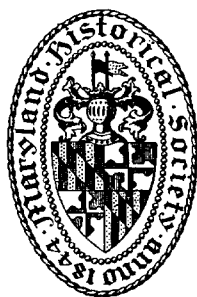


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NOTES AND QUERIES

THE "AUTOBIOGRAPHY" OF LUTHER MARTIN

The name of Luther Martin (ca. 1748-1826), long the Attorney-General of Maryland and leader of the Bar, is well-known but little information concerning his life and career is available. A biography is now in preparation by Paul S. Clarkson and R. Samuel Jett. We are indebted to Mr. Clarkson who called attention to the "autobiography" and the sequence of events which lead to it.

Both of Martin's daughters—he had no sons—died young as had their mother,¹ and the tragedies must have affected Martin's later behavior. Maria married Lawrence Keene, U. S. N., separated from him and died insane.² Eleanora, often called Ellen, married Richard Raynal Keene (unrelated to Lawrence) against her father's will and died in 1807 when a son was born.³ The child is supposed to have died before reaching maturity. The marriage of Eleanora brought about a pamphlet "war" between Martin and Keene.⁴ In defense against an insinuation that Martin's early years included some unsavory chapters, he printed the account of his life which is reproduced below.⁵ Apparently the insinuations against Martin lacked foundation; at least nothing further is heard of them. Out of the unfortunate personal affair came the "autobiography"—which might not otherwise have been written—of an important Maryland and national figure.

... Hence it is that I feel myself justified in giving to the public a succinct history of the earlier part of my life and shall flatter myself, that, should I be therein, in some degree an egotist, I shall notwithstanding receive their indulgence.

Two brothers of that family, from which I derive my name, were among the first settlers in East-Jersey. They came immediately, I believe, from Piscataqua in New-England, with the ancestors of the Dunns, the Dunhams, the Fitz Randolphins, the Mannings, the Bonhams, and other

¹ Maria Cresap Martin died Nov. 2, 1796; *Federal Gazette*, Nov. 3.

² Maria Martin was married on April 8, 1808; *Federal Gazette*, April 13.

³ Eleanora Martin was married on Jan. 27, 1802. She died Nov. 16, 1807; *Federal Gazette*, Nov. 21.

⁴ Martin, *Modern Gratitude, in Five Numbers: Addressed to Richard Raynal Keene, Esq. Concerning A Family Marriage* (Baltimore, 1802). Keene, *A Letter from Richard Raynal Keene, to Luther Martin, Esq. Attorney-General of Maryland; upon the subject of his 'Modern Gratitude'* (Baltimore, 1802). Bristol 121 and 114.

⁵ *Modern Gratitude*, pp. 131-153.

old and respectable families in that state. They fixed on that part of the country adjoining to the Rariton, on the east of New-Brunswick, and called the township Piscataqua, after the name of the place, which they had left. My ancestors were natives of England; and though I honour the worthy and good of every clime, and am as free from nationality as I think any man ought to be, yet I can truly say I know not a nation on the habitable globe, to be descended from natives of which would give my heart superior pleasure.

That part of the Jerseys, was at the time, of which I am speaking, to a great degree, an uncultivated wilderness, inhabited by its copper-coloured aborigines, yet these first settlers had to build their own huts—to hunt the game of the forest, or ensnare the scaly tenants of the water, for their food; they had to conquer those forests by the toil of their limbs, and by the sweat of their brows to compel the earth to yield to them its stores; for to them the savages of the wilderness did not stretch forth the hand of hospitality, to them they pointed not the openings of their wigwams; to them the savages offered not the flesh of the deer or the bear, the racoon or the opossum, to assuage their hunger, nor the skins of those animals on which they might repose their wearied limbs. In fine, those savages of the wilderness, notwithstanding all that unbounded hospitality and philanthropy of which modern philosophers, and a modern president [Jefferson], have discovered they once were possessed, in so superior a degree, as to shame even the most civilized and polished professors of Christianity, never once formed an idea of introducing those their white-coloured, emigrant neighbours, into their families, and inviting them to participate in all the rights and benefits of children.

I will not say, that it may not be possible, this strange and unheard of unkindness and inhospitality, thus by them experienced, might arise from the circumstance, that these settlers happened not to be "fugitives from distress."

I am an American born, of the fourth or fifth generation. My ancestors were, and most of their descendants have been, of that class or "sect," of people known as agriculturists or cultivators of the earth, and therefore, as Jefferson tells us, have had the happiness of being in the number of "God's chosen people, if ever he had any," of which that sage philosopher seems to entertain as great doubts, as I sometimes am inclined to have, notwithstanding his high authority, of Indian hospitality.

Those two of my name, who first came to that part of East-Jersey, obtained grants for lands highly valuable and to a very considerable extent, which is now broken into small farms;—for they and their descendants have been among those not the least distinguished for their "conscientious desire to direct their energies to the multiplication of the human race and not to its destruction."⁶

For this conscientious discharge of their duty, they needed not the

⁶ See the President's Message to the last Congress.—L. M.'s footnote.

opinions, the advice nor the exhortation of a sceptical philosopher, if any such philosophers were known to them; to those, whose family motto⁷ was selected from the sacred code, the command of their God, particularly when that command was accompanied with a blessing, was sufficient.⁸ Numerous yet are the persons who bear my name in New-Jersey, to almost all of whom, I am more or less distantly, related, and the descendants from the same family are to be found from the Hudson on the east to the Spanish dominions on the west; in the states New-York, Pennsylvania, Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, North-Carolina, Georgia, Kentucky, Tennessee, and the Territory north-west of the Ohio.

I was the third of nine children all of which arrived to years of maturity, and all of whom, except one, are yet living. From the moment I could walk until I was twelve years of age, my time was employed, except what was devoted to the acquisition of science, in some manner or other, useful to the family; when too young for any thing else, I rocked the cradle of a brother or sister that was younger.

