

HISTORY OF THE DEAL ISLAND AREA,
1607-1877

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WE ARE GATHERED⁹ HERE TODAY TO REVIEW THE HISTORY OF DEAL ISLAND AND ITS ENVIRONS--THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE MAINLAND, THE SURROUNDING ISLANDS THAT DOT THE LOWER CHESAPEAKE BAY, AND THE WATER ITSELF, WHICH HAS PLAYED SUCH A CRUCIAL ROLE IN THE LIVES OF PRESENT AND PAST GENERATIONS. THE HISTORY OF DEAL ISLAND IS INDEED A LONG ONE--ESPECIALLY FOR SOMEONE LIKE ME WHO GREW UP IN NORTHEASTERN WASHINGTON STATE WHERE THE FIRST PIONEERS HAD NOT EVEN ARRIVED A HUNDRED YEARS AGO. AS EARLY AS 1607, CAPTAIN JOHN SMITH LEFT THE NEW SETTLEMENT OF JAMESTOWN IN VIRGINIA AND SAILED UP THE BAY TO EXPLORE THE "ISLES, RIVERS, STRAITS, AND PLACES FOR HARBORS AND HABITATIONS," AND FROM THE BOOK HE PUBLISHED DESCRIBING HIS ADVENTURES, WE KNOW THAT HE VISITED, AMONG OTHERS, DEVIL'S ISLAND, THE NAME BY WHICH THIS ISLAND WAS KNOWN UNTIL THE NINETEENTH CENTURY. SPORADIC EXPEDITIONS BY INDIAN TRADERS FOLLOWED SMITH'S INITIAL EXPLORATIONS, AND BY THE MID-SEVENTEENTH CENTURY PERMANENT SETTLEMENTS HAD BEEN ESTABLISHED IN THE VIRGINIA COUNTIES OF ACCOMAC AND NORTHAMPTON ON THE LOWER PENNINSULA OF THE EASTERN SHORE.

THE REAL IMPETUS FOR MIGRATION INTO WHAT IS NOW MARYLAND'S EASTERN SHORE, HOWEVER, DID NOT COME UNTIL 1660, WHEN VIRGINIA PASSED A LAW BANISHING QUAKERS IN THE

COLONY. FACED WITH IMMEDIATE EXPULSION FROM THEIR HOMES, THE VIRGINIA QUAKERS PETITIONED LORD BALTIMORE FOR PERMISSION TO SETTLE IN MARYLAND. ALTHOUGH MEMBERS OF THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH THEMSELVES, THE CALVERT FAMILY HAD PUBLICLY ESPOUSED A POLICY OF RELIGIOUS TOLERATION IN AN EFFORT TO POPULATE THEIR COLONY IN THE NEW WORLD. LORD BALTIMORE WELCOMED THE QUAKERS, AND BETWEEN 1660 AND 1665 A NUMBER OF FAMILIES--QUAKERS AS WELL AS MEMBERS OF OTHER FAITHS--MIGRATED UP THE EASTERN SHORE FROM VIRGINIA, FIRST SETTLING ALONG THE ANNAMESSEX AND MANOKIN RIVERS, AND LATER DISPERSING THROUGHOUT THE ENTIRE LOWER EASTERN SHORE OF MARYLAND. BY 1666, POPULATION IN THE AREA HAD SO INCREASED THAT IT BECAME NECESSARY TO ERECT A NEW COUNTY, NAMED SOMERSET IN HONOR OF LADY MARY SOMERSET, SISTER OF CECILIUS CALVERT, LORD BALTIMORE.

LITTLE MORE THAN A DECADE AFTER THE INFLUX OF SETTLERS FROM VIRGINIA BEGAN ON THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE, THE FIRST PATENTS FOR LAND ON DEVIL'S ISLAND WERE ISSUED. EARLY SETTLERS VALUED ISLAND PROPERTY--NOT BECAUSE OF THE OYSTERS AND CRABS AND OTHER WATER-ASSOCIATED ACTIVITIES FOR WHICH THEY LATER BECAME IMPORTANT-- BUT BECAUSE THE HIGH LAND WAS GENERALLY FERTILE AND THE BROAD EXPANSES OF MARSH PROVIDED NATURAL FORAGE FOR CATTLE. THE FIRST LARGE TRACT SURVEYED ON THE ISLAND WAS

LAI D OUT IN APRIL OF 1675 FOR THOMAS WALKER, WHO IMMEDIATELY ASSIGNED IT TO THOMAS ROWE. THE TRACT WAS CALLED NORTH FORELAND, AND ITS THREE HUNDRED ACRES ENCOMPASSED VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE NORTHERN THIRD OF THE ISLAND. AT THE SAME TIME, WALKER ASSIGNED TO ROWE A FIFTY ACRE TRACT ON LITTLE DEVIL'S ISLAND, NAMED SOUTH FORELAND. LATER THAT SAME YEAR, THOMAS SHELLITOE HAD ANOTHER THREE HUNDRED ACRE TRACT--NAMED GRAVESEND--SURVEYED FOR HIM WHICH STRETCHED DIAGONALLY DOWN THE ISLAND FROM THE NORTH FORELAND TRACT TO THE LOWER THOROUGHFARE. TWO YEARS LATER THREE OTHER TRACTS WERE SURVEYED ON THE ISLAND-- A 36-ACRE TRACT CALLED CROSS ON THE EXTREME SOUTH END OF THE ISLAND FOR THOMAS ROWE, HENRY LEATON'S 150-ACRE TRACT CALLED WOLRIDGE ON THE SOUTHWEST SIDE OF THE ISLAND, AND GREENWICH, A 50-ACRE TRACT ON THE WEST-CENTRAL PART OF THE ISLAND ASSIGNED TO JOHN LAWS.

