

WO-270

1878

George W. Covington House
Snow Hill
Private

This Snow Hill dwelling, named "The Hedges" by its builder, George W. Covington," dates to 1878, two years after he purchased five acres at the south end of Church Street for \$3000. The rather large transfer price may suggest some improvements had already been made on the property. Due to its location on the edge of Snow Hill at the time, he oriented his Italianate style dwelling on axis with the street facing northwest. Built as one of the most prominent dwellings of its time, a mid to late twentieth century conversion to apartments with various insensitive additions has compromised its architectural integrity. Nevertheless, the house retains a three-story entrance tower, bracketed eaves, a patterned slate roof, bay windows, and various bracketed hoods over doors and windows.

Fifth and youngest son of Isaac and Amelia Franklin Covington of Berlin, George attended Buckingham Academy in his youth, and later Harvard University in pursuit of law degree. Although he was denied a seat in the Maryland Assembly during a special state election held in 1864, he served locally as the auditor for the circuit court of Worcester County and secretary and treasurer of the board of county school commissioners. In 1880 George Covington became the Democratic nominee for congress from the first congregational district. Upon election he took his seat in the forty-seventh congress of the United States. He was re-elected in 1882 to the same position. In 1885 he returned to private life in Snow Hill. Among many local positions, he also assisted in the fund raising campaign for the Makemie Memorial Presbyterian Church, erected in 188-1889. At his urging, his cousin, Lady Kortright of London, England,

Page 2

contributed \$5000 in memory of her father, John Richardson, which enabled the congregation to finish the construction of the elaborate Gothic Revival church.

HISTORIC CONTEXT INFORMATION

Resource Name: George W. Corington House

MHT Inventory Number: WO-270

MARYLAND COMPREHENSIVE HISTORIC PRESERVATION PLAN DATA:

1) Historic Period Theme(s):

Architecture

2) Geographic Orientation:

Eastern Shore

3) Chronological/Developmental Period(s):

1870-1930 Urban-Industrial Dominance

4) Resource Type(s):

1. Spawning structure

a. house - multiple family

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

Survey No. W0-270

Magi No. 2402705604

DOE yes no

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic GEORGE W. COVINGTON HOUSE, THE HEDGES

and/or common

2. Location

street & number Church Street not for publicationcity, town Snow Hill vicinity of First congressional districtstate Maryland county Worcester

3. Classification

| Category | Ownership | Status | Present Use | |
|---|---|---|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> district | <input type="checkbox"/> public | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> museum |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private | <input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied | <input type="checkbox"/> commercial | <input type="checkbox"/> park |
| <input type="checkbox"/> structure | <input type="checkbox"/> both | <input type="checkbox"/> work in progress | <input type="checkbox"/> educational | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence |
| <input type="checkbox"/> site | Public Acquisition | Accessible | <input type="checkbox"/> entertainment | <input type="checkbox"/> religious |
| <input type="checkbox"/> object | <input type="checkbox"/> in process | <input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted | <input type="checkbox"/> government | <input type="checkbox"/> scientific |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> being considered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted | <input type="checkbox"/> industrial | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| | <input type="checkbox"/> not applicable | <input type="checkbox"/> no | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> other: |

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Clayton S. Adkinsstreet & number 518 South Church Street telephone no.: 632-1603city, town Snow Hill state and zip code MD 21863

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. Worcester County Clerk of Court liber 69street & number Worcester County Courthouse folio 142city, town Snow Hill state MD 21863

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title

date federal state county local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. WO-270

| | | | | |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|---|--------------------|
| Condition | | Check one | Check one | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> excellent | <input type="checkbox"/> deteriorated | <input type="checkbox"/> unaltered | <input type="checkbox"/> original site | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> good | <input type="checkbox"/> ruins | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> altered | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> moved | date of move _____ |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> fair | <input type="checkbox"/> unexposed | | | |

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The George W. Covington house stands at 518 South Church Street in the turn of the road at the intersection of Martin Street in the southern residential district of Snow Hill, Worcester County, Maryland. The two-and-a-half story frame dwelling faces northwest with the principal gable oriented on a northeast/southwest axis.