In my thirteenth year, and in the month of August [1761], I was sent to Princeton College, where I entered the grammar school. I there began the first Rudiments of the Latin language. In September, five years next after, I received the honours of the college; during which period I also studied the Hebrew language, made myself a tolerable master of the French, and among many other literary pursuits, found time fully to investigate, that most important of all questions, the truth and the divine origin of the Christian Religion.

At Princeton, I early formed an acquaintance with the honourable William Patterson, of New-Brunswick, who has with so much credit to himself, and to his constituents, filled so many of the most important offices a discerning public hath bestowed upon him.⁹

He and myself are natives of the same state—he is acquainted with my family, and has well known several of my relations.

It was there we first formed for each other that friendship and esteem, which have continued unimpaired to the present time.

The amiable, the worthy, the brave John McPherson, Esq. who fell with General Montgomery, in the cause of his country, before the walls of Quebeck, and myself trode together the flowery paths of science from the grammar school through all the classes of the college:—we graduated together;—about the same age,—our pursuits were the same:—few brothers were ever bound together by stronger bands of affection.

Among those, on whom memory most delights to dwell, was also the worthy and esteemed son of Capt. Thomas Bowden, he was then an

⁷ "Iaitum Sapientiae est Timor Deis"—"The fear of God is the beginning of wisdom."—L. M.'s footnote.

⁸ "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth." Genesis, chap. 1st, verse 28th.—L. M.'s footnote.

⁹ William Paterson (1745-1806), Princeton, 1763, attorney-general of New Jersey, Congressman, Senator, Governor, and Justice of the Supreme Court.

ensign in the British army; but strongly impressed with the great truths of Christianity, on his return to Europe, he gave up his commission, and having there completed his education, took holy orders, became the chaplain of Lord Milton, and is now the respectable Rev. Mr. Bowden of Connecticut.

Among those who, were my class-mates and graduated with me, were the late Chief Justice of the United States, the honourable Oliver Ellsworth, The Rev. Mr. [John] Bacon, now one of the members of congress for Massachusetts.—The Rev. Mr. Balch, of the Territory North-West of the Ohio.—Daniel C. Clymer, Esq. of Reading, Pennsylvania.—Waightstill Avery, Esq. of North-Carolina and David Howell, Esq. of Rhode-Island.

Among those, with whom I formed an acquaintance while at college, and who were not in the number of my classmates I can name the Rev. Mr. Story of Marblehead.—Col. [Nathaniel] Ramsey of the city of Baltimore—his brother Doctor [David] Ramsey of South-Carolina—[Joseph] Haberman, Esq. late Post-Master-General.—The Rev. Mr. Gantt of George-Town.—Pierpoint Edwards, Esq. of New-Haven and the Right Rev. Bishop [Thomas J.] Clagett of Maryland, whose friendship and esteem I also am well known to possess in no small degree.

To any, or to all of these, whose name I have mentioned, and who are now living, I cheerfully refer those, who wish to know what was my character and conduct while a student at that college—either as to the friendliness of my disposition, the correctness of my manners,—my assiduity in my studies, or as to my literary attainments.

From my parents I received a sound mind, and a good constitution. They with unceasing tenderness and zeal laboured to impress me with principles of manly independence—with a spirit of kindness and generosity towards my fellow-creatures, and with reverential love and fear of my God. And as the best security for my performance of my duty in all situations, in which I might be placed in life, they deeply impressed on my young mind the sacred truths of the Christian Religion, the belief of which, though at that time principally owing to education, has since been rivetted by the fullest conviction, grounded on a thorough and dispassionate enquiry; those sacred truths, which, though too often departed from in my practice, have ever remained too deeply engraven on my heart to be effaced by the hand of infidelity—and the belief of which is my boast.

These, with a liberal education, were all the patrimony they could bestow upon me;—a patrimony, for which my heart bears towards them a more grateful remembrance, than had they bestowed upon me the gold of Peru or the gems of Golconda.

Through the fond partiality of my paternal grandfather, I was the owner of a small tract of land on South-River, not far from New-Brunswick— as soon as the laws of my country gave me the power of disposition, I conveyed it to my two elder brothers, as a trifling compensation for the

additional toil they had experienced, in contributing to the support of a family, the expences of which had been increased by reason of my education.

When I graduated [1766] at Princeton college, I wanted near five months of being nineteen years of age. Having previously determined to be no longer a burthen to my family, than till my education was completed, and having fixed upon the profession of the law, against which I knew my father had prejudices,¹⁰ as the mean of my future support and respectability—I had deliberately formed my plan; in pursuance of which, the second day after the commencement, with no other resources, than my horse and the small remains of my pocket money, I left Princeton, accompanied, by young Bowden and a few others of my most intimate friends, as far as Philadelphia—from that place I proceeded with as much dispatch, as I could conveniently make, to the Reverend Mr. Hunt, who then resided in Cecil county, near Octorara Creek, to whom, having been informed he wanted an assistant in his school, I had procured letters of recommendation.

By him I was received with kindness and attention: but found to my disappointment, that a few days before my arrival he had supplied himself with an assistant.

It was there, I first contemplated an application for the Free-School of Queen Ann.¹¹ The last teacher¹² at that place had formerly lived in the neighbourhood of Mr. Hunt; the account of his death had been recently received, and a relation of his, whom I met at Mr. Hunt's, was preparing to visit the county, in order to settle the affairs of the deceased. I was strenuously urged not only by Mr. Hunt and some of his friends to whom he had introduced me, but also by the young gentleman who was going to Queen Ann, to accompany him, and, as it was understood the mastership of that school was still vacant, to apply for the appointment. They encouraged me to hope for success; of the probability of which I might be able to form some judgment before my companion could finish his business, and consequently should have it in my power to return with him, which they declared to be their wish, provided I met with difficulties they did not foresee. Being furnished with letters of recommendation, we sat out for Queen's-Town in Queen Ann's county; and there, in consequence of the letters, which had been given to me, and the friendship of my companion,¹³ who having visited the place, once or twice, while his relation lived there, had acquired a considerable

¹⁰ I had the happiness to see my father, not only reconciled to my having adopted that profession; but to have my youngest brother, Lenox, by him entrusted to me, when not more than ten years of age, to be brought up by me to the same profession.—L. M.'s footnote.