THUS, BY 1677, THE BULK OF THE BEST GRAZING AND FARMING LAND ON THE ISLAND HAD ALREADY BEEN PATENTED, BUT THE EXTENT OF SETTLEMENT WAS MINIMAL, AND CATTLE RAISING DOMINATED THE ECONOMY OF THE ISLAND. IN THE EARLY EIGHTEENTH CENTURY SEVERAL SMALLER PARCELS OF LAND BETWEEN THE LARGE ORIGINAL

PATENTS WERE TAKEN UP, BUT IN MOST CASES THE PATENTEES DID NOT MOVE ONTO THE ISLAND. THE CUSTOM OF NAMING PATENTED TRACTS IN MARYLAND ALWAYS PROVIDED PEOPLE WITH AN OPPORTUNITY TO USE THEIR IMAGINATION, AND DEVIL'S ISLAND HAD ITS SHARE OF UNUSUAL TRACT NAMES. PURGATORY AND WINDSOR'S PREVENTION, LAID OUT IN 1701, BARBADOS IN 1722, SELF POSSESSION AND COME BY CHANCE IN 1744, WEBSTER'S MISCHANCE IN 1783, AND THREE CONTIGUOUS TRACTS SURVEYED IN 1784 NAMED VICTORY, CHANCE, AND POOR DEPENDENCE, TO NAME ONLY A FEW.

BY 1783, WHEN AN ASSESSMENT WAS MADE OF ALL PROPERTY IN MARYLAND, THERE STILL WERE ONLY FIVE LANDOWNERS ON DEVIL'S ISLAND. EACH OF THEM PROBABLY LEASED LAND TO A FEW OTHER INDIVIDUALS, BUT THE SMALL NUMBER OF DWELLINGS LISTED ON THE ASSESSMENT SUGGESTS THAT THE TOTAL POPULATION OF THE ISLAND WAS SMALL. THE WEALTHIEST RESIDENT IN 1783 WAS JOHN LAWS, OWNER OF 505 ACRES WITH TOTAL ASSESSABLE PROPERTY WORTH NEARLY £800. THE SECOND WEALTHIEST INDIVIDUAL WAS DAVID WALLACE, WHOSE ASSESSED WEALTH TOTALLED £500. THE ASSESSMENT LIST ALSO REVEALS THAT THE VAST MAJORITY OF THE ISLAND WAS STILL COVERED WITH WOODLAND OR MARSH, WITH ONLY TWO PERCENT OF THE LAND UNDER CULTIVATION. SINCE THERE WAS MINIMAL AGRICULTURAL ACTIVITY ON THE ISLAND, THE RESIDENTS HAD LITTLE NEED

FOR SLAVES. ACCORDING TO THE 1783 ASSESSMENT, ONLY JOHN LAWES, DAVID WALLACE, AND RICHARD WALLACE WERE SLAVEOWNERS, OWNING EIGHT, FIFTEEN, AND THREE SLAVES RESPECTIVELY.

AFTER THE REVOLUTION THE POPULATION OF DEVIL'S ISLAND INCREASED RAPIDLY, WITH THE FIRST MEMBERS OF MANY FAMILIES WHO LATER BECAME PROMINENT IN THE ISLAND'S HISTORY MOVING HERE BETWEEN 1783 AND THE MID-1790s. THE PROGENITORS OF THE EVANS, WEBSTER, GIBSON, AND NOBLE FAMILIES, TO NAME ^{but four} ~~ONLY A FEW~~, CAME TO THE ISLAND IN THIS PERIOD.

AS THE POPULATION ON DEVIL'S ISLAND INCREASED, THE LIMITED AMOUNT OF ARABLE LAND BECAME INADEQUATE TO SUPPORT THE PEOPLE, AND MEN INCREASINGLY LOOKED TO THE WATER FOR A MEANS TO SUPPORT THEIR FAMILIES. DEVIL'S ISLANDERS PROVIDED THE SHALLOW DRAFT CANOES AND SAILORS FOR THE TRANSPORTATION OF TOBACCO AND GRAIN UPRIVER AND ACROSS THE BAY, AND AGRICULTURAL LAND WAS INCREASINGLY DEVOTED TO VEGETABLES AND FRUITS THAT COULD BE MARKETED AS THEY SAILED FROM ONE LANDING TO ANOTHER ALONG THE BAY. THE ISLANDERS WERE A HARDY AND COURAGEOUS PEOPLE-- THEY HAD TO BE BECAUSE THE SAME WATER THAT PROVIDED THEIR LIVELIHOOD COULD CAUSE DEATH AND DESTRUCTION WHEN STORMS FLOODED LOW LYING LAND AND CAPSIZED THEIR VESSELS.

