

## PORTRAIT OF A COLONIAL GOVERNOR: ROBERT EDEN

### II—HIS EXIT

By ROSAMOND RANDALL BEIRNE

ROBERT EDEN, ex-Governor of Maryland, sailed out of Annapolis harbor on the 20-gun ship *Fowey*, commanded by Captain Montague, and joined ex-Governor of Virginia Dunmore's fleet, down the Chesapeake Bay. Dr. Upton Scott, Richard Tilghman and three other gentlemen besides Eden received permission to take passage to England on the merchant ship *Levant*, the victualler or store-ship for the fleet, and transferred somewhere off the Virginia Capes.<sup>1</sup> They reached England in August 1776. Eden went at once to his brother William in the Colonial Office to make his official report on his lost province. He did not learn until then that the Colonies had declared themselves free and independent states. He did not know until then that, because of this news, the Lord Chancellor had thrown the Harford-Browning law suit over Lord Baltimore's will out of Court, declaring "It was a waste of time and that he had no power to give the rightful owner possession."<sup>2</sup> His personal baggage and his wines followed him but later news confirmed the report that the stores left on the Annapolis dock and the contents of his house had been confiscated by the State of Maryland.

Eden had been in England but a week or two when he received a letter from Lord George Germain, Secretary of State for the Colonies, announcing a reward from his grateful government. Germain spoke of "the King's entire approbation of your conduct" and announced that "His Majesty is pleased as a public mark of his favour, to create you a Baronet."<sup>3</sup> The new Baronet

<sup>1</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, XII, 24, 87.

<sup>2</sup> *Charles Browning's Chief Explanation* quoted in J. Thomas Scharf, *History of Maryland* (3 vols., Baltimore, 1879), II, 138.

<sup>3</sup> Germain to Eden, September 7, 1776, "Correspondence of Governor Eden," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, II (1907), 138.

of Maryland answered from Downing Street that very day and modestly thanked His Majesty. This happy ending to his colonial affairs temporarily salved the feelings of a young man out of a job. He wrote the good news to his friend Eddis, still in Annapolis, closing out the business of the Loan Office, and in short order it was relayed to all the Loyalist families still in residence in Maryland.

Little is known of Robert Eden's life for the next seven years. His mother, the elderly Lady Eden, like all mothers, worried about her second son. "You rather disappoint me by saying nothing about Bob," she wrote William Eden. "I cannot help thinking with anxiety how my poor Bob is to live now he has got to England."<sup>4</sup> He would not have wanted to join an army fighting his former friends in America and if Great Britain won the contest he would most surely have returned as their Governor. There was nothing to do but apply for a pension and bide his time. Reunited with his family, he sought rest from his arduous labors of the last year, paid a lengthy visit to his sister, wife of the Bishop of Bangor (later Archbishop of Canterbury), and sojourned in Durham, the seat of his brother, Sir John, before settling in London.<sup>5</sup> He was in constant communication with the Rev. Jonathan Boucher and all other refugees from whom he could gather news of Maryland. The Dulany clan, Addisons, Ogles and others, gathered at the Montgomerys in London where they had little to do except worry over the confiscation of their estates by the new government. Laws had been passed in Maryland decreeing that former citizens who had left the country, or those still remaining who refused to aid the new United States, must suffer the penalty of either fines, imprisonment or banishment.<sup>6</sup> Merely receiving letters from England, opened and censored en route, was sometimes enough to place the receiver in an embarrassing position with the local government. Rebecca Dulany Hanson writing to her brother Walter Dulany from Oxon Hill, Maryland, says:

Your old friend Carr who has been a Prisoner in this country for some months is at Liberty again. His confinement was owing to some letters he

<sup>4</sup> Rev. Robert Allan Eden, *Some Historical Notes on the Eden Family* (London, 1907), p. 34.

<sup>5</sup> Robert Eden to Walter Dulany, August 15, 1777, Bangor Palace, quoted in Bernard C. Steiner, *Life and Administration of Robert Eden*, Johns Hopkins University Studies (Baltimore, 1898), p. 140.

<sup>6</sup> Scharf, *op. cit.*, II, 303.

received from Mr. Boucher which gave great offence. I should think it would not be improper to let Mr. B. know this, he would certainly be more on his guard.<sup>7</sup>

It is doubtful if Mr. B. would have taken the hint for he still felt it his place to tell the upstart Americans, including his erst-while friend, General Washington, exactly how wrong they were. There were two distinct groups of exiles; the wealthy Americans whose education and interests had been in England and the British office-holders, who though long resident in the colonies had never changed their allegiance. Most of those who still called themselves Marylanders felt unhappy and in an alien land. Samuel Curwen resented the "conceited islanders" who were continually referring to "our colonies and our plantations" and calling the Americans contemptuous terms. He wrote in his diary that he was "Sick at heart and tired of a sojourn among a people who after all, are but foreigners."<sup>8</sup> Dr. Upton Scott, too, was dissatisfied with life in London and retreated to Belfast, his native city. These country colonials, so long removed from their British habitat, homesick for their families left behind, grew less sure of their conviction that the British Empire must be upheld, and secretly rejoiced at the news of American victories.