¹¹ The Queen Anne's School minute book (1723-1791), one MS volume, is in Md. Hist. Soc. Library.

¹² John Dehorty.

¹³ I think his name was Holmes.—L. M.'s footnote.

acquaintance—I soon became introduced not only to some of the trustees of the school, but also to several influential characters in the neighbourhood.

Among those of the trustees, to whom I was thus early introduced, were the late Col. Edward Tilghman, father of Edward Tilghman, Esq. of Philadelphia, Doctor [John] Smith of Queen's-Town—and the Rev. Mr. Neale,¹⁴ uncle of the Honourable Mr. [Joseph Hopper] Nicholson, one of the members of congress for this state, by all of whom, but particularly by the last, I was treated with great politeness and hospitality, and received from them such encouragement as determined me to await the result of the decision of a board of trustees, which, however, could not be had until the lapse of some time, in consequence of the sickness, or absence of some of the trustees, or vacancies in the board to be filled up, or by reason of some other cause not now particularly remembered. Whether I ever in the intermediate time waited on the Rev. Samuel Keene, at his own house, I cannot at this period with certainty say, but as he lived in the upper part of the county, remote from Queen's-Town, I am inclined to think that I never did. On the contrary, as far as my memory serves me, the first time I was introduced to that gentleman was by the Rev. Mr. Neale at his own house, a day or two before the board of trustees met.

Upon the meeting of the board I was, most certainly, preferred "to my competitor," to whom, however "experienced and approved a scholar" he might be, my superiority in that respect was by the trustees not doubted, two of those gentlemen, themselves of a liberal education and good scholars, had taken some pains to ascertain my fitness; and I took with me—from college a testimonial, from the highest authority, "that, in a class of thirty-five, I was the first scholar in the languages,—and second to none in the sciences." My youth was the only suggestion that was by any person made as an objection to the appointment. That the Reverend Mr. Keene, as one of the trustees, voted in my favour I never doubted, and in consequence thereof I have always felt for him all that respect due to a person who performs his duty. He was acting in the execution of a public trust. It was his duty to join in the first opportunity to fill the office; he was sacredly bound, if he thought me the most proper person for the appointment to vote for me and, if he thought I was not such, to vote in favour of my competitor. He was carrying into execution a trust reposed in him by the laws, and in which he could have no possible private interest, unless he was capable of taking a bribe. I was not benefited to the amount of a farthing out of the Rev. Mr. Keene's private fortune, or at his expense. Mr. Keene was not injured, to the amount of a farthing, by any benefit I was to receive. If I entered upon a "post of honour and profit" the "Doors thereto were not, I trust, broken open"

¹⁴ Probably Rev. Hugh Neill; see Frederic Emory, *History of Queen Anne's County* (Baltimore, 1950), p. 254.

for my entrance. I entered upon the appointment, if to receive a reward, to render services also to the full amount. I was appointed not from favouritism but from fitness. How contemptible then the pretence that I was under obligations to the reverend Mr. Keene, or bound to him by ties of gratitude, because he joined in filling an office, which he could not, without violating his duty to the public, have suffered to continue vacant, and, because filling up that office, he, having no motive of interest to act otherwise, preferred the candidate, whom he thought the most suitable for the appointment.

Is there the most distant analogy between the conduct of the Rev. Mr. Keene towards me and my conduct towards the Nephew? And if I may with justice, in his opinion, be charged with ingratitude towards his uncle, to what depth of damnation doth he thereby consent to sink himself.

I did "enter upon that establishment," which I had thus obtained; and remained therein until some time on the month of April, in the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy.

My object, in applying for that establishment was, that it might be to me a temporary support during the time, I should find necessary for the acquisition of a competent knowledge of the law.

The late Solomon Wright, Esq. father of the honourable Mr. [Robert] Wright of the senate of the United States, was at that time living in Queen-Ann.—He was a near connexion of some of those with whom I was early intimate, and whose children were under my care. I was soon introduced to him and became a frequent visitor in his family—from him I had occasionally the use of such books as I had time to read—by him and his very worthy lady I was during the whole time I remained in that county treated almost as a son; and by their children I was always received as a brother.

I continued in Queen-Ann near three years during which period I had availed myself of the vacations to make several journies; at one time I visited my parents in East-Jersey, and on my return purchased in Philadelphia as many law-books as the then state of my funds would enable me to purchase—at another time I made an excursion to Somerset county, where was, at Back-Creek, an academy, in which were employed, as teachers, two most worthy, respectable young gentlemen, who had also been educated at Princeton college, and with whom I had there been most intimately acquainted.¹⁵

I have already stated that I was only nineteen years of age when I went to reside in Queen-Ann. The profits which I received as master of the free-school were the only funds I enjoyed—from which I had to defray the expences of cloathing, lodging, board, physics, books, travelling and every other incidental charge—I am not even yet, I was not then, nor have I ever been, an economist of any thing but time. No person

will think it a matter of surprize, much less of disgrace, that I did not rigidly restrain my expenditures to my income or that a youth of my age, of a warm and generous heart, left so totally to his own guidance, should become indebted beyond his power of immediate payment. Under these circumstances, and with the concurrence of some of my friends, whose judgment was most relied on by me, I formed the determination to resign my appointment, which I then held, and devote one year solely to the further attainment of legal information; at the end of which time we calculated I should be able to enter upon the practice, after which it might soon be in my power to discharge the debt I had already incurred as well as that which must unavoidably be incurred in the intermediate time. With this view, and preparatory to my resignation, I made a second journey to Somerset county. I had fixed upon the neighbourhood of Back-Creek as the place of my residence, during the year, which I meant to devote to the study of the law. For this I had been actuated by two reasons—I thereby should be, for that period, in the enjoyment of the society of my two friends, whom I have mentioned, and whom I greatly esteemed—I have also, when first in that county, formed an intimate acquaintance with some of the most respectable families, particularly with Levin Gale, William Winder, and Samuel Wilson, Esquires, the last of whom lived on Back-Creek, within half a mile of the academy, which was erected on his plantation, and, who, having been brought up to the profession of the law, although he had ceased to practice, possessed an excellent law library, of which he had expressed a willingness that I should have the use, if I settled in that neighbourhood.