DESPITE THE ARDUOUSNESS OF THEIR LIFE, THE RETURNS FROM PLYING THE WATERS OF THE BAY WERE OFTEN DISAPPOINTING AND FEW ISLANDERS BECAME AFFLUENT. THE 1798 FEDERAL DIRECT TAX PROVIDES AN INDICATION OF THE LIFESTYLE OF THE INHABITANTS OF DEVIL'S ISLAND, BECAUSE THE TAX WAS IN PART BASED ON THE SIZE OF A PERSON'S DWELLING, AS WELL AS OTHER IMPROVEMENTS ON THE PROPERTY. THOMAS ROWE, DESCENDED FROM THE FIRST PATENTHOLDER ON THE ISLAND, LIVED IN A DWELLING THAT WAS ONLY SIXTEEN FEET WIDE BY TWENTY FEET LONG. THE WALLACE FAMILY HAD THE LARGEST HOUSES ON THE ISLAND, AS WELL AS SOME OF THE BEST DEPENDENCIES AND OUTBUILDINGS. DAVID WALLACE OWNED A SINGLE STORY WOODEN HOUSE THAT MEASURED 32 BY 20 FEET, BUT IT WAS DESCRIBED AS BEING "OUT OF REPAIR." IN ADDITION TO THE DWELLING, WALLACE HAD A SEPARATE KITCHEN, FOURTEEN FEET WIDE BY FIFTEEN FEET LONG, A MILK HOUSE, A SMOKE HOUSE, A CORN CRIB, AND A BARN, WHICH MEASURED 20 FEET WIDE BY 24 FEET LONG WITH TEN FOOT SHEDS ON EACH SIDE. RICHARD WALLACE'S HOUSE MEASURED 18 FEET WIDE BY 35 FEET LONG, AND HE ALSO HAD A KITCHEN, CORN CRIB, AND BARN. THESE DWELLINGS WERE QUITE SMALL COMPARED TO THE HOUSES ERECTED IN THE LAST HALF OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY BY MORE WEALTHY MEN ON THE EASTERN SHORE, BUT MANY OF THE ISLANDERS HAD EVEN LESS ROOM FOR THEIR FAMILIES. STEPHEN PARKS'S

DWELLING MEASURED ONLY TWELVE BY FIFTEEN FEET; JAMES WINDSOR'S 14 BY 12; AND WILLIAM HORNER'S A MERE 12 BY 13 FEET. FROM THE TANGIBLE POSSESSION OF THE ISLANDERS AT THE CLOSE OF THE EIGHTEENTH CENTURY, IT IS CLEAR THAT A LOVE FOR THE WATER AND THE WATERMAN'S WAY OF LIFE--NOT GREAT MATERIAL REWARDS--HAD ALREADY BECOME A COMPELLING FACT OF LIFE ON DEVIL'S ISLAND.

THE POPULATION OF DEVIL'S ISLAND CONTINUED TO GROW DURING THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, BUT NOW NEW SURNAMES WERE ADDED TO THE ISLAND'S POPULATION MORE OFTEN BY INTERMARRIAGE THAN BECAUSE OF TRUE OUTSIDERS MOVING IN. GENERATION AFTER GENERATION OF EVAN'S, WHITES, WILSONS, MISTERS, WEBSTERS, WINDERS, KELLYS, AND CROCKETTS MADE A LIVING EITHER DIRECTLY FROM WORKING ON THE WATER OR BY PROVIDING BUSINESSES AND SERVICES REQUIRED BY THE OTHER ISLANDERS. FISHING AND PROVIDING WATER TRANSPORTATION FOR PLANTERS AND FARMERS ALONG THE BAY REMAINED IMPORTANT TO THE ISLAND'S INHABITANTS, BUT OYSTERS INCREASINGLY CAME TO BE A MAINSTAY OF THE ISLAND'S ECONOMY. THE STATE OF MARYLAND BANNED OYSTER DREDGING IN 1820, BECAUSE NEW ENGLAND DREDGE BOATS WERE OVERHARVESTING THE WATERS OF THE BAY. HAND TONGED OYSTERS PROVIDED THE BULK OF THE INCOME FOR MANY ISLANDERS DURING THE MIDDLE OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY, WITH MOST OF THE CATCH BEING MARKETED

IN BALTIMORE.

