

# EDEN'S LIFE HERE

Sir Robert Eden, Maryland's last Governor under the Proprietary Government, had a full life during his stay in Annapolis, and once probably saved the city, due to typical British diplomacy, from invasion by troops representing his own government. Annapolis in turn saved Eden from capture by Baltimore foes.

Eden arrived in Annapolis on June 5, 1769, from England to succeed Governor Sharpe. He remained here until 1776 when he returned home. Eden was popular and while his property was confiscated when he departed for England, it was restored to him when he returned to Annapolis in 1784 to live. He died a short time later.

## History Gives Story

An insight in Eden's life here is gathered from Jackson's book of Annapolis, termed "Three Centuries of Glamour." An extract from the book follows:

"While this work was under way a British warship passed the mouth of the harbor and caused great consternation in the city. News reached the city during a torrential rainstorm, but citizens crowded into carriages, and many drove from the town. Great Bri-

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tain's Governor, Robert Eden, living in the town, was prudent, and immediately called in the Council of Safety and offered to send a flag of truce aboard as soon as the vessel came to anchor. The offer somewhat preserved the public tranquillity.

## Otter Threatened City

"The ship, the Otter, commanded by Captain Squire, came to anchor in the harbor on March 8. The citizens' plea was sent aboard by the Governor and an agreeable reply returned. Nevertheless Annapolis had troops ready for defense should the British decide to attempt an entry. The Otter, during her stay, went up the Magothy river where she captured a ship lader with meat and flour, and also took several other prizes. She did not, however, attempt to fire on the city because Governor Eden said Annapolis citizens were opposed to independence and treated him well. Captain Squire even sent ashore some Colorists he had taken in raids on ships and the Annapolitans sent him beef with their compliments.

"Annapolis, however, refused to allow the British to commandeer a small New England sloop then lying in the river. The citizens sent Captain Squire word that since the Otter had burned another schooner in the bay, he was not entitled to further consideration. Annapolis men in arms went aboard and guarded the sloop. Captain Squire showed his friendliness for the city by passing up the bounty offered in the schooner.

## Locals Stopped Foes

"Shortly afterwards a group in Baltimore wanted to arrest Governor Eden as an English spy, but Annapolis citizens blocked this move, although the Baltimoreans captured Eden's personal boat. Even Congress tried to have Eden arrested but failed as the Council of Safety, predominately Annapolitans, held the issue was strictly in their hands. The Council, friendly to Eden to the last, nevertheless had to ask him to leave America, and the Governor's baggage was kept here when Captain George Montague of the British warship Fowley, the vessel on which Eden sailed, refused to return several servants and deserters to the city.

"The departure of Governor Eden, on June 24, 1776, for the West Indies and thence to England, ended the English domination in Maryland. Five years before Frederick Calvert, last Lord Baltimore, had died. During

Eden's last two years here the Colonists had been prepared for strife. Home guards and militiamen were drilled, and minutemen, ready to fight at a minute's notice, were enrolled. The blacksmith shops made guns and swords. Gunpowder was manufactured in large quantities and stored in Annapolis and throughout the colonies. Most Tories, sympathizers of the King, were kept silent in fear."