While on this visit, I made all the necessary arrangements for the execution of the plan I had formed, which also received the most perfect approbation of my friends in Somerset; and while there I contracted with a respectable farmer, who lived within a mile of Mr. Wilson, for one year's board commencing from the time, when I expected to have it in my power to return to that place.

My then journey to Somerset, and the objects I had in view, were well known to several of my most respectable friends and acquaintance, in Queen-Ann, and met with their decided concurrence.

I had to return to settle with the trustees for a balance due to me—to give in my resignation; and even to make such arrangements with those to whom I was indebted, as to them should be satisfactory, or, if that could not be effected, at least to look out for some one of my friends, who would be my bail in suits, which might be prosecuted against me.

I did return as was intended. Two creditors, whose debts, altogether amounted to no more than eleven pounds, eight shillings and ten pence, for I have the records before me, having heard, some vague report, that I was about to leave the county, and thinking it possible I might not return, had in the meantime taken out attachments against me to secure their debts. The conduct of those two creditors had created a momentary alarm,

¹⁵ Messrs. Ephraim Bravard and Thomas Reese.—L. M.'s footnote.

and caused my other creditors to bring suits against me for their claims. Five writs were served upon me. I had no difficulty in procuring security for my appearance. I applied to Solomon Wright, Esq. who then practised in the county court, who was good enough to agree to be my counsel, if necessary, in those actions. He well knew all my views, and the moment my creditors were made acquainted therewith, not having a wish to distress me without benefit to themselves and conscious I would pay them as soon as it should be in my power, at the appearance court, in the month of March, in the year seventeen hundred and seventy, each of the suits were entered "struck off." But what was the amount of the whole aggregate of these debts thus sued for? The debts which had been thus contracted by a youth, in my situation, during a period of about three years?—This paltry sum, not exceeding two hundred dollars! a sum, ten fold, nay much more than ten fold, to the amount of which I have since that time bestowed upon those, with whom I have met during my journey through life, in similar situations, embarrassed, or distressed, without any other prospect of compensation, than the heart-felt delight of contributing to the happiness of my fellow creatures, and the most grateful of sentiments to the Author of all good for thus enabling me to be, in those instances, his representative on earth!

Thus then it was, that with the full knowledge of my creditors, and with their full approbation—without one obstacle to impede—and with their best wishes, and the best wishes of my other friends and acquaintance, in that county, for my future success, I left Queen-Ann, where I had thus resided nearly the three first years after—I had, without a pilot or guide, embarked on the untried ocean of life.

Here then for the present I take leave of Queen-Ann, the inhabitants of which county I ever remember with pleasure and affection.

I now proceed "to a more distant place," though not quite "on the borders of the Pocomoke, from my late abode;"—To which place, though I had found it "Expedient to retire" thereto, any person, who wished to have found me, might have arrived, without much difficulty, even in one day, in a day and a half, making it a mere journey of pleasure.¹⁶

I had been so short a time residing in Somerset that Messrs. Ramsay and Parker had not heard of my removal from Queen-Ann, when I received the following letter.

¹⁶ There can be no doubt, the expressions used by Mr. Keene in his letter, page 50, was intended basely to insinuate, what he must have known to be false, "that I wished to be concealed from the knowledge of my former acquaintance in Queen-Ann." Whereas nothing was of more publicity than the place to which I had removed.—It was on the same shore, in the same province,—and where I might have been made answerable to the courts of justice, for any cause whatever, with nearly or quite as much ease, as if I had remained in Queen-Ann. But Mr. Keene expected his letter to be read by many, who know not the relative situation of places in Maryland;—and it is only for those who are ignorant of facts that he writes!—L. M.'s footnote.

" Colonel Henry's, May 21, 1770.

" Dear Sir,

" I last night received a very angry letter from Mr. Ramsay insinuating that I had intentionally disappointed the managers of that school and entered into other engagements, while a treaty with them was on foot.

" This insinuation I must say is unjust, for I cannot apprehend, that in any particular of that transaction I gave the least room for supposition that I would keep myself in waiting for them.—But the purpose of this billet is not to vindicate myself, but to apprise you, that the gentlemen, in consequence of a hint from me, have determined to apply to you, and I wish, if it may be convenient, and consistent with the plan of conduct you have laid down for yourself, that you could be prevailed upon to oblige them. Perhaps, if you undertake but for a few months, till the gentlemen can elsewhere supply themselves, it might be sufficient to prevent the difficulties they apprehend. Their own letter will, I suppose, inform you of particulars.

" I am, yours, &c

" EPHRAIM BRAVARD.

" Mr. Luther Martin,

" At Back-Creek."

This letter from Mr. B. was accompanied by the two letters following which were delivered me by a messenger, who had been sent with them from Virginia.

" Accomack county, Virginia, May 24, 1770.

" Sir,

" By the bearer you will receive a letter, in which you are informed that we are in want of a person to teach a Grammar School here.

" If you agree to take the offer as mentioned, please send an answer per bearer, directed to James Henry, who will be at Snow-Hill, next week, and if, when you are here, you choose your salary should be collected by one hand, it shall be done.