RELIGION HAD NOT PLAYED MUCH PART IN THE LIVES OF MOST DEVIL'S ISLANDERS UNTIL ABOUT THE TIME OF THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION. MOST OF THE INHABITANTS WERE PROBABLY NOMINAL ANGLICANS, BUT THE SHORTAGE OF ANGLICAN PRIESTS ON THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE MADE THE AREA'S RESIDENTS RECEPTIVE TO MISSIONARIES OF OTHER DENOMINATIONS. QUAKERS HAD BEEN AMONG THE FIRST SETTLERS ON THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE, AND DUE LARGELY TO THE MISSIONARY EFFORTS THE REVEREND FRANCIS MACKEMIE IN THE LATTER PART OF THE SEVENTEENTH CENTURY, THERE ^{WERE} ~~WAS~~ ALSO A NUMBER OF PRESBYTERIANS ON THE LOWER SHORE. BUT NOT UNTIL THE ENTHUSIASTIC AND TIRELESS METHODISTS ARRIVED DID THE PEOPLE OF THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE FIND A RELIGION THAT WAS NEARLY UNIVERSALLY APPEALING. THE FIRST ITINERANT METHODIST MINISTER TO PREACH IN SOMERSET COUNTY WAS THE REVEREND JOHN COOPER. HE ARRIVED IN THE COUNTY IN 1778, IN BROKEN HEALTH, UNABLE TO CONTINUE THE ARDUOUS TRAVELS OF THE OTHER METHODIST ITINERANTS PROSELYTIZING ON THE EASTERN SHORE. WHAT EFFECT COOPER HAD ON THE RESIDENTS OF DEVIL'S ISLAND IS UNKNOWN, BUT WHEN FREEBORN GARRETSON--ONE OF THE GREAT EARLY METHODIST PREACHERS-- VISITED THE ISLAND FOR THE FIRST TIME IN 1781, HE FOUND A METHODIST CLASS--THE FIRST STEP IN THE ORGANIZATION OF A FORMAL CHURCH--ALREADY IN EXISTENCE, ONE OF THE EARLIEST CLASSES RECORDED IN SOMERSET COUNTY.

THE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE WERE MOST RECEPTIVE TO THESE EARLY METHODIST MISSIONARIES, BUT THE AUTHORITIES OF THE NEW STATE ^{of Maryland} WERE NOT. JOHN WESLEY WAS AN ENGLISHMAN, LOYAL TO THE KING, AND MARYLAND PATRIOTS SUSPECTED THAT METHODIST MINISTERS MIGHT BE ENCOURAGING SEDITION AND DISLOYALTY TO THE UNITED STATES. MARYLAND POLITICAL LEADERS WERE, IN FACT, PLAGUED BY A HOST OF PROBLEMS WITH THE INHABITANTS ON THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE. FEW MEN FROM THE LOWER COUNTIES WERE WILLING TO ENLIST IN THE ARMY, AND AS EARLY AS THE FALL OF 1776 SPORADIC RIOTS OVER THE SHORTAGE OF SALT FOR CURING PORK HAD OCCURRED. IN THE EARLY MONTHS OF 1777, A MAJOR INSURRECTION IN SOMERSET AND WORCESTER COUNTIES FORCED THE STATE TO REQUEST TROOPS FROM CONGRESS TO, IN THEIR WORDS, "ASSIST IN QUELLING, AND BRINGING TO JUSTICE THE INSURGENTS IN THOSE PARTS." THROUGHOUT THE WAR FOR INDEPENDENCE THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE REMAINED A PROBLEM AREA FOR THE STATE OF MARYLAND. BRITISH SHIPS ENTERING THE BAY COULD COUNT ON ASSISTANCE FROM LOYALISTS LIVING ON THE ISLANDS AND MAINLAND, AND PERIODIC UPRISING OF LOYALISTS NECESSITATED SENDING TROOPS TO COUNTER RESISTANCE ON SEVERAL OCCASIONS. THE SOURCES FOR DISCONTENT ON THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE WERE VARIED. A GENUINE LOYALTY TO THE KING MOTIVATED MANY, A FEELING THAT THEY WERE IGNORED BY THE STATE GOVERNMENT OR THAT

THE WESTERN SHORE AND UPPER EASTERN SHORE WERE TREATED BETTER WAS ALLEGED BY SOME, AND A DECIDED APATHY ABOUT WHATEVER WAY THE WAR MIGHT TURN OUT CHARACTERIZED OTHERS.

BUT THROUGHOUT THE WAR THE METHODISTS CAME IN FOR MORE THAN THEIR SHARE OF THE BLAME FOR THE POLITICAL TURMOIL. SINCE THE FIRST BURST OF MISSIONARY ACTIVITY ON THE LOWER SHORE COINCIDED WITH THE BEGINNING OF SERIOUS POLITICAL DISTURBANCES IN THE AREA, MANY STATE LEADERS WERE CONVINCED THAT THEIR ACTIVITIES WERE PERNICIOUS TO THE AMERICAN CAUSE AND AS A RESULT THE ITERERANT MINISTERS SUFFERED HARASSMENT, PERSECUTION, AND EVEN IMPRISONMENT. WILLIAM PACA, WHO LATER SERVED AS THE STATE'S THIRD GOVERNOR, WROTE TO GOVERNOR THOMAS JOHNSON IN JUNE 1778 THAT HE HAD JUST ASSISTED IN SUBDUING AN INSURRECTION OF TORIES "HEADED BY SOME SCOUNDRED METHODIST PREACHERS." PACA ADDED THAT "A BODY OF EIGHTY ASSEMBLED IN ARMS, WERE DISPERSED, THREE HAVE SINCE BEEN APPREHENDED /WITH THE/ CAPTAIN & CHIEF METHODIST PREACHER . . . AMONG THE CAPTIVES."