Eden was not given to vituperation and he must have longed often for the easy and pleasant life of Annapolis. When William Eden was sent to America as a commissioner to negotiate for peace, Sir Robert sent by him a long letter to his old friend, George Washington. To this the overworked General replied in part on June 12, 1778:

I thank you much for your care of the Letters addressed to myself. The one from your Brother gave me particular satisfaction, as it not only excited a pleasing remembrance of our past intimacy and friendship, during his residence in this Country, but also served to show that they had not been impaired by an opposition of political sentiments.<sup>9</sup>

William Eddis had written the former Governor whenever he could get a letter through the lines. One from New York, July 23, 1777, gave a lurid picture of the new government: The best people feared to take office; few even bothered to vote; inflation; insults

<sup>7</sup> Dulany Papers, January 20, 1782, Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>8</sup> Samuel Curwen, *Journal 1775-1784* (New York, 1842), p. 90.

<sup>9</sup> John C. Fitzpatrick, editor, *Writings of Washington* (39 vols., Washington, 1931-44), XII, 52.

to those considered Tories; fortification of Annapolis, right to the Governor's garden wall; and assurances of the victory of British arms.<sup>10</sup> But the war dragged on and the stubborn Yankees refused to admit defeat.

The Loyalists, enduring the hardship of long exile on reduced incomes, saw the vanishing prospect of recompense by the British government for their losses. What debts they had in America were to be paid from the sum realized by the sale of their confiscated property there, but in the meantime they had to live. The Edens sent their youngest son to school at Mr. Boucher's in 1779 and the worthy pedagogue noted that Sir Robert had borrowed £1200 from Harford and that he (Boucher) had gone on his note.<sup>11</sup> Henry Harford came of age that year and began plans for seeking restitution of his estates and province as soon as the war was over.

At last, in 1782 the war ended and all the exiled Marylanders who had survived, drifted back to their homes, for the most part in humble spirit. Robert Eden had been granted by his government the largest pension (£800) of any on the Loyalist list.<sup>12</sup> Until the treaty was settled none of them knew what compensation could be gained in addition and the British government, in negotiating, was constantly embarrassed by the continual appeals of the Tories. The United States commissioners felt it impossible to restore property already confiscated and were unwilling to compensate their former enemies when they could not completely compensate their own patriots. Congress finally agreed to recommend to the states that they provide restitution in certain cases and that persons be allowed lawful means to regain property.<sup>13</sup> Harford and his former guardian lost no time in drawing up their appeal to the Maryland Assembly for redress and prepared to present it in person.

Both Baltimore newspapers report their arrival on the ship *Harford*, Captain Nathaniel Richardson, from London via Madeira. One account reads, "In the *Harford* came passengers, the right honorable Henry Harford, esquire (proprietor of Mary-

<sup>10</sup> William Eddis to Robert Eden, July 23, 1777, British Public Record Office, quoted in Scharf, *op. cit.*, II, 312-315.

<sup>11</sup> Jonathan Boucher, *Reminiscences of an American Loyalist* (New York, 1925), p. 188.

<sup>12</sup> Claude H. Van Tyne, *The Loyalists in the American Revolution* (New York, 1902), p. 255.

<sup>13</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 287. See also Lorenzo Sabine, *American Loyalists* (Boston, 1847), p. 1-114.

land prior to the late revolution), sir Robert Eden, Robert Smith, and John Clapham, esquires." <sup>14</sup> Eden, Harford and Smith, their secretary, repaired to the home of Dr. Upton Scott on Shipwright Street. Scott, now in his sixties and none too well, had obtained, through his universal popularity, a special pass through the line in New York for himself "his cloathes and his medicines" and had returned in 1780 to join his wife at her plantation, Belvoir, a few miles up the Severn River from Annapolis. <sup>15</sup> There he lived in "elegant retirement" and could offer the hospitality of his town house with its lovely garden to his visiting friends.

The Assembly met in October but the claimants were told by their advisers that it would be better to wait for the definitive peace treaty to be signed before approaching it. There was nothing to do but to have patience and to try to reclaim as far as was possible the old and pleasant way of life. Annapolis was trying hard to forget the war and was dusting the Assembly room in the prospect of balls and other entertainments for Congress when it convened. The race tracks had opened for an expected good season. As one interested horse-breeder said to another, "Is not so fine a stud of Breed mairs in this State for the blood.—The goal [jail] will be full by March Cort as it was of Torys the like has never bin knowne here by Report." <sup>16</sup> The old Tories were living as unobtrusively as possible, most in reduced circumstances. Benedict Calvert and his family still occupied Mount Airy and its broad acres, unmolested. Of Eden's other friends, Col. William Fitzhugh and his wife had spent the period of the war away from Rousby Hall at a farm more remote from scenes of activity. His son, George, had taken the oath and continued to live at Epping in Baltimore County. William Digges of Warburton had died before June, 1783, as had Barrister Carroll. Richard Lee was advertising his town house for sale and the *Gazette* carried many other such notices for the sale of property to settle debts. It was hard to be gay with so many of the old Court circle missing. Inflation and the lack of all trade had impoverished the erstwhile rich. The State had planned to sell six slaves, the property of Robert Eden, but Eden had previously sold them to satisfy a personal debt. Word

<sup>14</sup> *Maryland Gazette or Baltimore General Advertiser*, August 15, 1783. See also *Maryland Journal* (Baltimore) of the same date for almost identical story.

