn the water into an artificial channel, constructed in such a location that by letting the water out of it, through openings a short distance apart, the land between the original and artificial channels could readily be covered with it. This was practiced for many years by the first settlers in the upper part of the county wherever there was a stream large enough to admit of it. Many of the races that were constructed for this purpose are yet to be seen. Lime was hard to obtain, and liming was not resorted to as a means of enriching the soil; indeed, it is probable that its use as a fertilizer was unknown to many of the people of that day. Owing to what would now be considered a very bad system of farming, but which was the best their circumstances allowed them to pursue, the soil on their farms became impoverished and many of them emigrated to the fertile valleys of the Carolinas and Virginia.

This was the case with many of the Alexanders and others of New Munster, who, about the year 1746, emigrated to Mecklenburg County, North Carolina. Those of them who first settled there were joined from time to time by others of the same family until, it is said, they were at the

time of the commencement of the Revolutionary war the most numerous people of one name in that county. Among the other families that emigrated from this county to North Carolina, where many of them and their descendants afterwards distinguished themselves by the active part they took in the affairs of the Presbyterian Church and the Revolutionary struggle, were the Polks, Brevards, and very probably the Pattons and others, members of whose families were active participants in the convention that promulgated the Mecklenburg Declaration of Independence, in 1775. Abraham Alexander was president of that convention, and John McKnitt Alexander was its secretary. Doctor Ephraim Brevard was chairman of the committee which drafted the Declaration. He was probably a son of the John Brevard who was one of the elders of the Broad Creek Church in this county. John McKnitt Alexander was born in Cecil County, and went to North Carolina in 1754, when he was 21 years of age. He was a tailor by trade, but became a surveyor, and was one of the leading patriots in his adopted State in the trying times of the Revolutionary war, when it was overrun by the British Army and many professed patriots became traitors. Three others of the Alexander family were signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration, as was also Col. Thomas Polk, a granduncle of ex-President James K. Polk, whose father is believed to have emigrated from this county and settled in North Carolina.

There is some reason to believe that the father of ex-President Andrew Jackson was among the number of those who emigrated to North Carolina. Tradition says that he lived in an old log-house that stood near the head of Persimmon Run, just east of Cowantown, in the fourth district, and that he went with a large number of other emigrants from this county a few years anterior to the Revolutionary war. The old house in which he lived, owing to the fact that its walls were not perpendicular, was called the "Bendy House." The place where it stood was

long remembered and venerated by the old residents of the neighborhood, on account of tradition connecting it with the parents of the hero of New Orleans.

The emigrants from this county were the founders of the seven Presbyterian churches that existed in Mecklenburg County, in 1755, and so great was the interest taken by the Presbytery of New Castle in the spiritual welfare of these churches and others in that part of the State, that they frequently sent their ministers there to preach the gospel to them, the other members of the Presbytery supplying the pulpits of the missionaries during their absence. Rev. John McCrery, during the latter part of his pastorate at Head of Christiana, is said to have been absent from his charge, in the latter part of his life, engaged in missionary labor of this kind one-fourth of his time. Once, when on a visit to his old parishioners in North Carolina, he was taken sick and remained there nine months.

It is worthy of mention in this connection as an interesting historical fact, that Doctor David Ramsay, the author of a history of the American Revolution, though not a native of this county, at one time practiced medicine at the head of Bohemia River, and was one of the large number of eminent men who emigrated from Cecil County to South Carolina.

A few years after the emigration to North Carolina begun, a similar one commenced from this region to the country west of the Alleghany mountains. Many of the emigrants settled along the Ohio River and its tributaries in southwestern Pennsylvania and northwestern Virginia. The existence of the strong Presbyterian element that has always pervaded society in that section of country, is readily traceable to the early Presbyterian churches, whose history is so closely blended with the early history of this county. These emigrants and others of the same class from the southern parts of Chester, Lancaster, and York counties, were the first permanent settlers west of the Alleghany mountains.

The emigration from these districts continued for many years. During a period of twenty years, which probably commenced about the time of Rev. James Finley's first visit to the West, it is said that as many as thirty-four families, members of the Rock congregation, chiefly young married persons, emigrated to the valley of the Youghiogheny, and settled along that stream and in the valleys along the other tributaries of the Ohio River. These families all settled within the bounds of the old Redstone Presbytery, and twenty-two of the heads of them became ruling elders in the churches of which it was composed. These Presbyterians made an indelible impression upon society in the region where they settled, which is yet plainly discernible there, and which while society lasts will remain as a witness of the untiring energy and unflagging zeal of those who planted the standard of Presbyterianism in the Western wilderness.

But the emigration from this county to western Pennsylvania was not confined to New Munster, and many of the inhabitants, generally Presbyterians, emigrated there from Nottingham. Among the latter were members of another family of Alexanders, whose ancestors settled in Nottingham in the early part of the last century, and who is supposed to have belonged to the same clan in Scotland to which the ancestors of the Alexanders of New Munster belonged. Hugh Alexander, a member of this family, married Margaret Edmisson, and migrated to western Pennsylvania as early as 1740. The Edmisson family owned a tract of land, containing 980 acres, at the mouth of Stony Run at this time. This land included the site of the mill near the junction of that stream with the Octoraro Creek.

These emigrants, having descended from a hardy and restless race, transmitted their peculiar characteristics to their offspring, who, when civilization encroached upon them and was about to circumscribe their accustomed liberties and subject them somewhat to the conventionalities and restraints of refined society, emigrated to Kentucky, as did

the same class that had emigrated to Virginia and the Carolinas. In this way Kentucky and Tennessee received the influence of Presbyterianism that has made an indelible impression upon the character of their citizens.