IMPRISONING THE METHODIST PREACHERS DID LITTLE TO IMPEDE THE NUMBER OF CONVERTS TO THE FAITH, AND IN FACT, IT OCCASIONALLY PROVED TO BE A BOON TO THEIR EFFORTS. IN 1779, THE REVEREND JOSEPH HARTLEY WAS CONFINED TO JAIL IN EASTON. HE FOUND THAT BY PREACHING THROUGH THE

BARS OF HIS CELL HE COULD AROUSE THE CURIOSITY OF LARGE CROWDS, AND ULTIMATELY THE AUTHORITIES RELEASED HIM, BECAUSE THEY WERE AFRAID HE WOULD, IN THEIR WORDS, "CONVERT THE WHOLE TOWN AND COUNTRY."

THE PEOPLE OF THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE WERE ENTHUSIASTIC ABOUT THE METHODIST PREACHERS, AND GREAT NUMBERS OF PEOPLE CONVERTED TO THE FAITH. THE DEPTH OF THE PEOPLE'S BELIEF IS APPARENT IN THE NUMBER OF SLAVE MANUMISSIONS THAT OCCURRED AFTER THE METHODIST PREACHERS ARRIVED, BECAUSE LIKE QUAKERS, METHODISTS DID NOT BELIEVE IN SLAVEHOLDING. ONE BY ONE THE SLAVEOWNERS ON DEVIL'S ISLAND WENT TO THE SOMERSET COUNTY COURTHOUSE TO FILE THE NECESSARY PAPERS TO FREE THEIR SLAVES. DAVID WALLACE, THE LARGEST SLAVEOWNER ON THE ISLAND IN 1783, FILED MANUMISSION PAPERS FOR FIVE OF HIS SLAVES ON MARCH 16, 1785, IN A PETITION THAT EXPLICITLY REFERRED TO HIS RECENT CONVICTION AGAINST SLAVEHOLDING. THE PETITION BEGAN, "WHEREAS I BELIEVE THAT IT IS WRONG TO HOLD PEOPLE IN SLAVERY, I DO BY THESE PRESENTS MANUMIT AND SET FREE THE FOLLOWING SLAVES" CITING THE "INJUSTICE AND IMPROPRIETY OF HOLDING AND KEEPING SLAVES, RICHARD WALLACE FREED ~~HIS SLAVES NAMED~~^S CATO AND SIMON IN 1787. JESSE WEBSTER AND THOMAS JONES WERE TWO OTHER DEVIL'S ISLANDERS WHO EVENTUALLY BECAME CONVINCED THAT THEIR

RELIGIOUS PRINCIPLES WOULD NO LONGER PERMIT THEM TO HOLD PEOPLE IN BONDAGE. THE FINANCIAL SACRIFICE THESE MEN MADE BY FREEING THEIR SLAVES WAS GREAT, BUT LIVING THEIR LIFE ACCORDING TO THE TENETS OF THEIR RELIGION HAD BECOME MORE IMPORTANT TO THEM THAN WORLDLY GOODS.

ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT EARLY MINISTERS ON THE LOWER SHORE WAS LORENZO DOW, A COLORFUL AND SPELLBINDING PREACHER, AND A STORY OFTEN TOLD ABOUT HIM INDICATES HOW SERIOUSLY AND ENTHUSIASTICALLY THE ITINERANTS WENT ABOUT THEIR JOB OF CONVERTING THE PEOPLE TO METHODISM. ONE DAY AS MR. DOW WAS ON HIS WAY TO POCOMOKE CITY--THEN CALLED NEWTOWN--HE CONCEIVED A NOVEL IDEA ABOUT HOW TO HEIGHTEN THE IMPACT OF HIS SERMON OF THE DAY. ON HIS WAY TO CHURCH, DOW NOTICED A LITTLE BLACK BOY PLAYING ON A TIN HORN. HE EMPLOYED THE LAD TO CLIMB A TREE IN THE CHURCH YARD, WITH INSTRUCTIONS TO BLOW HIS HORN LOUDLY WHEN HE CAME TO THE PART IN HIS SERMON WHEN HE EXCLAIMED "BLOW, GABRIEL, BLOW YOUR HORN.!" AT THE CLIMAX OF HIS FIREY SERMON ON THE TOPIC OF THE DAY OF JUDGMENT, DOW DESCRIBED THE ANGEL GABRIEL STANDING WITH ONE FOOT ON THE SEA AND THE OTHER ON THE LAND, WITH A LONG SILVER TRUMPET IN HIS HAND. "BLOW, GABRIEL," THE REVEREND DOW SHOUTED, AND THE LITTLE BOY IN THE TREE INSTANTLY OBEYED. THE ASSEMBLED THRONG WAS TERRIFIED, FALLING TO THE GROUND CRYING FOR MERCY AND BEGGING FORGIVENESS FOR THEIR SINS.