<sup>15</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, XLIII, 348-349.

<sup>16</sup> Cornelius Conway to John Galloway, March 1738, Bellvoir Farm. *Galloway Papers*, Vol. 17, Library of Congress.

came that Sir Guy Carleton had received orders to evacuate New York City as soon as possible and that the definitive treaty was on its way to America.

The former Proprietary and his former Governor believed that it was their right to issue land patents on unclaimed parts of the old province and to receive fees for them. Eden, therefore, brought some signed patents with him and signed others while in Annapolis. It was not long before the full censure of the Assembly fell on his head. <sup>17</sup> William Paca, the Governor, and his Council sent the data from the Register of the Land Office to Luther Martin, the Attorney General, to decide whether Robert Eden should be tried for forgery, treason or fraud. Eden listened to reason, said he was sorry, and signed no more patents.

When Congress, rotating from one city to another, assembled in Annapolis on November 26, the town was agog. Lodgings had to be found for all the members, though many were missing from the roll call. Thomas Jefferson, member from Virginia, wrote wearily to his family that they could not muster a quorum and so could do no business. "We have never yet had more than 7 states and very seldom that as Maryland is scarcely ever present. Consequently we do nothing." <sup>18</sup> Perhaps Eddis was right when he told Eden that the important men would not accept responsibility of office. Those that would were worked hard. Judge "Jere" Chase had to adjourn court in order to attend Congress and other men like James McHenry were members both of Congress and the Assembly. It took from November until January to collect the needed quorum of 9 states to ratify the treaty. Jefferson and Monroe together rented a Dulany house and were attended by Partout, a remarkable French cook. <sup>19</sup> It was just before Christmas that Jefferson, McHenry and Gerry, acting as a committee, arranged a ceremony toward which all America had been looking. General Washington was arriving to resign his commission to Congress. He was met on the outskirts of the town on December 19 and spent the following three days renewing old acquaintances and being entertained in a grand manner by the Assembly and by Congress. Between the official entertainments

<sup>17</sup> *Archives of Maryland*, XLVIII, 506, 517 (Feb., 1784).

<sup>18</sup> Paul Leicester Ford, editor, *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (10 vols., New York, 1892-99), III, 347.

<sup>19</sup> Marie Kimball, *Jefferson, War and Peace* (New York, 1947), p. 354.

tradition has it that the General dined quietly at the Scott house on Shipwright Street with Sir Robert Eden and Henry Harford.

On Tuesday, the 23rd, the Senate Chamber of the little State House was crowded to capacity. Mrs. Washington, with other ladies, was admitted to the gallery where they had a good view of the dignified presiding officer, General Thomas Mifflin, enthroned in a great chair on a very small platform. General Washington's hands and voice shook as he read in measured tones his short but moving address. There was scarcely a dry eye in the whole packed assembly as he strode out to grasp the hands of many of his old soldiers. Annapolis, however, never wept for long and while dinners and balls could not perhaps be on the elaborate scale of those of this week-end, nevertheless, there were other occasions and other days. Congressmen writing home both praised and condemned the gayety. "Our Adjournment to Annapolis has certainly had a good Effect: the Object of the Inhabitants here is altogether pleasure; Business is no part of their System."<sup>20</sup> Those who felt that they were there for business, like Jefferson, grumbled, and some without private means had difficulty living with the constant temptation of "plays, Balls, Concerts, routs, hops, Fandangoes and fox hunting," on the stipend of \$4 per day as a Congressman.<sup>21</sup>

Historians have assumed and so stated that Robert Eden was in bad repute with most Marylanders and was at this time practically in hiding. Nothing could be farther from the fact. Sociable and kindly by nature, it was easy for him to see his American friends again and feel confident that they would want to see him. We have the record of two eyewitnesses that the ex-Governor was not hiding his light and was quite as much in evidence as other Annapolitans. James Tilton wrote to Gunning Bedford, Christmas Day, 1783:

Every man seemed to be in heaven or so absorbed in the pleasures of imagination, as to neglect the more sordid appetites, for not a soul got drunk, though there was wine in plenty and the usual number of 13 toasts drank, besides one given afterwards by the General which you ought to be acquainted with: it is as follows. 'Competent powers to congress for general purposes.'

<sup>20</sup> Elbridge Gerry to Stephen Higginson, March 4, 1784, Edmund C. Burnett, editor, *Letters of Members of the Continental Congress* (8 vols., Washington, 1921-36), VII, 461.

