

education to the children of the State, as evinced by the legislation of 1694, '96 and 1704, it was not till 1725—ninety-two years after the landing of the Pilgrims at St. Mary's, and seventy-one after the erection of our County—that we realized the benefits of their efforts. Under the act of 1723 'for the encouragement of learning and erecting Schools in the several Counties of this Province,' a 'Public Free School' was established near where the County Seat now stands. * It was incorporated under the charge of seven 'Visitors,' † whose names still represent some of our most influential citizens; thus indicating the solicitude felt by the Legislature for its success. How far it realized the hopes of its founders, we have, unfortunately, no means of knowing ('Troja fuit, is nearly all the Records announce.) It was, through the liberality of 'Geo. Plater, of Annapolis, endowed with one hundred and eighty acres of land, ‡ from the cultivation of which, the 'Master'—who was to be a 'member of the Church of England, of pious and exemplary life and conversation, and capable of teaching well the grammar, good writing and the mathematics'—derived his chief support. Whom they found to fulfil these requirements; who ministered at this primitive Temple of Science,—it were idle now to inquire; though as Rev. J. Cay and Wm. Hunter are entitled 'Masters' in the Records, we may indulge the conjecture that both in their day ruled 'lords dominant' in this Pioneer School, which for fifty-two years held undivided sway in our County. But a rival at length appeared. In 1775, Dr. Jno. H. Smith donated a lot of ground near Lower Marlboro' to certain individuals, § for the use of a 'Public School', 'to be thereon erected,' a duty which they appear to have promptly executed, as three years later (1778) the Trustees represented to the Legislature, "that they had at their own expense erected a seminary of learning, near Lower Marlboro', which for *several years past*, had secured a sufficient number of students to enable a gentleman of ability to take charge thereof;" and being desirous of enlarging its plan, they petition to be authorized to sell

* This same year (1725) an act was passed for the removal of the County seat from Battle Creek to its present site, which was then known as 'Williams' Old Fields.'—Vide Kitty's Laws. Md. 1725. ch. xi.

† 'Rev. Jonathan Cay, Jno. Rousby, Esq., Col. Jno. Mackall, Col. Jno. Smith, Mr. Jas. Heigh, Mr. Walter Smith of St. Leonard's Creek, and Mr. Benj. Mackall.—vide. idem. 1723. ch. xix.

‡ This land is described as 'lying in Calvert County, east of the Patuxent River, west of the Chesapeake Bay, in the head branches of Parker's Creek.' and derived from the donor's Father, 'Geo. Plater, also of Calvert Co.' who had purchased it from Wm. Williams in 1704.—Vid. Land Rec. June 3, 1725. The words *East* of the Patuxent River, imply, as was the fact, that Calvert Co. at one time extended *West* of the P. River. Query: was this *Geo. Plater* (the donor) father to the Governor of that name in 1791?

§ Dr. Ed. Johnson, Ed. Gantt, Ed. Reynolds, Pat. Sim Smith, and Thos. J. Claggett. Vid. Land Rec. Calvert Co. Lib. 1775. The *Thos. J. Claggett* here named, was afterwards (1792) Epis. Bishop of Md.