Then,
SUDDENLY, SOMEONE SPOTTED THE BOY IN THE TREE, AND THE PEOPLE BEGAN TO LOOK THREATENINGLY AT MR. DOW. NONPLUSSED, DOW SHOUTED, "IF A LITTLE BOY CAN STRIKE SUCH TERROR INTO YOUR HEARTS, WHAT WILL YOU DO WHEN THE GREAT DAY REALLY COMES?"

IT WAS LORENZO DOW WHO IN 1807 CONVERTED PERHAPS THE MOST FAMOUS INHABITANT OF DEVIL'S ISLAND, JOSHUA THOMAS, FONDLY REMEMBERED AS THE "PARSON OF THE ISLANDS." THOMAS, A WATERMAN BY BIRTH AND BREEDING, WAS THRITY YEARS OLD AT THE TIME OF HIS CONVERSION, AND HE SPENT THE REMAINDER OF HIS LIFE MANAGING METHODIST CAMP MEETINGS, PREACHING, AND FERRYING OTHER MINISTERS FROM ISLAND TO ISLAND IN HIS GIANT LOG CANOE CALLED "THE METHODIST." IT WAS HE WHO WAS ORDERED TO PREACH TO THE BRITISH FLEET UNDER THE COMMAND OF ADMIRAL COCKBURN JUST BEFORE THEY LEFT FOR THE INVASION OF BALTIMORE IN 1813, AND IT WAS HE, IN FRONT OF 12,000 BRITISH TROOPS, WHO HAD THE COURAGE TO INFORM THEM THAT THE ALMIGHTY HAD TOLD HIM "THAT THEY COULD NOT TAKE BALTIMORE AND WOULD NOT SUCCEED IN THEIR EXPEDITION." THOMAS WAS ALSO RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING THE METHODIST CAMP MEETING ON DEVIL'S ISLAND THE MOST IMPORTANT ON THE EASTERN SHORE. ALMOST ANNUALLY, BEGINNING IN 1828, CAMP MEETINGS WERE HELD ON DEVIL'S ISLAND DURING AUGUST, WITH THOUSANDS OF PEOPLE AT ONE TIME

OR ANOTHER STAYING IN ONE OF THE PERMANENT "TENTS" OF CLAPBOARDS AND SHINGLES THAT RINGED THE GROUNDS. THOMAS LIVED ON LITTLE DEAL ISLAND, BUT IN ACCORDANCE WITH HIS WISH, WHEN HE DIED IN 1853 AT THE AGE OF 77, HE WAS BURIED NEAR THE DOOR OF THE METHODIST CHURCH ON THE MAIN ISLAND, WHERE HE COULD "HEAR THE PREACHED GOSPEL SUNDAY AFTER SUNDAY AND THE HAPPY SHOUTS OF THE CHRISTIANS."

THANKS TO MEN LIKE FREEBORN GARRETSON, LORENZO DOW, AND MOST ESPECIALLY, JOSHUA THOMAS, THE LOWER EASTERN SHORE, BECAME WHAT HAS BEEN CALLED "THE GARDEN OF METHODISM." THE CHURCH AND ANNUAL CAMP MEETINGS BECAME AN INTEGRAL PART OF THE PEOPLE'S LIVES, BOTH RELIGIOUSLY AND SOCIALLY. CHURCH ATTENDANCE BROUGHT PEOPLE FROM ALL PARTS OF THE ISLAND TOGETHER, AND VISITS BY MINISTERS TRAVELING THE CIRCUIT HELPED ALLEVIATE THE ISOLATION OF ISLAND LIFE. METHODISM REMAINED A POWERFUL FORCE IN THE LIVES OF THE PEOPLE THROUGHOUT THE NINETEENTH CENTURY--SO MUCH^{SO} THAT THE DETERMINATION OF ONE MINISTER, THE REVEREND DAVID DAILLEY, TO DROP THE "v" FROM THE ISLAND'S NAME TO SHOW THAT THE DEVIL HAD NO CLAIM HERE, ULTIMATELY GAINED POPULAR ACCEPTANCE. AT LEAST UNTIL 1877 DEAL ISLAND WAS STILL SPELLED D.E.I.L.--THE SAME AS BEFORE BUT WITH THE DEVIL'S "v" MISSING. EVENTUALLY, THE MODERN SPELLING EMERGED, AND THE ISLAND'S LINK WITH SATAN FADED INTO FOLKLORE.

AS THE DECADES OF THE NINETEENTH CENTURY PASSED, CANALS AND RAILROADS AND THE ADVENT OF LARGE INDUSTRIES CHANGED THE COMPLEXION OF MARYLAND, BUT DEAL ISLAND REMAINED MUCH THE SAME. PEOPLE WERE BORN, AND PEOPLE DIED, BUT THE LIFEBLOOD OF THE ISLAND REMAINED THE WATERS OF THE CHESAPEAKE BAY.