<sup>21</sup> David Howell to Jonathan Arnold, February 21, 1784, *ibid.*, VII, 451.

And he added, "Sir Robert Eden and Mr. William Harford [*sic*] attended very respectfully. They were also at the public dinner and dance."<sup>22</sup>

James McHenry has left us a graphic account of the Governor's ball:

"Sir Robert Eden would have persuaded one by being of the party that he had lost all remembrance of his having been the owner of the house in which he danced, and late governor of Maryland—but the thing could not be, where every person he met, and every picture and piece of furniture he saw, served to remind him of the past, or brought up the recollection of pleasures he could no longer repeat. This state has taken away his property, and a libertine life his constitution. He finds himself a dependent on persons he despised, and insignificant on the spot where, but lately he was everything. He sees his old parasites and companions, enjoying places under the present government, and devoted to new interests. He is without a train of followers obedient to his pleasing will. He perceives that even the hearts he is said to have subdued by his entertainments or warmed by his gallantries have altered by time or submitted to other seducers. If we look for the cause of his return to this place in his pride—that would not suffer him to sue for favor from men he so lately considered rebels. If in his interest, he will be blamed for meanness. If in his poverty, he is certainly to be pitied. So situated and circumstanced I could neither believe him happy or at his ease, unless I had supposed, that, with his estate and constitution he had lost his sensibility. . . .

Sir Robert danced with Mrs. Plater<sup>23</sup> Mr. Smith, his secretary, with her daughter. Mr. Clapham, formerly receiver of rents, was at the card tables. Mr. Harford did not dance, but was sometimes seen chatting with the ladies and sometimes with himself.

Such a blended assembly—men of so opposite principles and manners—those who had lost estates and those who had them,—those who were once the greatest and who were now among the least—those who were once nothing, and who are now everything—ladies who shone under the late constitution, and some few of both sexes, whose value and merits no revolutions could diminish—all conspired to excite reflections and to afford amusement. The scene did not cease to be interesting till near twelve o'clock—when I retired to my apartment.<sup>24</sup>

The ladies, too, wrote to each other of the attractive visitor in town: "Our friend was there in scarlet and gold. You know I always thought him superior to most. We supped with him two

<sup>22</sup> James Tilton to Gunning Bedford, Fitzpatrick, *op. cit.*, XXVII, footnote p. 285-286.

<sup>23</sup> Elizabeth Rousby, second wife of Col. George Plater of Sotterly, St. Mary's Co. Plater, then a Maryland delegate to Congress, was later Governor of the State.

<sup>24</sup> Letter to Margaret Caldwell, Dec., 1783, Bernard C. Steiner, *Life and Correspondence of James McHenry* (Baltimore, 1907), p. 66.

nights ago at a snug party." <sup>25</sup> Mrs. John Ridout kept her mother, Mrs. Samuel Ogle, still in England, in touch with affairs in Annapolis.

"We have a very pretty and agreeable little man here, Mr. Harford. I hope the Assembly will do something handsome for him—they ought when they have taken such a noble estate from him. He is much liked. Sir Robert Eden seems in bad health. He does not flirt now. They are very agreeable neighbors to us. They live in Dr. Scott's house. The Doctor himself is in an ill state of health."

It was common knowledge that Sir Robert was an ill man <sup>27</sup> but he was far from *persona non grata* to the Annapolitans nor was he keeping out of the public eye as has been stated. In England the old Court coterie were anxious to know how Eden and Harford were progressing with their claims against the State. William Vans Murray among others wrote from London to Henry Maynadier to ask "What is the affair of Sir Robert Eden? how ended?" <sup>28</sup> Congress finally ratified the peace treaty and adjourned June 3, 1784. The Maryland Assembly had too much business to finish before its adjournment and so the Harford claims were postponed until the next session in the fall. The summer dragged on. Seven French battleships lay at anchor in the harbor and the townspeople, like the chorus of a musical opera, danced out to give their brave allies a good time. Lafayette stopped by between trips to Mount Vernon and Baltimore to confer with his countrymen. General Washington, too, put up for a night on his way north. In the torrid heat of an Annapolis summer, worn out by illness and perhaps by disappointment, Robert Eden died.

The *Gazette* carried no news of his death. In the issue of that week (Sept. 2, 1784) was advertised the Fall racing season; the opening of King William's School; the wares of increasing mercantile trade and the dramatic Mr. Hallam's course of lectures.

<sup>25</sup> Henrietta Hill Ogle (Mrs. Benjamin Ogle) to Miss Lowndes, undated (probably 1783 or 1784), Kate Mason Rowland, "Maryland Women and French Officers," *Atlantic Monthly*, LXVI (1890), 658.

<sup>26</sup> Lady Edgar, *A Colonial Governor in Maryland*, London, 1912), p. 276, letter dated January 16, 1784.