Built around 1878, this two-and-a-half story Italianate style frame dwelling is supported by a common bond brick foundation, and it is sheathed with asbestos shingles. Covering the steeply pitched roof slopes are original surfaces of patterned and colored slate. Attached to the back of the ell-shaped main house is a slightly shorter two-story service wing. The house has been converted into several apartments.

The northwest (main) elevation is an asymmetrical three-bay facade with a central entrance that is incorporated within the old corner tower that rises three floors within the ell of the main block. The second floor of the tower is lighted by two-over-two sash windows, and the third floor is pierced by narrow arched windows with shed-roofed hoods. The roof of the tower is nearly flat. To the right of the tower is the former front porch, now enclosed, which retains late nineteenth century brackets and trim. A second floor addition above the porch has been added. Left of the entrance is a single-story bay window trimmed with brackets and lighted by long two-over-two sash windows. The second floor is marked by a paired single-pane sash windows covered by a bracketed hood as well. Piercing the upper gable is a small two-over-two sash window. The extended eaves around the main block are highlighted by paired brackets. Rising through the center of the house is a large brick chimney finished with a dentiled and corbelled cap.

The southwest side of the main house is three bays across with a single story bay window marking the northern corner. Two-over-two sash windows pierce three sides, and a bracketed eave trims the patterned slate roof. The adjacent two bays, filled with two-over-two sash windows, light the first floor, and the window lintels are accented with small brackets. The second floor is lighted by two-over-two sash windows as well, and the northern most window is highlighted by a bracketed hood. Piercing the gable end is a small two-over-two sash window.

The northeast side is marked by another entrance with a hip roofed hood. A large bay window fills the adjacent bay. The two-over-two sash windows and the bracketed eaves follow similar lines as the rest of the house.

The two-story rear wing is shorter in elevation than the main house, and it retains a patterned slate roof as well. Rising through the roof is a narrow brick chimney with a corbelled and dentiled cap.

The interior was not seen, but the house has been converted into several apartments.

8. Significance

Survey No. WO-270

| Period | Areas of Significance—Check and justify below | | | |
|---|--|---|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric | <input type="checkbox"/> community planning | <input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> religion |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499 | <input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic | <input type="checkbox"/> conservation | <input type="checkbox"/> law | <input type="checkbox"/> science |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599 | <input type="checkbox"/> agriculture | <input type="checkbox"/> economics | <input type="checkbox"/> literature | <input type="checkbox"/> sculpture |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699 | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture | <input type="checkbox"/> education | <input type="checkbox"/> military | <input type="checkbox"/> social/ humanitarian |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799 | <input type="checkbox"/> art | <input type="checkbox"/> engineering | <input type="checkbox"/> music | <input type="checkbox"/> theater |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899 | <input type="checkbox"/> commerce | <input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement | <input type="checkbox"/> philosophy | <input type="checkbox"/> transportation |
| <input type="checkbox"/> 1900- | <input type="checkbox"/> communications | <input type="checkbox"/> industry | <input type="checkbox"/> politics/government | <input type="checkbox"/> other (specify) |
| | | <input type="checkbox"/> invention | | |

Specific dates 1878 **Builder/Architect**

check: Applicable Criteria: A B C D
 and/or
 Applicable Exception: A B C D E F G
 Level of Significance: national state local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The George W. Covington house was one of the more prominent Italianate style dwellings in Worcester County built during decade following the Civil War. However, a mid to late twentieth century conversion to apartments with various additions has compromised the architectural integrity of the house. Nevertheless, the house retains a three-story entrance tower, bracketed eaves, a patterned slate roof, bay windows, and various bracketed hoods over doors and windows.