BY THE TIME OF THE CIVIL WAR, VIRTUALLY ALL OF THE HABITABLE LAND ON DEAL ISLAND WAS OCCUPIED, AND THE DOMINANCE OF THE WATER WAS ABUNDANTLY CLEAR IN A SURVEY OF MEN BETWEEN THE AGES OF EIGHTEEN AND FORTY-FIVE TAKEN BY THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT IN 1862^{during the Civil War.} OF THE 160 MALES ON THE ISLAND IN THAT YEAR, SIX HAD ALREADY ENLISTED IN THE UNION ARMY, AND ONLY ONE WAS UNDER ARREST BY MILITARY AUTHORITIES; PRESUMABLY FOR SUPPORTING THE REBEL CAUSE. ^{ese} THIS FIGURE SUGGESTS THAT THE RESIDENTS OF DEAL ISLAND, UNLIKE PEOPLE IN MANY OTHER PARTS OF THE EASTERN SHORE; SUPPORTED THE UNION, PROBABLY BECAUSE, AS METHODISTS, THEY OPPOSED SLAVERY. OF THE REMAINING MEN ON THE ISLAND ELIGIBLE FOR MILITARY SERVICE, ALL BUT TWENTY-SEVEN WERE WATERMEN, AND VIRTUALLY EVERYONE ELSE DERIVED THEIR LIVELIHOOD INDIRECTLY FROM THE WATER. SEVEN MEN WERE CARPENTERS, THREE WERE BLACKSMITHS, AND ONE WAS THE DEPUTY CUSTOMS COLLECTOR--ALL OF WHOM IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER PROVIDED GOODS AND SERVICES FOR THE WATERMEN. SO DID

THE FOUR MERCHANTS ON THE ISLAND, ALTHOUGH ONE OF THEM HAD RECENTLY "COMMITTED MURDER AND LEFT FOR PARTS UNKNOWN." THE SINGLE WHEELWRIGHT ON THE ISLAND HAD GONE TO ANNE ARUNDEL COUNTY, PROBABLY TO SEEK EMPLOYMENT THERE IN READING WAGONS FOR THE UNION ARMY. THE ONLY MEN NOT DIRECTLY EMPLOYED IN WATER-RELATED OCCUPATIONS WERE TWO FARMERS, GABRIEL WEBSTER, THE POSTMASTER, AND MICHAEL WEBSTER, WHO SERVED AS THE ISLAND'S SCHOOL TEACHER AND JUSTICE OF THE PEACE.

OUR NEXT OPPORTUNITY TO EXAMINE IN DETAIL THE POPULATION AND OCCUPATIONS OF DEAL ISLANDERS IS THE LAKE, GRIFFING, AND STEVENSON MAP PREPARED IN 1877. THE MAP SHOWS A BRIDGE CROSSING LAW'S THOROUGHFARE, THAT LED INTO A ROAD THAT PASSED THROUGH A HEAVILY POPULATED SECTION ON THE NORTH END OF THE ISLAND, ON DOWN TO A SECONDARY CONCENTRATION OF RESIDENCES AND SHOPS IN THE VICINITY OF PRESENT-DAY WENONA. THERE WERE TWO SCHOOLS ON THE ISLAND--ONE AT THE WENONA END AND THE OTHER NEAR THE METHODIST CHURCH AND PARSONAGE ON THE NORTHERN SECTION OF THE ISLAND. NEAR THE METHODIST PARSONAGE WAS JOSHUA THOMAS'S CAMP MEETING GROUND, BY THE DATE OF THIS MAP NEARLY FIFTY YEARS OLD. MID-WAY ON THE ROAD DOWN THE ISLAND WAS A SEPARATE SCHOOL FOR COLORED CHILDREN, AND PERHAPS IN THE SAME BUILDING, A CHURCH FOR THE ISLAND'S BLACK INHABITANTS. THE SAME SURNAMES THAT HAD DOMINATED THE ISLAND'S