During this period of the history of the county, the state of society was not very good, and a few of the old records of the court that are now extant show that licentiousness and drunkenness prevailed to a considerable extent among the lower classes, most of whom were indentured servants or redemptioners. The records of New Castle Presbytery contain but very few references to matters of this kind, which, inasmuch as the Presbyterians were very austere and also rigid disciplinarians, leads us to believe that few breaches of decorum were committed by their membership.

Slavery prevailed to some extent throughout the county, but the slaves were not numerous in that part of it north of the Elk River. Rev. James Finley had a few of them, in whose religious welfare he is said to have been much interested, always having them present at family worship and catechising them with his own children. This was probably the case with the members of his and the other Presbyterian churches.

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CHAPTER XIX.

Border war—Davy Evans dispossesses Adam Short—Petition of Samuel Brice—Arrest of Isaac Taylor and others—Agreement between the heirs of William Penn and Lord Baltimore respecting the settlement of the boundaries—Proceedings in chancery—Renewal of border war—Thomas Cresap—Order of the King in Council—The temporary boundary line—Decree of Chancellor Hardwick—Diary of John Watson—Cape Henlopen—The trans-peninsular line—Death of Charles Calvert—Another agreement—Location of due north line—Difficulty of the work—Mason and Dixon—They land in Philadelphia—Latitude of that city—Account of their labors for the next five years—Re-location of the northeast corner of Maryland.

AFTER William Penn took possession of his territories on the Delaware several interviews took place between him and the lord proprietary of Maryland in reference to the adjustment of the boundaries of their respective provinces, but inasmuch as they had no particular bearing on the history of this county and were as futile as the efforts that had preceded them, it is not important that they should be noticed here.

From about the time of the disappearance of George Talbot in 1687, to the time of the death of William Penn, which took place in 1718, the good understanding between the two provinces had been maintained by a variety of temporary expedients, which were every now and then frustrated by some act of border aggression.

This was notably the case with the people living on the borders of this county. At this time there were very few settlements in Pennsylvania west of the Susquehanna River, and the people living in the lower-part of the peninsula seem to have been more peacefully disposed than those on the borders of this county.

In 1721 Adam Short, who lived upon a tract of land called Green Meadows, which was somewhere on the borders of Welsh Tract, complained to the council of Maryland that shortly before he had been waited on by Davy Evans of the Welsh Tract, who was accompanied by eight or ten men, and had two horses harnessed to a log sledge, who demanded possession of his premises, which he refused to give them. Apprehending trouble he went to see a Maryland magistrate, and found when he returned that his visitors had been so expeditious in building a log-house that they had raised it all round three logs high during his absence. He protested against their action, but they finished the house and gave possession to one Rice Jenkins. To avoid trouble Short removed to another plantation which he had on Christiana Creek, where he then resided, first securely fastening the doors of his dwelling and out-house. Returning some time afterwards to the house in which he formerly resided he found the dwelling occupied and the out-house used for a tailor shop.

On the 2d of June, 1722, Samuel Brice presented a petition to the court of this county, stating that he "had been an inhabitant of this county, on New Connaught Manor, for about nine years past, and had always quietly and peaceably paid all taxes and duties to this county, since an inhabitant within the jurisdiction of this court. But so it is, may it please your worships, that on the 11th of this instant (May) Isaac Taylor the surveyor for the county of Chester of the Province of Pennsylvania, with others* assisting him came and surveyed close to your petitioner's fence, so as to render your petitioner's settlement altogether inconvenient for the use of your petitioner and greatly to his prejudice, and further that your petitioner is very credibly informed that Daniel Smith, George Sleyter, James Bond, John Bond, Edward

*The other persons were Elish Gatchell, William Brown, John Churchman, Richard Brown, Roger Kirk, and Isaac Taylor's son, as stated in the records of the council.

Long, John Allen, Charles Allen, and several others, are upon complying with a Pennsylvania survey and title, although they have considerable time since complied with and allowed themselves inhabitants of this county, all which your petitioner conceives is not only an agrievance to your petitioner but to the public interest of this government, and his Lordships good rule, and loudly calls for redress."

This petition was favorably received, and the court ordered that a *precept* be made out and directed to the sheriff ordering him to arrest Taylor and the others for committing a breach of the peace; whereupon, William Howell, the sheriff, called out the *posse comitatus* and arrested Taylor, who, it is stated in Penn's breviat, was imprisoned probably in the jail at Court-House Point, but possibly at Annapolis. While he was confined in prison, Gatchell visited him, whereupon the authorities of Maryland also arrested and imprisoned him.

This outrageous conduct of Evans and Taylor and their friends was the more reprehensible from the fact that it was in violation of a compact or agreement between the governors of the two provinces made in 1718, at a meeting held at the house of Colonel Hinson. At this meeting Governor Hart of Maryland, alleged that Nottingham was in that province, and that the people thereof had often petitioned to be taken under the government of Maryland. Governor Keith replied, that New Munster belonged to Pennsylvania, and the people living there had asked to be taken under the protection of that province. It was thereupon agreed that the inhabitants of these tracts, and all others, should be left in possession of their land, and all other grants should be respected until the dispute was settled.

The arrest of Taylor and Gatchell coming to the knowledge of the Governor of Pennsylvania, he at the instance of the council, remonstrated with the authorities of Maryland, who referred the matter to Daniel Delaney, then attorney-general, who gave an elaborate opinion on the sub-