" I am, Sir,

" Your most humble servant

" GEORGE PARKER.¹⁷

¹⁷ Father of the present George Parker, Esq. of the Eastern Shore of Virginia.—L. M.'s footnote.

" Mr. Luther Martin,
" Queen-Ann's County, Maryland."

" Sir,

" I am about to leave my school and having been disappointed of a successor from Princeton,—and also of Mr. Bravard, I am directed to make application to you by Mr. B. who supposes it might be agreeable to you to accept of my place. My wages are at the lowest par of exchange seventy-eight pounds Maryland money, all good pay, and not varied by the number of scholars;—the place agreeable and healthy. The school is situated in a small town, where the clerk's office is kept, and several other small advantages might be had in the study of the law, which I hear you are engaged in,—about five miles off the court house, where the courts are kept monthly. My time has been up two months, but, however, I would wait another month rather than the school should fall.—If you will please to accept you will be pleased with your situation, and if you do it immediately it will be to me a great favour, but if you will engage to come in a few weeks, you may depend on the place being secured.—We board as in Somerset school.

" Your very humble servant,
" And affectionate friend,
" DAVID RAMSAY.¹⁸

" Mr. Luther Martin,
" Queen-Ann's."

To Colonel Parker I returned the following answer:

" Sir,

" I have just received your's of May the 29th, and should have been glad it had suited me to comply with your desire; but as it appears to me incompatible with the plan of life I have determined to pursue, I must decline. I should be glad to inform you of any gentleman, who might have it both in his power and in his will, to oblige you, but I know of none.

" I remain your most obedient servant,

" LUTHER MARTIN.

¹⁸ Doctor Ramsay of Charlestown, South-Carolina, the author of the History of the American Revolution, brother to Colonel Ramsay of Baltimore.—L. M.'s footnote.

" Mr. George Parker,
" Accomack County, Virginia."

My answer to Mr. Ramsay was as follows:

" Back-Creek, June 2, 1770.

" Sir,

" I have just received your's of the 29th May,—and in answer shall only observe, that as to the plan of the school—situation of the place, and salary, I should have no particular objection to either;—but having determined to devote this year to the study of the law, to qualify myself for the practice, and having accordingly engaged lodgings, I cannot prevail upon myself to comply with your request.—I should be sorry should my refusal be of any injury to the school, at the same time, I cannot but think, according to my present view of things, it would be imprudent were I to act otherwise.

" I remain, dear Sir,

" Your's affectionately,

" LUTHER MARTIN.

" Mr. David Ramsay,
" Onancock."

I thus decidedly refused accepting the charge of the Grammar School at Onancock, as being incompatible with the plan, I had formed for my future conduct; ¹⁹ but it being found impracticable to obtain, at that time, any other teacher—a personal interview took place between Mr. Ramsay, some of the trustees and myself, in consequence of which, from their importunity—from their representations of the advantages I might there enjoy for the acquisition of legal knowledge—and their assurance that

¹⁹ The following is an extract of a letter addressed to me by Waightstill Avery, Esq. of North-Carolina, dated at Salisbury, the 15th, of August, 1770—" Yours, of May last, now lies on the table before me, for which I thank you before I forget it, and I rejoice to hear that you have fixed yourself in a respectable family for a year's necessary and profitable study, in prosecuting this I wish you laborious perseverance.

" There is an extraordinary good opening for a young lawyer in Edenton district, the most easterly part of this province, where, if your abilities for the practice of the law equal your abilities to acquire knowledge in the sciences, you might soon make an estate; there I should have pushed in, but durst not venture my health; I thought it too much like Somerset, and therefore came out here into the west of the province, in a high, hilly country three or four miles directly west of Edenton."

This may serve as further proof of the determination I had made of devoting that year solely to the study of the law; and I had so early as in May, written to my friend Mr. Avery consulting him on the place of my future practice.—L. M.'s footnote.

they would, as soon as possible, endeavour to find me a successor, I was prevailed on to remove from Somerset to Onancock and to take upon myself the temporary charge of the Grammar School at that place. The time of my thus removing was, I presume, about the last of June or the first of August, for in consequence of a few lines I had written, of which I kept no copy, giving information of my having at length consented to remove to Virginia, I received the following letter from the honourable John Leeds of Talbot county.

" Talbot, August 31, 1770.

" Dear Sir,

" I received your acceptable letter but have had no opportunity till now to write to you.—I am most sensibly affected with the kindness and affection you have shewn to the little stranger²⁰ so far removed from all his friends.—If ever it should be in my power to make you amends for the trouble you have taken, you may be sure it will be a pleasure to me. I am sorry to hear your business calls you so far from him, however we must submit to the loss he will have in your absence. Whenever you can, I hope you will shew him your usual tenderness.

" I am, dear Sir,

" With much esteem and friendship,

" Your obliged friend and

" Humble servant,

" JOHN LEEDS.²¹

" Mr. Martin."

I remained at Onancock superintendant of the Grammar School at that place until about the fourteenth day of October; when, by my letter book, I find the fall vacation having taken place, I left Accomack, called on my friends in Somerset and Talbot, and proceeded to Queen's-Town, to make arrangements for sending, from thence to Virginia, my trunks, which had till then remained in Queen-Anne. From that place I went on to Baltimore, and while there I waited upon Colonel Benjamin Young, who was then the deputy surveyor general of the province of Maryland, and as such had the appointment of the deputy surveyors of the respective

²⁰ John Leeds Bozman, Esq. of Easton, between whom and myself there has continued an uninterrupted intimacy and friendship from that time, and who for several years past, has officiated as my deputy for Talbot and Caroline counties.—L. M.'s footnote.