This Snow Hill dwelling, named "The Hedges" by its owner, George W. Covington," dates to 1878, two years after he purchased five acres at the south end of Church Street for \$3000. (ITM 4/503) George W. Covington, an attorney by profession, served Worcester County as well as the nation throughout his adult life. Fifth and youngest son of Isaac and Amelia Franklin Covington of Berlin, George attended Buckingham Academy in his youth, and later Harvard University for a law degree. Although he was denied a seat in the state government during the special election held in 1864, he served locally as the auditor for the circuit court for Worcester County, and later as secretary and treasurer of the board of county school commissioners. In 1880 George W. Covington became the Democratic nominee for congress from the first congressional district. He took his seat in the forty-seventh congress of the United States. He was re-elected in 1882 to the same position. In 1885 he returned to private life and assisted in the fund raising campaign for the Makemie Memorial Presbyterian Church, erected in 1888-1889. At his urging, his cousin, Lady Kortright of London, England contributed \$5000 in memory of her father, John Richardson, which enabled the congregation to finish construction of the elaborate Gothic Revival church.

WO-270
GEORGE W. COVINGTON HOUSE
Church and Martin streets
Snow Hill, MD 21863

CHAIN-OF-TITLE

69/142

E. Avery Perdue
Blanche M. Perdue

to

12/31/1953

Clayton S. Adkins
Mary Clarke Adkins

CWN 23/244

Lucille W. Covington, widow
of George B. Covington

to

1/12/1948

E. Avery Perdue
Blanche M. Perdue

ITM 4/503

James T. H. Spencer
Emma F. Spencer

to

8/8/1876

George W. Covington \$3,000
and devised by the said George B. Covington,
Harry F. Covington, and Louisa A. Covington
by will EPD 10/136
"Beginning at the intersection of Martin's
Street and the Virginia road
5 acres, 25 perches

Will

John Spencer

to

James T. H. Spencer

WO-270
GEORGE W. COVINGTON HOUSE
Church and Martin streets
Snow Hill, MD 21863

CHAIN-OF-TITLE

69/142

E. Avery Perdue
Blanche M. Perdue

to

12/31/1953

Clayton S. Adkins
Mary Clarke Adkins

CWN 23/244

Lucille W. Covington, widow
of George B. Covington

to

1/12/1948

E. Avery Perdue
Blanche M. Perdue

ITM 4/503

James T. H. Spencer
Emma F. Spencer

to

8/8/1876

George W. Covington \$3,000
and devised by the said George B. Covington,
Harry F. Covington, and Louisa A. Covington
by will EPD 10/136
"Beginning at the intersection of Martin's
Street and the Virginia road
5 acres, 25 perches

Will

John Spencer

to

James T. H. Spencer

land, but came to America soon after the close of the Revolutionary war. He attained a good old age, and was quite a prominent man in Baltimore. Mrs. Jane Berry was a member of the Baptist Church and was a sweet, lovable Christian lady.



HON. GEORGE W. COVINGTON. Probably no citizen of the Eastern Shore of Maryland is better or more favorably known as a statesman, lawyer and enterprising business man than is the subject of this article. One of the native sons of Worcester County, he has always had a great interest in the growth and prosperity of the state and an especial interest in this particular portion of it. He has been a lifelong resident of the towns of Berlin and Snow Hill, and many of the notable improvements that have been instituted in his native county which have been material factors in her progress have been championed by him, among these being the Worcester Railroad, which company he assisted in incorporating, and in which he was a director. He is also a director in its successor, the Delaware, Maryland & Virginia Railroad, of which he is counsel.

George W. Covington, fifth and youngest son of Isaac and Amelia (Franklin) Covington, was born in Berlin, Worcester County, Md., September 12, 1838. He received his classical education in said town, in Buckingham Academy, then noted for its efficient teachers, among whom our subject gratefully remembers Loring Johnson, to whom, above all others, he feels indebted for conscientious instruction. In the fall of 1857 the youth went to Charlottesville, Va., with the intention of entering the University of Virginia, but was deterred by the prevalence of typhoid fever there. Returning home he determined to take up the study of law, under the preceptorship of his cousin, John R. Franklin. In his choice of a profession and in his efforts to gain a liberal education he followed his own youthful judgment, as his father had died when the son was but six years old, and his fond, indulgent