<sup>27</sup> The Rev. Robert A. Eden to Bernard C. Steiner, June 7, 1895, quoting a letter from William Eden to Morton Eden "that R. E. had fallen into bad health in his latter days and his life had become rather a sad one for some time before his death." Maryland Historical Society.

<sup>28</sup> Wm. Vans Murray to Henry Maynadier, London, May 20, 1784, Maryland Historical Society.

The real news was that three boys had been brutally murdered on a bay schooner, but Henry Harford paid for a notice to the public that he "purposed to apply to the next General Assembly for such restoration of, or compensation for, my confiscated property as they in justice shall think proper." And Robert Eden was laid to rest without the knowledge of the man on the streets.

However, *The Maryland Journal & Baltimore Advertiser* of Friday, September 10, a paper by that time of much larger circulation than the *Gazette*, carried the death notice in full:

A few Days ago departed this Life, at Annapolis, with great Resignation and Serenity, after a long Indisposition, Sir Robert Eden, Bart. who presided as Governor of this State previous to the late Revolution. This Gentleman was a Branch of a respectable dignified Family and was much respected for his many amiable qualities.

This clears any doubt as to the non-secrecy of his death and as to the esteem in which he was held by even such ardent patriots as the newspaper readers of Baltimore. Further local proof of his death was the notice in the *Gazette* for Sept. 9, 1784, stating that "Application will be made to the next general assembly, on behalf of the heirs of the late Sir Robert Eden for restitution of property or compensation for the same," signed by R. Smith, his secretary. We can only suppose that news of his death was received too late for publication the week before and was stale news by the next issue on the 9th. It took four months to reach the refined columns of *The Gentleman's Magazine* published in London and to have the exact date of death recorded:

September 2, 1784

In Maryland. Sir Robert Eden, Bart. late governor of that province, brother of Sir John Eden, Bart. and the Abp. of Canterbury's lady. He had returned to that state a few months ago for the recovery of his property pursuant to the provisional articles of peace and his death was occasioned by a dropsy in consequence of a fever. This property came to him from the late Lord Baltimore whose sister he married, by whom he has left two sons, the eldest of whom now at Oxford succeeds to the title.<sup>29</sup>

The place of burial of Sir Robert has interested local historians for these 166 years. An old citizen of Annapolis, writing her memoirs some time before her death in 1840, made several comments on Eden whose friend her husband had been. She

<sup>29</sup> *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, 1785, Vol. 54, p. 876. "Deaths of Considerable Persons."

assures us that "He [Eden] changed before death, took the sacrament, and at his death he requested to be buried in S. R. Churchyard."<sup>30</sup> "S. R. Churchyard" was taken by the editor to mean South River or All Hallows Church, whereas it could also stand for Severn River (St. Margaret's) Church. That it was the latter was made clear in 1841 when David Ridgely published his *Annals of Annapolis* and stated definitely that "he was buried under the pulpit of the Episcopal church on the north side of Severn, within 2 or 3 miles of this place. This church was some years since burned down."<sup>31</sup> Another old citizen of Annapolis added to this evidence and gave a reason for Eden's grave being outside the city bounds. Alexander Randall's copy of the *Annals* has been annotated by him, apparently at his first reading of it in 1841.<sup>32</sup> Around the margins of the page he wrote

Gov. Eden was buried there because the Vestry of St. Anne's Church had ordered that [no] more burials should take place in the Churchyard and they had opened the 'Grave yard,' a present to the Church from Miss Bordley, for the purpose to be thereafter used as the City Cemetery. Gov. Eden's friends wanted his case to be an exception but the Vestry refused to allow it, hence he was interred in the Parish on the north side of Severn. When I was a boy Gov. Eden's relation came to Annapolis to seek his grave. My father told them where it was, but he after a careful search could find no trace of it. If the friends of Gov. Eden had allowed him to be buried in our Cemetery no doubt his grave would have been known to this day.

This margin-writer's father<sup>33</sup> lived in Annapolis during Eden's administration, was a vestryman of St. Anne's Church, and must have known all the facts of his death and burial. These facts he passed on to his son,<sup>33</sup> also a citizen and vestryman of the same town. In 1784 the Episcopal Church in America was struggling to reorganize. In Maryland Lord Baltimore's appointees had brought the church into disrepute in many parishes. Methodism had converted many of its members. Between 1781 and 1784 St. Anne's Vestry met only at Easter, while the wealthier members had in anger withdrawn their subscriptions to pay for the ministrations of an ill rector and for the completion of the church itself, already

<sup>30</sup> Mrs. Rebecca Key, "A Notice of Some of the First Buildings with Notes of Some of the Early Residents," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, XIV (1919), 270.

<sup>31</sup> This annotated copy of Ridgely's *Annals of Annapolis* (Baltimore, 1841) is owned by Alexander Randall, M. D., of Philadelphia.

<sup>32</sup> John Randall (1754-1826), merchant of Annapolis.