POPULATION FOR DECADES ARE DISPLAYED IN PROFUSION ON THE MAP, AND FEW OF THE BUSINESSMEN WHO ADVERTISED THEIR GOODS AND SERVICES IN THE MARGIN OF THE MAP WERE NEWCOMERS. AS WITH THE 1862 ENROLLMENT LIST, THE BUSINESSES LISTED ON THE MAP INDICATE THE ALMOST TOTAL DEPENDENCE OF THE ISLANDERS ON THE WATER OF CHESAPEAKE BAY. JOHN A. MESSICK'S ADVERTISEMENT AS "OWNER AND MASTER OF THE SLOOP NOMINL" INDICATED THAT HE WOULD DO FREIGHTING "TO AND FROM ALL POINTS ON THE CHESAPEAKE BAY," AND SIMILAR NOTICES WERE PLACED BY GEORGE GIBSON, GEORGE WINDSOR, JOHN D. WILSON, HENRY TODD, AND R. J. COOKSEY, ALTHOUGH THE LATTER ALSO ADVERTISED THAT HE BOUGHT AND SOLD OYSTERS IN SEASON. JAMES D. ANDERSON, LEVIN M.V.B. COLLIER, AND THE FIRM OF WALLACE AND COLLIER DID BLACKSMITHING, ADVERTISING THAT THEY COULD MAKE AND REPAIR OYSTER DREDGES AND DO ALL KINDS OF SHIP-SMITHING. SAMUEL J. WILSON, WHO LISTED HIMSELF AS A "PRACTICAL BOOT AND SHOEMAKER," CLAIMED HE COULD MAKE AND REPAIR BOOTS AND SHOES "FROM FINEST FRENCH CALF TO 'PLOW'-BROGANS." HE ALSO NOTED THAT HE HAD "A FINE ASSORTMENT OF LADIES' AND GENTS' WEAR ON HAND AND FOR SALE." JOHN W. KELLY, JAMES T. DANIEL, LEVIN ANDERSON, JAMES L. BENNETT, AND J.S.C. VETRA & SON ALL ADVERTISED AS DEALERS IN DRY GOODS. THE VETRA AND SON STORE WAS LOCATED ON THE SOUTHERN TIP OF THE ISLAND, AND IN ADDITION TO "GROCERIES, HATS, CAPS, BOOTS, SHOES,

HARDWARE, QUEENSWARE, TINWARE, READY-MAKE CLOTHING, DRUGS, MEDICINES, PATENT MEDICINES, TOILET SOAPS, FANCY ARTICLES, AND NOTIONS," THEY NOTED THAT THEY WERE ALSO PROPRIETORS OF A BLACKSMITH SHOP WHERE "ALL KINDS OF WORK" WOULD BE "NEATLY AND PROMPTLY DONE," AND THAT THEY WERE THE AGENT "FOR THE CELEBRATED 'CUCUMBER PUMP.'" ^{part of the} THE TWO CARPENTERS ON THE ISLAND, WILLIAM AND SEWELL EVANS, BOTH ADVERTISED THAT THEY WOULD UNDERTAKE ALL KINDS OF BUILDING. IN THE EIGHTEENTH AND NINETEENTH CENTURIES, THE WORD "UNDERTAKE" IN THE JARGON OF A CARPENTER MEANT THE EQUIVALENT OF "CONTRACT" IN TODAY'S TERMS. ONE JOB CARPENTERS WERE FREQUENTLY ASKED TO "CONTRACT," OR UNDERTAKE, WAS CASKETS, AND BOTH EVANS'S INDICATED IN THEIR ADVERTISEMENTS THAT THEY WERE MOST WILLING TO PERFORM THAT SORT OF SERVICE AS WELL. WILLIAM EVANS'S CRYPTIC ADVERTISEMENT READ: "ALL KINDS OF UNDERTAKING DONE. FUNERALS ATTENDED. I HAVE A FIRST-CLASS HEARSE. ORDERS FOR ALL KINDS OF WORK PROMPTLY FILLED." ALTHOUGH MOST MODERN-DAY MORTICIANS WOULD BE HARD PRESSED TO CONSTRUCT EVEN THE CRUEST PINE BOX, THE WILLINGNESS OF WILLIAM AND SAMUEL EVANS AND OTHER CARPENTERS OF THEIR ERA TO PROVIDE NOT ONLY CASKETS, BUT ALSO FUNERAL SERVICES, HAS LEFT THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE WITH THE WORD "UNDERTAKER" TO DESCRIBE PEOPLE OF THAT PARTICULAR OCCUPATION.

I WILL LEAVE DEAL ISLAND AND ITS PEOPLE IN THE YEAR 1877. MANY OF YOU HERE FROM PERSONAL MEMORY OR FROM STORIES TOLD BY YOUR PARENTS AND GRANDPARENTS KNOW WHAT HAS HAPPENED IN THE CENTURY SINCE THEN, SO I AM SURE YOU CAN RECONSTRUCT THE PICTURE MUCH BETTER THAN I. LET ME CONCLUDE BY EXPRESSING MY ^{PERSONAL} PLEASURE AT BEING ABLE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS FIRST BICENTENNIAL MEETING ON DEAL ISLAND. OUR TASK AT THE HALL OF RECORDS, ^{in Annapolis} IS TO PRESERVE THE HISTORICAL RECORDS OF OUR STATE, AND IN PREPARING THESE REMARKS I HAD MANY OPPORTUNITIES TO REVIEW ANCIENT DEEDS, WILLS, ASSESSMENT LISTS, AND CENSUS RECORDS. STILL, THE REASON WE TAKE SUCH CARE IN PRESERVING THE RECORDS OF OUR STATE IS NOT FOR THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE GONE BEFORE, BUT FOR PRESENT AND FUTURE GENERATIONS. THUS, IT IS A SPECIAL PLEASURE FOR ME, AS AN ARCHIVIST AND HISTORIAN, TO HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO SEE THE LAND AND MEET THE PEOPLE WHO ARE THE BENEFICIARIES OF THE LONG AND PROUD HISTORY OF THIS ISLAND.