mother placed no opposition to his wishes. His older brothers had already left the home nest for distant states, where they were earning their livelihood, and so he continued with his aged mother and young sister until the former's death, August 3, 1863. In the fall of 1858 he entered the law department in Harvard University, Cambridge, Mass., and while there became acquainted with many men famous in the annals of history, as poets, authors, statesmen, artists, and in the regular professions. Among his legal instructors were also men of note, such as Professor Parsons, author of the exhaustive work on contracts, and Professor Washburn, then engaged upon his book on real estate. Upon his return home early in 1859 it was found that close application to his books had injured his eyes, and he was forced to abandon his studies and receive treatment from a Philadelphia oculist. During the months of idleness which followed, time hung so heavily upon his hands that he accepted the position of principal of Buckingham Academy, in his native town, and he now looks back to those days spent in teaching as among the pleasantest in his life. The next year he was enabled to resume his interrupted legal studies, and after being admitted to the bar, subsequent to examination in open court by Judge Thomas A. Spence, then the only judge in this district, he settled down quietly to practice in his home neighborhood, as he would not leave his aged mother.

About this time the great Civil war came on, and the same reason that had prevented him from locating elsewhere to begin his legal career—the protection of his mother and sister—prevented him from offering his services to his country, he being an avowed sympathizer with the Union side. After the death of his mother he removed to Snow Hill, January 6, 1864, and opened an office for the practice of his chosen profession. The preceding fall he took his initial step into politics which was never in a more turbulent condition in this fair land. Though the Union sentiment was strong in the county, two factions sprang up amongst them, owing to the attempt of the politicians to accomplish their own selfish ends. In a convention which was called, a county ticket

was nominated, it being dubbed the "Unconditional Union" ticket, it being too soon for its supporters to call themselves Republicans. The leaders in this movement comprised many of the prominent citizens of the county, and they chose among others William H. W. Farrow as a candidate for state's attorney and Dr. Edward Hubbell for register of wills. The opposing faction of Union men, also headed by large property owners and representative men, at a meeting called in Snow Hill, placed in nomination a full ticket, among them Robert J. Henry for register of wills, James R. Purnell for the house of delegates and George W. Covington for state's attorney. At the following election such a spectacle was seen as, it is devoutly to be hoped, will never again be witnessed in this land of the free ballot. Excitement had arisen to such a state that the military were called out, and in Berlin, Snow Hill and other voting districts many legal voters were turned away at the command of the soldiers and were not permitted to use their franchise. The vote permitted to be cast for the Constitutional Union ticket was insignificantly small, and resulted in the election of the "Unconditional Union" ticket. Much controversy arose and many protests against the irregular and illegal election were presented to Governor Bradford, but nothing was done in the matter, and the candidates returned as elected and took their offices. The following winter the state legislature authorized the calling of a convention for the purpose of preparing a new constitution to be submitted to the people the next spring. The "Unconditional Union" men placed in nomination as candidates for delegates to said constitutional convention William T. Purnell, William H. W. Farrow and others, while the Conservative or Constitutional Union men placed in the field as their nominees John Selby Purnell, Dr. George W. Bishop, Ritchie Fooks and George W. Covington. The contest was a short but heated one, and though our subject was the youngest man on his ticket, he took a very active part in the campaign, being the only candidate who stumped the county. The issue at point was the question of the emancipation of the slaves, the Unconditional

Union men being in favor of immediate emancipation of slaves in the state without compensation, while the Conservative party advocated gradual emancipation and compensation to the owners by the government. The election that followed was carried on under the supervision of United States marshals, and the larger number of Democrats not being allowed to vote, the election as a matter of course resulted in favor of the Unconditional Union party faction, and the calling of a convention to be held in Annapolis in 1864 for the formation of a new constitution.