<sup>33</sup> Alexander Randall (1803-1881), attorney-at-law and banker of Annapolis.

many years in building.<sup>34</sup> It seems clear that a city cemetery was needed because of the enlarged church building and because the churchyard was filled to capacity. However, the city cemetery at that moment was merely an open field, sloping down to the waters of Dorsey's Creek, and Eden's friends hesitated to subject his body to possible neglect. They hesitated, also, about refusing to comply with his desire to be buried in a churchyard.

If not St. Anne's then St. Margaret's Westminster, was the most convenient church and one with which the Governor may have had some associations. It was the parish church of Horatio Sharpe when he was at Whitehall, as it was of his successor to that estate, John Ridout. It stood exactly across the Severn river from Dr. Upton Scott's plantation, Belvoir. We know that Dr. Scott was living at Belvoir<sup>35</sup> and since he was not only Eden's most intimate friend but also his personal physician, it is possible that he removed the ill man from his town house and brought him to the country where he could be nursed by Mrs. Scott and her sister. As medical advisor, Dr. Scott must have foreseen what was apparent to all observers that spring, the seriousness of the disease with which Eden was afflicted and he must, also, have known his dying wishes. Therefore, with no intent of secrecy, he probably would have placed the coffin on a barge and have had it rowed to the opposite river bank for burial in the nearest church.

St. Margaret's Westminster predates any Anglican parishes in the neighborhood. There was a church at this point as early as 1692. Following the destruction of this church, a second was built about 1731 which was standing in Eden's time and was the parish church for those living in Broad Neck Hundred.<sup>36</sup> The second church burned about 1823 and the new church to take its place was erected at a site several miles away, considered more convenient to the congregation. This St. Margaret's survives and gives name to that community in Anne Arundel County. A few old inhabitants knew of the tradition that a church and burial ground

<sup>34</sup> Rev. Ethan Allen, *Historical Notices of St. Anne's Parish* (Baltimore, 1857), p. 92.

<sup>35</sup> From advertisements in the *Maryland Gazette* and from a letter of his nephew, Hugh Birnie, owned by Miss Amelia H. Annan, Taneytown, Maryland: "June 10, 1783. During the Doctor's Abstinence [sic] Mrs. Scott resided at a Country Seat a few miles from Annapolis where they still continue to live and I have never heard that she was disturbed in his abstinence."

<sup>36</sup> Percy G. Skirvin, *First Parishes of the Province of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1923), p. 123.

had been on a certain piece of property, long since given over to agriculture. Ploughshares would turn up bricks and someone remembered that a tombstone had been dug up and used since as a door step. Elihu Riley, author of *The Ancient City* tried in his turn to find Eden's grave but could only report the tradition that people knew that "an English Lord" had once been buried near Winchester Station.<sup>37</sup>

In 1923 Daniel R. Randall,<sup>38</sup> an amateur antiquarian, undertook to find Governor Eden's last resting place. Armed with his father's recollections, he sought out for questioning all the ancients, both white and colored, of that section of the county. Eventually an old Negro ploughman told of underground bricks on part of the Winchester farm. Mr. Randall had a long crowbar made with a spike on the end and, assisted by a willing son, began to prod a field which lay close to the steep river bank at Severn Heights. Before long they hit masonry from two to three feet below the surface. Other ardent antiquarians, particularly architects, were consulted who sketched in a phantom colonial church with proper and possible orientation.<sup>39</sup> Nothing daunted by enormous trees and a jungle of honeysuckle which had grown up within the boundary of the walls, the brick outline was laid bare by a local laborer who was accustomed to "Mister Dan's" historical vagaries. The owners of the corn field and copse, Mr. and Mrs. Walter T. Moon, became interested in the project and did everything they could to assist.

Bearing in mind that interments were usually made at the chancel end of a church, which would be facing east, a thorough probing was made of that section. When in August a well-built brick vault containing a complete skeleton was uncovered, the archaeologists were jubilant.<sup>40</sup> But with this discovery the "force," Aaron Day and his helper, vanished, and persistent personal persuasion to return was effective only after another six months had passed. The skull and pelvic bones were carefully removed and taken to Dr. Adolph H. Schultz, anthropologist in the Johns Hopkins School of Medicine, for classification. Dr. Schultz was quite positive that the skeleton was that of an elderly woman but wished to see the breast bone (clavicle) to complete his case.

<sup>37</sup> Elihu Riley, *The Ancient City* (Annapolis, 1887), p. 157.

<sup>38</sup> Daniel R. Randall (1864-1936), attorney-at-law of Annapolis and Baltimore.

<sup>39</sup> Howard Sill, J. Appleton Wilson, Charles W. Johnson, and J. Hall Pleasants.

<sup>40</sup> D. R. Randall to J. Appleton Wilson, undated. Copy in possession of R. R. B.

Dr. J. Hall Pleasants, one of the antiquarians, accordingly went back to Winchester for the missing part. Dr. Schultz was then even more positive that the bones were those of a woman and the small size of the skeleton had already caused doubt in the minds of the enthusiastic historians that it could be Eden's body. The scientific denial was, of course, a grievous disappointment.