²¹ The late honorable John Leeds of Talbot county, who was then one of the judges of the provincial court, and had been one of Lord Baltimore's commissioners for settling the lines between him and W. Penn., of their respective provinces—he was far advanced in life, and a gentleman of great knowledge and information—young as I was when an acquaintance commenced, I acquired his friendship and esteem, with which I was honored until his death.—L. M.'s footnote.

counties; while with him he offered me the deputation for the county of Queen Ann, of which by a letter dated from Kent-Island, October 24th 1770, as I returned, I gave information to the then deputy surveyor. The letter was as follows:

" Dear Sir,

" I left Colonel Young's yesterday, and am sorry to inform you that he designs to displace you. Should you settle with him immediately, perhaps you may prevent it. You having neglected that, is, I believe, his only complaint. He made me an offer of the commission you hold, which I declined,—I should but ill have requitted the kindness I received from you, while I lived in Queen-Ann had I done otherwise.

" Yours, &c.

" L. MARTIN.

" Mr. James Emory

" Deputy Surveyor,

" of Queen-Ann."

And in a letter written by me, a few days, after, to a friend, to whom I mentioned Colonel Young's offer, I find this passage " my principle motive for declining it was, that the surveyor of that county was a person with whom I had a particular intimacy while I lived in that place; I could not endure he should have any reason to think me base enough to do him an injury. No, if I cannot get bread without taking it from the mouth of a friend, let me starve!"

On my return, I spent near a week, in Talbot, with Mr. Leeds and his daughter, the mother of Mr. Bozman,—her son accompanied me as far as Back-Creek, to resume his studies;—at which place I staid two days with my friends, and arrived at Onancock about the second of November, where I again resumed the care of the school, and the prosecution of my studies, until about the first of September in the year of our Lord, seventeen hundred and seventy one; when I waited upon John Randolph, Esq. the then attorney-general of Virginia, and George Wythe, Esq. the present chancellor of that state, at Williamsburgh, and having undergone the examination required by the acts of assembly of that colony, I received a licence authorising me to practice law in the county courts throughout Virginia, and on the 24th of September, 1771, qualified in Accomack county.

It had been my design whenever I should obtain a licence, to fix my residence some where in the upper part of the Northern-Neck, or in parts still more westward in Virginia. And, at as early a period as possible, to make a tour throughout that part of the country to determine on the place: Accordingly having continued the prosecution of my studies until the month of April in the year 1772, I went to Williamsburgh

where the general court was then sitting, and remained there until the end of its session, during which time I formed an acquaintance with many very respectable characters, and particularly with the gentlemen of the bar, who attended that court, among whom were the present judge of appeals and the present chancellor of Virginia, John Blair, Esq. and the late Patrick Henry, John Tazewell, and Thompson Mason, Esq. with the last of whom I had the pleasure to travelling from Williamsburg, as he returned home to his seat in Loudon county. Having continued with that gentleman some days, and received from him the utmost politeness and hospitality, I proceeded to Berkeley, in which county I remained ten or more days, much of that time in the family of colonel Samuel Washington, where I found all that kindness and those friendly attentions I had before experienced while at Mr. Masons. By Mr. Washington I was introduced to other gentlemen of the county, and, among others, to the late General Stevens, who obligingly furnished me with a letter to Colonel Frazer of Bedford; and one or both of those gentlemen gave me letters to Lord Fairfax and to his nephew Colonel Thomas Bryan Martin. In Frederick I spent several days, most agreeably, at his seat not far from Winchester, with colonel Martin, Lord Fairfax was not at home. Before we parted, it was settled that if I fixed on the western part of the Northern Neck for the sphere of my practice, I was to receive the appointment, under his lordship, of a surveyor for one of the counties, as soon as there should be a vacancy.—From Colonel Martin's I proceeded according to appointment, which while in Berkeley I had made with George Brent, Esq.²² whom I had there seen, to meet him at Colonel Thomas Cresap's, in Old Town, on a particular day from which place I was to accompany him to Red-Stone and Fort-Pitt.

Mr. Brent and myself there met according to our agreement, and after having staid a few days with Colonel Cresap, and his son, Captain Michael Cresap, we departed for Red-Stone and Pittsburg; our route was by Braddock's-Road. On this journey I had the pleasure of beholding Will's-Creek—Fort-Cumberland—the Little and the Big meadows, Fort-Necessity—Laurel-Hill, and the other parts of the Alleghany Mountains—Fort-Redstone—Braddock's-Fields—Fort-Du-Quense, with the Alleghany and Ohio rivers, and many other objects, of all which, during the war, when a little boy, I had heard and read so much.

While at Fort-Pitt, I spent my time most agreeably. I recollect among those with whom I there became acquainted, Major Ward, Captain McKee, and the late Colonel George Croghan; besides these there was, at that time, a garrison in the fort consisting of a detachment of the Royal Irish, of which many of the officers appeared to be polite and respectable men.

²² This gentleman married the grand-daughter of col. Cresap, and the only child of Thomas Cresap, esq. who in an engagement between a party which he commanded, and the indians, killed the indian chief, and was killed by him.—L. M.'s footnote.

At Fort-Pitt, and the settlement in the neighbourhood of Red-Stone, I remained, I believe, upwards of three weeks. On my return, I staid a day with Major Ennis at Fort-Cumberland—I then arrived at Old-Town, where I spent a few days with the two Mr. Cresaps, the father and the son. The kind attentions, the friendly civilities, I on this journey received from that truly hospitable family, gave rise to that connexion, which eleven years after took place between them and myself, and by which I became the happy husband of the amiable daughter of the one, and grand daughter of the other.²³