Having thus been baffled in his first two political ventures Mr. Covington resumed his practice and gave all of his attention to that occupation. He was pleasantly surprised by soon thereafter receiving the unsolicited appointment of auditor of the circuit court for Worcester County from Judge Thomas A. Spence. In 1865 he was elected secretary and treasurer of the board of county school commissioners of Worcester County, Rev. Samuel K. Stewart having been president of the same. This was the first board to serve under the present system of free schools in Maryland. In 1867 he was nominated by the Conservative Democrats to the constitutional convention and elected, almost without opposition. He was appointed on the committee of the judiciary, but was unable to take the active part he would have done otherwise, owing to illness. He retired to his Cedar Grove farm in 1871 to recuperate in health and while there was unexpectedly appointed school examiner and treasurer of the county school board, this event occurring in 1874. During the two years of his service he started the first colored school in his county, under the present free-school system. In 1874 he took up his residence again in Snow Hill, resuming his practice, and in 1878 he built his handsome home, the Hedges. In 1880 he became the Democratic nominee for congress from the first congressional district and canvassed every county in the district. He received a very large majority (nearly one thousand in his own county) and took his seat in the forty-seventh congress. He served on the committee on the revision of laws, of which President McKinley was chairman,

and was also on the committee on militia. In 1882 he was re-elected to congress by a good majority, John G. Carlisle, of Kentucky, his warm personal friend, being speaker of the forty-eighth session. That gentleman honored Mr. Covington by tendering him the only chairmanship given to any member from Maryland, to wit: Committee on accounts. During this session he projected the idea of the inland water-way between Delaware Bay and Virginia, sometimes called the Covington Canal, and he also put forth efforts for the betterment of our postal route system. While Mr. Covington was a member of the forty-eighth congress he was tendered the appointment of associate judge in his circuit by Governor McLane, but deeming it his duty to serve out his term he felt constrained to decline the honor. Since 1885 he has been in private life devoting his time to looking after his practice and estates. He has been town commissioner of Snow Hill three times and was one of the trustees of the high school here for many years. From 1885 to 1895 he was chairman of the Worcester County Central Democratic Committee, resigning then on account of becoming dissatisfied with the political conduct of county affairs.

September 6, 1865, Mr. Covington married Sallie M. D. Bishop, only daughter of George and Louisa C. Bishop, the ceremony taking place in All Hallows Church, in Snow Hill. Four children have blessed their union, Louisa Amelia, George Bishop, Harry Franklin and Arthur Dennis, the latter dying in infancy. Mr. Covington was baptized in the above-mentioned church, of which his father had been a vestryman, but after his father's death he attended the Buckingham Presbyterian Church, of Berlin, with his mother. After removing to Snow Hill he was elected a committeeman and served as such in Makemie Memorial Church just twenty-five years. During the latter part of that period the fine edifice was built in honor of the father of Presbyterianism in America, Francis Makemie. Work had ceased upon the structure for more than a year after its partial erection, and things were rather gloomy from a financial point of view, when Mr. Covington put his shoulder to