Winter had now set in and the weekly trips had to be abandoned. To make doubly sure that the vault did not contain the remains of Governor Eden, another nationally known anthropologist was consulted. Dr. Ales Hrdlicka, Curator of Physical Anthropology at the Smithsonian Institution, could not come over from Washington until spring but when he studied the skeleton he agreed completely with Dr. Schultz. It was clear that more excavating must be done.

The Society of Colonial Wars in Maryland, of which Mr. Randall was a member, had agreed to support his undertaking financially and historically, and appointed a committee consisting of Mr. Randall, as chairman, Mr. J. Appleton Wilson and Mr. J. McC. Trippe, to report on progress. During the winter months every effort was made to unearth more data. Lacking any church record of burial or other documentary evidence in Maryland, a London researcher was engaged to find portraits or other material on the physical aspects of Robert Eden. One portrait of the Governor, painted by Charles Willson Peale, was known to exist in England but it was felt that the Eden family, which was large and scattered, might own other illuminating evidence. Mr. Randall had been in active correspondence for some time with Sir Timothy Calvert Eden, the titular head of the family. Sir Timothy, to whom both the Baronetries of West Auckland and of Maryland had descended, still owned Windlestone, County Durham, famous for its gardens.<sup>41</sup> But, unfortunately, no letters or likenesses of Robert Eden were known to be in this family fastness. The London researcher read all the Eden letters at the Colonial Office, all the records of the Cold Stream Guards, and found nothing that would throw light on the Governor's physique.

By the summer of 1925 Aaron Day had recovered from his fright and returned to the site of St. Margaret's ruins. The architects interested in the project decided that the whole chancel end must be cleanly excavated and then, if no other bodies were found, the nave of the church. The pulpit, they decided, if not

<sup>41</sup> Sir Timothy Calvert Eden, bart., *The Tribulations of a Baronet* (London, 1933).

near the chancel would be at the center of the south wall. With cord the whole area was laid off in squares and patiently probed foot by foot before clearing. No sign of graves, other than the vault first found, was discovered. With pick and shovel the entire foundation wall was uncovered to its base. "The foundations are at least twenty four inches through and built of a mixture of hard burned and salmon brick laid in white oyster shell mortar. The building as I measured it was 50' by 27'6" wide and is exactly east and west in its central line," wrote Mr. Randall.<sup>42</sup> In spite of a bees' nest and poison-ivy the foundation wall was cleared to a depth of three feet. Probing along the south wall was the next step and there, a little to east of center, the rod sank in a hole. This was the signal for further digging and there, in November, in a clay subsoil was a completely undamaged skeleton and the remains of a mahogany coffin. No metal or other means of identification, except a few handforged nails, could be found.<sup>43</sup>

Because this skeleton was very large and because no other bones were turned up in a complete excavation of the interior of the church, the historical searchers were very hopeful that their objective had been reached. The long bones were submitted again to Dr. Schultz and a second scientist, Earl W. Swinehart, D. D. S., was selected to inspect the skull and jaw. Dr. Swinehart had made a lifetime study of the color and shape of teeth in relation to age and genetic type. Being given an almost complete set of teeth in excellent preservation he became fascinated in the problem of rebuilding the entire face with what other bones there were. All night he worked with modeling clay and wire and was able the next day to state with some assurance the probable physical features of a man whose identity was to him unknown.<sup>44</sup> The two doctors agreed on every point as to age, sex and type and Mr. Randall cheerfully reported the findings to all the interested parties, Sir Timothy Eden, the Society of Colonial Wars and local historians:

With winter coming on, I am pushing the matter of identification, etc., of the remains which I am convinced are those of Governor Robert Eden. From such portions as I have carefully removed for examination I learn the following facts; that the subject was an Englishman, or at least an

<sup>42</sup> Randall to Wilson, August 31, 1923, copy in possession of R. R. B.

<sup>43</sup> Randall to Mrs. Walter T. Moon, owner of the property, Nov. 13, 1924, copy in possession of R. R. B.

<sup>44</sup> Interviews with Dr. Schultz and Dr. Swinehart, 1950.

Anglo-Saxon, of six feet in height, whose age at death was between forty and fifty. One scientist even goes so far as to declare that he was a blond in coloring, with peculiarities as to facial expression and teeth, which would be a very exact means of identification had he lived in these modern times when photographs and dentists are our every day concomitants.