The evening after I left Old-Town I reached the house of my fellow traveller, Mr. Brent, who had returned before me. With him I spent the next day, being Sunday; and on Monday I went to the Warm Springs,²⁴ in Berkeley, from which Mr. Brent lived about six miles distant. At the Springs I found a great resort of company. There, for the first time, I became acquainted with many respectable characters, of both sexes, with whom I have ever since been in habits of friendly intimacy, among others, I there, for the first time, after we had parted at Princeton, met with Mr. Clagett, the present right reverend Bishop of Maryland.—Six weeks I passed most happily at the Berkley springs, when the season being nearly over, and, the company dispersing, I set my face homeward. As I passed through Loudon, I revisited Mr. Mason, and again for a few days partook of his friendly hospitality. As I came down the Potomac, I viewed, for the only time in my life the Great Falls. It was a little before sunset—The scene has never effaced from my memory. I spent a day in Alexandria, it was the first time I had ever seen that city; from thence I crossed into Maryland, to visit Mr. Clagett, whom, before we parted at the springs, I had promised to see, on my return. From Maryland I again re-crossed the Potomac, at Hoe's-Ferry, into Virginia. I had also promised Mr. Coulston, who left me at the Springs, that I would not pass through the Northern-Neck without waiting upon him. With him I spent a few days and by him was introduced to several of his respectable friends and relations, the late Rhodam Kenner, Esq. and the present Colonel Peachy I remember to be of the number. In Westmoreland county I remained near a fortnight, in the family of the late John Augustine Washington, Esq.²⁵ at the mouth of Nominy. By him and his very amiable lady I was treated with all that parental affection,

²³ As Miss Cresap was returning home from Philadelphia, where she had been educated under Mrs. Brodeau, she made a short stay in Baltimore; accidentally hearing that a young lady of that name was in town, I originally waited upon her solely from the motive of in some measure repaying, by my attentions to a daughter of the family, the kindness and hospitality I had received from her parents and relations. But for that circumstance, it is more than probable I should never have seen her.—L. M.'s footnote.

²⁴ Now Berkeley Springs, W. Va.

²⁵ The father of the honourable Bushrod Washington, one of the judges of the supreme court of the United States, the possession of whose friendship and esteem is to me a source of pleasure.—L. M.'s footnote.

which hath endeared and ever will endear their memories to my heart. From Nominy I passed down through Northumberland to Mr. Lee's, near Chesapeak. In that neighbourhood I had the pleasure of finding an old acquaintance, Doctor Armstrong, who had been for some time a fellow student and class mate of mine at Princeton college. He was the son of General Armstrong, formerly of Pennsylvania, so celebrated for his bravery in the Indian wars, particularly against the Indian Captain Jacob. At Mr. Lee's, and occasionally, with Doctor Armstrong, by whom I was also introduced to all their respectable friends, I remained two or three weeks, until a boat was ready to sail, bound to the Eastern-Shore of Virginia, of which I availed myself, and returned to my former home about six months after I had left it; than which, perhaps, no six months of my life ever bestowed upon me more pure and rational pleasure while passing—or when past, on reflection.

On my return, I found that events had during my absence, taken place, which totally changed my plan, and have given, to a great degree, a colour to the subsequent part of my life. Almost immediately after I had left the Eastern Shore, John Murray, Esq. son of Captain Murray of Somerset county, a lawyer of most promising talents, who practised in Somerset and Worcester counties, on his passage from Cambridge to Annapolis, lost his life by the boat's oversetting and filling. And before I returned George Handy, Esq. a lawyer of great respectability was dead and Littleton Dennis, Esq. the very worthy and respectable father of the member for congress of that name, who was most eminent in his profession, was dead or dying; both these gentlemen practised in Somerset and Worcester counties, and the last of them had practised in Accomack.

The death of those three gentlemen, had made so great a change, and had left so fair a field for the exertion of legal abilities, that I suffered myself to be, by a few sanguine, partial friends, flattered into the hope, that I might enter thereon with some prospect of success!

I immediately commenced the practice of law in Accomack and Northampton, in Virginia, where the county courts were held monthly and at the next ensuing November courts of Somerset and Worcester, where the courts were held four times a year, I applied, and was admitted as an attorney.

From that time I made my residence in Somerset and regularly attended the courts of those four counties, until the interruption of business, which took place in the early part of the revolution. At the time of that interruption my practice had become, nearly or quite, equal to a thousand pounds a year, with every prospect of encrease. The revolutionary measures, then thought necessary to be adopted, and which received my assent, not only in a great degree, cut me off from future business, but also deprived me of the benefits arising from the suits, in which I was then employed, by putting a stop to the completion of those suits. From that period, until the courts of justice were again opened, I was engaged in a variety of pursuits, some professional, and some of a different nature.

I was occasionally employed in cases of admiralty jurisdiction—and in one or two important appeals to the congress of the United States.²⁶ Soon as a court was established at Williamsburgh for criminal business, which was much sooner than they were organized for suits of a civil nature, I was the constant attendant on that court; and devoting my time and attention to the criminal law, for the purpose of enabling me the better to defend those, who were accused; which I did most successfully; ²⁷ I thereby acquired all that knowledge and information, which rendered me able the more effectually to prosecute and convict those, who were guilty of crimes, when it became my duty to become their prosecutor.

In the intermediate time and immediately after, having entered on the practice of the law, I became a resident of Somerset, the trustees of Back-Creek school, who were among the most respectable gentlemen in that county, chose me without my solicitation, to fill a vacancy which happened in their number. And in the autumn of the year one thousand seven hundred and seventy-four, while attending the courts in Virginia, I was by that portion of the inhabitants of Somerset, who approved the opposition to the claims of Great Britain, in my absence and without being consulted elected, not only a member of the committee for the country; but also one of their representatives to the convention, which was held at Annapolis in the month of December following; which convention I attended.

My firm and decided support of the opposition to the unwarrantable claims of Great-Britain, which caused our revolution, is well known, and that at a time when, and in a place where, it indeed "tried men's souls"—for there was a period of considerable duration, throughout which, not only myself, but many others, acting in the same manner, did not lay down one night on their beds, without the hazard of waking on board a British armed ship, or in the other world. Notwithstanding which I can say without fear of contradiction, my conduct to those, whom, from the political state of the country, I was obliged to counteract and oppose, was so free from any thing like wanton insult, personal enmity, rancour or malignity, that instead of finding at this period a personal enemy in their number, I received from them proofs of esteem and regard.