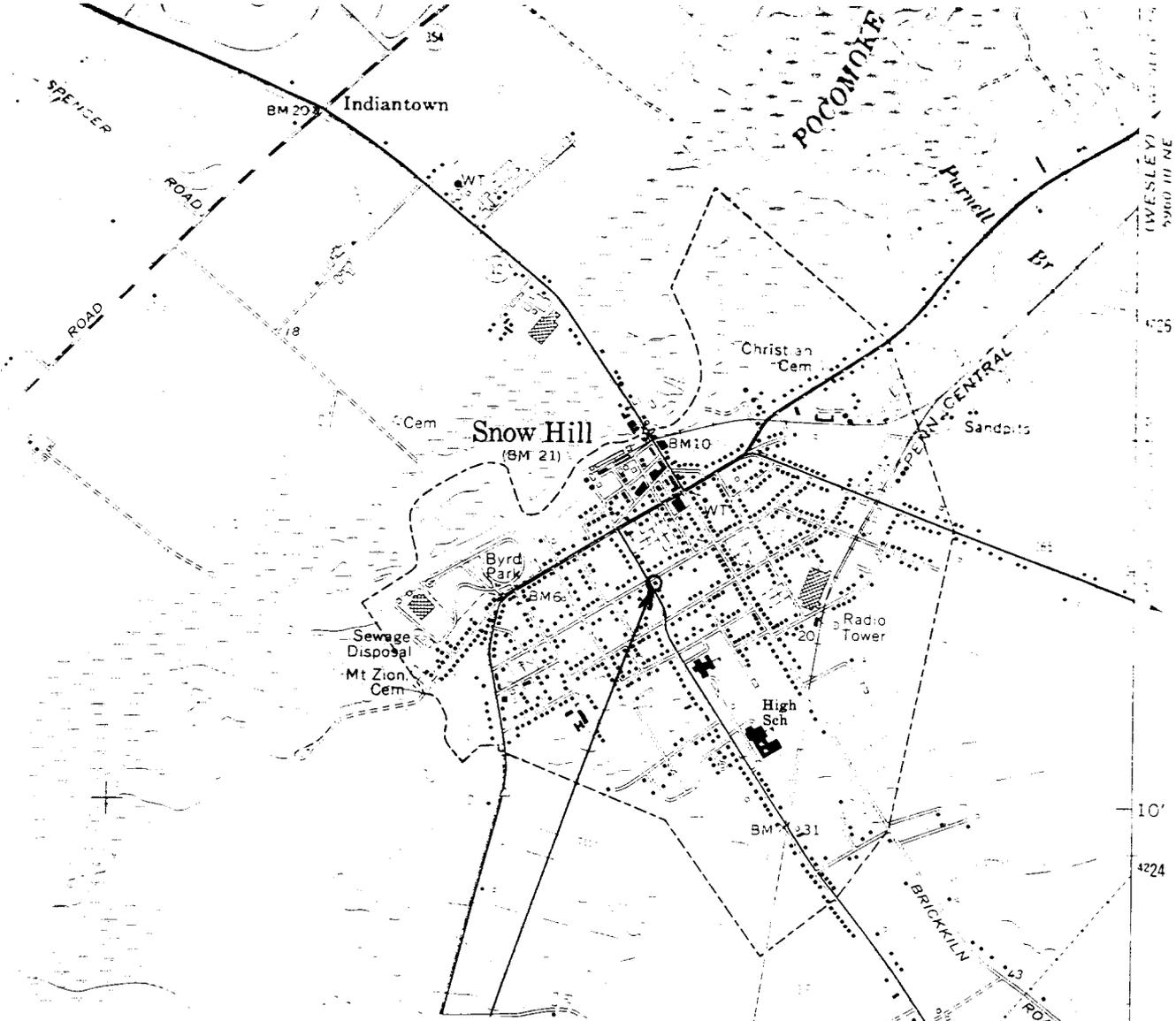
the wheel and was largely instrumental in securing its completion. At his suggestion his cousin, Lady Kortright, of London, England, contributed \$5,000 in memory of her father; and having been given authority to expend the amount as he deemed wisest, he as chairman of a committee was enabled to fully complete the church. Through him a beautiful stained glass window, "the seed-sower," in memory of Lady Kortright's father, John Richardson, who was a native of Snow Hill, and a former member of this congregation, adorns the front of the church. Since resigning from the committee of the church, Mr. Covington with his family now worships in the church of his fathers, All Hallows Episcopal, of which his wife has been a member from early girlhood.



THOMAS H. CRANE, M. D. The high character sustained by Dr. Crane during the long period of his residence in Millington brought him the confidence of his associates and the respect of all with whom he came into contact. He was numbered among the skillful and efficient professional men of Kent County, and was one of those public-spirited men whose presence so powerfully advances the welfare of a community. Many of the enterprises for the benefit of the people owed their origin to his fertile brain and active mind.

Near Church Hill, in Queen Anne's County, Dr. Crane was born February 7, 1825. He was the son of Dr. Jonathan and Mary (Myers) Crane, natives of the same county as himself. His father, who was a physician, carried on a large practice in his neighborhood for many years and was one of the most prominent men in Church Hill. He and his wife continued to reside there until death. They were the parents of seven children, all of whom are deceased. The early days of our subject's life were passed in his native county, where he attended the public schools and academy. Desiring to enter the medical profession, he made his first investigations into the science under the preceptorship of his father. He

WO-270



WO-270
 GEORGE W. COVINGTON HOUSE
 Snow Hill, MD Quadrangle, 1966