Add to these facts the further one, that no other remains appear to exist in the church and our search is reduced to two in number; the first, pronounced a woman, lying in a brick tomb, at the north of the center of the Church; and the other buried in a simple wooden casket, and lying to the south, or pulpit side, of the chancel. This latter, of course, bears out the only documentary evidence that I possess which indicates the pulpit side, or beneath the pulpit, as the last resting place of Robert Eden. The fact that he was not buried in a tomb merely convinces one that the whole ceremony was rather hastily arranged, and possibly with the intention of a later removal to England. I have concluded that the only wise procedure is to have a metal box constructed to contain the remains, and have the same hermetically sealed, and replaced exactly where we found vestiges of the wooden casket.<sup>45</sup>

The scientists' verdict could now be checked against what facts were known. Only tall men were recruited for the Cold Stream Guards. Mrs. Rebecca Campbell Key in her memoirs stated that "He [Eden] was a favorite of the people and a very fine person, tall and commanding. General Washington previous to the period of his escape always staid with him when in this city. They resembled in stature. I had seen them walk arm in arm."<sup>46</sup> Washington is known to have been six feet and two inches tall so Eden could have been very little shorter. Robert Eden was 43 years old at the time of his death and this was the approximate age shown by the teeth and the skeleton.

Before giving public recognition to the findings of its committee, the Society of Colonial Wars requested the Maryland Historical Society to form a committee to give serious study to the data. Mr. J. Appleton Wilson, who had taken part in the search from the start, Mr. Bernard C. Steiner, author of the only published work on Robert Eden, and Mr. Louis H. Dielman, librarian of the Peabody Library, all distinguished scholars, were the committee appointed. After discussion and study they passed a resolution, submitted it to the Maryland Historical Society as a whole for approval and thus gave the full weight of that organization in confirming the findings of Mr. Randall and his committee. The

<sup>45</sup> Randall to Mrs. Walter T. Moon, Nov. 24, 1924, possession of R. R. B.

<sup>46</sup> Key, *loc. cit.*



evidence proved, in so far they could see, that the bones were those of Robert Eden.<sup>47</sup> The case was considered closed and the public was notified through the press that the remains of Governor Eden had been discovered.

Now that the body had been found the question was how to mark his grave and honor his memory. The owners of the property were willing to fence off the church enclosure and allow a monument marker there but several legal difficulties arose. The title to the land was in doubt, now that it was proved to have been once part of St. Margaret's parish, and also perpetual care of a grave and marker on a farm was thought impractical. The rector and vestry of St. Margaret's church were anxious to have the Governor reinterred in the graveyard of the new church. The Governor of Maryland and his Attorney General<sup>48</sup> were asked for official opinions; permits from the County Health Officer were obtained for possible removal of the bones, and the presiding Bishop of the Episcopal Church, at that time also Bishop of Maryland<sup>49</sup> was asked for an interpretation of the Church Vestry Acts. Sir Timothy Eden, as head of the Eden family, was also notified of the discovery of the body of his great, great, grandfather and asked for suggestions as to burial.

Another six months elapsed before various discords could be harmonized. The Moons agreed to permit the bones to be moved if St. Margaret's Vestry would not claim their field. Sir Timothy felt that Maryland was the place for the Governor to remain. With the coming of another summer and with the consent of all parties involved it was hurriedly decided to re-inter the body in St. Anne's churchyard, Annapolis, where there was now room, protection and an ever interested visiting public. The State of Maryland contributed \$100 and the Society of Colonial Wars in Maryland the balance. A handsome Italian marble stone of contemporary design, with the Eden arms and appropriate lettering, was designed by Howard Sill and J. Appleton Wilson and made by the Hilgartner Marble Co. A copper box with the remains had been left at the old church ruins and this was now placed in a bricked grave contained within the circle of land still surrounding the Episcopal church in Annapolis. Formal ceremonies took place

<sup>47</sup> Records of the Maryland Historical Society. Resolution, November 6, 1925.

<sup>48</sup> Hon. Albert Cabell Ritchie, Governor of Maryland, 1920-1935, and Thomas H. Robinson, Attorney General, 1924-1930.

<sup>49</sup> Rt. Rev. John Gardner Murray, D. D., Bishop of Maryland, 1911-1929.

on Saturday, June 5, 1926. Governor Ritchie, Bishop Murray, the Hon. John Balfour, Secretary of the British Embassy, an intimate friend and relation of Sir Timothy Eden, Josias Pennington, Governor of the Society of Colonial Wars in Maryland, all took part. Representatives of many patriotic societies were present. The only unfortunate note was that the rector of St. Margaret's church was offended by the shifting of burial from his church to another and refused to give the invocation.<sup>50</sup>

So at last, after 142 years, Robert Eden came to rest in the very spot he had on his deathbed desired. This last colonial governor has become a symbol of the close ties between the English-speaking peoples. He stands as a strong link in the chain that makes for happy relationship between Maryland and Great Britain and with poetic license carries out the wishes expressed in a poem of 1769:

Long as, or grass shall grow, or river run,  
Or blow the winds, or shine the glowing sun,  
May Eden and his sons here reign and stay;  
Themselves as happy as the realms they sway.

So long, transmitted to remotest Fame  
Shall live, unsullied Eden's honoured Name.<sup>51</sup>

<sup>50</sup> Randall to Wilson, June 5, 1926, copy in possession of R. R. B.

<sup>51</sup> *Maryland Gazette*, August 3, 1769, "On the Arrival of His Excellency Robert Eden, Esq., to his Government of Maryland," author unknown.