When the Howes were on their way to the Chesapeak, they published a manifesto or proclamation particularly addressed to the inhabitants on that part of the United States against which they were then directing their

²⁶ Particularly in one for James Ingram, Esq. of Williamsburgh—son of the once provost of Glasgow college, in which I not only procured him, upon the appeal to congress, a decree for the restitution of his property, but afterwards attended court with him at Williamsburgh and saw it restored to him.—L. M.'s footnote.

²⁷ To the best of my recollection, I was counsel at that court for thirty criminals, of whom twenty-nine were acquitted—the thirtieth charged with murder was convicted of manslaughter. I also procured the judgment to be arrested in the case of captain Davis, who had once been the servant of General Washington, and who was by the jury found guilty of treason.—L. M.'s footnote.

operations. The answer to which address directed to the Howes, as also an address²⁸ to the inhabitants of the Peninsula between Delaware River Bay and the Chesapeak to the southward of the British lines, and distributed among them in hand-bills, were from my pen.

On the eleventh day of February in the year of our Lord, one thousand seven hundred and seventy eight, is dated the commission by which I have holden to this time the office of Attorney-General of this state. The express, by which it was sent, found me in Accomack, very busily engaged in directions to artificers, who were employed in the erection of works for manufacturing salt,—So little did I expect to receive that appointment;—which was bestowed upon me without solicitation.

I qualified as Attorney-General in the criminal court of Baltimore county, on the twentieth day of May in the same year, and almost immediately after moved to Baltimore-Town, in which or its vicinity I have ever since resided.

From the time I left Queen-Ann until my arrival in Baltimore, I found in the worthy and hospitable Levin Gale, Esq. and his highly esteemed and respectable lady, kind and affectionate parents; and scarce ever did a young man, perhaps, receive with more delight a proof of esteem and confidence more dear to his heart, than when they placed under my care, to be instructed in the law, their eldest son a few years younger than myself—that son who at this time lives in Cecil county, and is in the number of my friends, and, who has with honour served both this state and the United States in the most respectable appointments they could bestow upon him.

One of the first acts I did after I received my commission was to send a letter to Robert Wright, Esq. who had just entered into the practice of the law, requesting him to inform me in what counties he attended, and whether it would be agreeable to him to accept deputations from me to prosecute in those courts: in consequence of his answer, I appointed him my deputy for the counties of Kent, Queen-Ann, and Talbot. His respectable father, who was afterwards one of the Judges of our court of appeals, did me the honour to accept a deputation for Caroline county.

Be this a proof whether my heart is formed for ingratitude or likely in the hour of prosperity to forget those who, in the day of adversity had shown to me civilities and kindness, much less those, had any such been, who should have, to their loss or expence, conferred on me great and essential services. Be this also a proof whether while I lived in Queen-Ann my conduct was ever such as ought to have excited a blush in my cheeks or the cheeks of my friends, or whether I left Queen-Ann on account of any such conduct. Nay more, whether the conduct was of such a nature that, even to "state" it should cause a blush on the bronze face of ----- I need no term of reproach other than that of Richard Raynall Keene, Esquire.²⁹

²⁸ This was published in Dunlap's Maryland Gazette of September 9, 1777. The other was published in Goddard's paper about the same time.—L. M.'s footnote.

²⁹ "I blush to state the cause." Page 50 of Keene's Letter to Luther Martin, Esq.—L. M.'s footnote.

Had such been my conduct, had I left Queen-Ann dishonored or disgraced would gentlemen of such respectability of character, with full knowledge of the fact, thus sanction my appointment to so an important an office, by being the first to receive appointments under me! !

Would the honourable Mr. Leeds have given me those proofs of his friendship and esteem, had infamy attached to me while in Queen-Ann,—nay, should I have been admitted into the number of his acquaintance,—and can it be believed that living at so short a distance, he should have remained all that time in ignorance of my conduct had any part of it warranted the base insinuation. . . .³⁰

Want Water, Prince George's Co.—Marylanders will be pleased to learn that "Want Water" will not go the way of "Barnaby Manor" and so many of the State's other distinguished buildings no longer in existence. Mr. and Mrs. Charles Wallace Collins of "Harmony Hall" are restoring the old house which has crowded the bank of Wide Water Cove in the Broad Creek area of Prince George's County since the 1704-1708 era. Building activity has recently been started and it is believed that its panelling which Dr. Henry Chandlee Forman described as "rich . . . in ruinous condition" can be saved, for the most part. Most references treat of the old Lyles (and Addison) House and the *Historic American Building Survey* editors found sufficient interest here that its floor plan forms one of the three illustrations in the Maryland section of the Catalog. On completion, the "Harmony Hall" estate will possess an unusual combination of three distinct examples of Colonial architecture: the mansion house of brick; "Want Water," of brick ends and frame sides; and the "Old House near Harmony Hall," all frame. Nearby St. John's Church (1723) contributes to a remarkable grouping of early Maryland within the shadow of the Nation's Capital.

JAMES C. WILFONG, JR.,
725 13th Street, N. W., Washington, D. C.

Gantt-Cole—Can someone tell me the marriage place and date of Polly Cole to Charles Gantt of Calvert Co.; also her date of birth and death. Gantt, born 1773, was son of Thomas Gantt 4th and Susanna Mackall. After death of his first wife Mary Parron he married Polly Cole between 1810 and 1820. There were two daughters by this marriage: Mary Gantt who married John Tweedal of Baltimore and Eliza Ann Gantt who married John Wood of Calvert Co.

Mrs. JOSEPH LEITER, 3rd,
5406 Willomere Way, Baltimore 12.

³⁰ A few liberties have been taken with Martin's punctuation, especially in the elimination of scores of dashes that pepper the original.—*Ed.*