

The mansion house and office near it are two stories....The orchards, garden, stables, barns, &c, also contribute to make this seat very pleasing and commodious."

The sale was held as scheduled, but only a small group of furnishings, stock and other articles were auctioned off on that date. Recorded as sold was the item, "4 seasons in gilt frames." At the time "an inventory of the goods and Chattels of Benjamin Tasker Jun. Esq." was made, the pictures were hanging in the hall of Belair mansion and were appraised at 10 pounds value. Benjamin Ogle bought them for 8 pounds, 5 shillings, his sole purchase of the day. As to the house and plantation, "they were not sold pursuant to such Notice, occasioned by the persons who were desirous of becoming purchasers being discouraged therefrom" by John Ridout, the then guardian of Benjamin Ogle, his minor brother-in-law.¹¹⁹

For the second time the Baltimore Iron Works became a factor in the settlement of Tasker junior's estate. Joseph Galloway, who had been party to the transactions with Tasker senior in 1765, made a new conveyance of the iron works to Anne Ogle and Robert Carter because, as he claimed, his deed to Benjamin Tasker could not "have its full intended legal Operation because the same bears Date before the Time of Recording the said first mentioned Deed [Tasker to Galloway]." The two 1765 deeds were drawn up on different days - one on the 8th of May, the other on the 14th - but they were both recorded on May 20th.¹²⁰

Was it a legal technicality that one-fifth share of the iron works was shifted from the elder Tasker's estate back to that of Tasker junior? Regardless, the manuever was of decided benefit to the legatees of the latter.

During the summer of 1770 a public auction of one-fifth undivided part of the Baltimore Iron Works, to take place at the furnace on September 4th, was advertised in the Maryland, Virginia and Pennsylvania newspapers. This time the highest bid was 6,150 pounds sterling. It was submitted by Daniel Dulany, and title passed to him on the 14th.¹²¹

Six days after the sale Benjamin Ogle married Henrietta Margaret Hill, "a very beautiful and accomplished woman," the daughter of Henry and Mary Hill. The ritual was performed, "according to the Form & Manner prescribed in the Litany of the Church of England," by the Rector of All Hallows Church.¹²²

It was a break with the religious concepts of the bride's family for her parents were both "of the people called Quakers." The marriage of Mary, the eldest daughter of Philip Thomas, a member of the Governor's Council, and Henry, the only son of Joseph and Sarah Hill, was recorded 12 March 1748

in the register of the West River Meeting, Society of Friends. Henrietta's early training was reflected in her life-long use of "thy" and "thee" in letters addressed to relatives who had remained faithful to the Friends' unpretentious form of worship.¹²³

Henry, as she was generally called, was still an infant when her father died accidentally in August 1751. Twenty-five-year-old Henry Hill, "in full Health and Vigor," was standing on the ground tier of a tobacco house, hanging tobacco, "when the Board on which he stood giving Way, he fell with it about seven Feet, and his Side striking on the Edge of it, wounded him so much, that he died soon after he was carried into the House." Not only did Henry leave a "plentiful estate" for his widow and one child, but ten years later a deceased Joseph Hill, "who by honest Industry accumulated a very good Estate," devised the greater portion of his land to his grand-daughter. At the age of sixteen, Henry had become a wealthy young lady.¹²⁴

On his birthday prior to the wedding, Benjamin had reached his majority and immediately afterward had applied to the heirs of Colonel Tasker for an accounting of the profits from Belair and for a re-conveyance of the estate to him, as heir and devisee of Samuel Ogle. In return, he offered to pay 1,700 pounds into Tasker's estate. When his several overtures were ignored, on 11 February 1771 he initiated suit against Anne Ogle, Robert and Frances Carter and Christopher and Elizabeth Lowndes in the Chancery Court of Maryland.

Ogle's bill of complaint charged that "Col. Tasker.... immediately after the death of the said Samuel Ogle entered and possessed himself of the...House and Plantation...and received the rents and profits thereof....till on or about the 25th day of December 1757 at which time without any Notice having been given....and without any measures having been taken to invite purchasers to bid or treat an agreement was entered into between...Benjamin Tasker Esquire and Col. Benjamin Tasker that he the said Col. Benjamin Tasker should take the said House and Plantation at and for the sum of 1,700 pounds for the securing payment of which sum the said Benjamin Tasker passed his bond or Obligation to Benjamin Tasker Esquire as guardian....for the payment of 1,923 pounds: 5 shillings: 7 pence sterling with interest thereon of 4 per cent." Of that amount, 223 pounds: 5 shillings: 7 pence was for the furniture purchased by Tasker junior from the inventory of Samuel Ogle.

Although the conveyance from the Benjamin Taskers to Anne Ogle and hers to Colonel Tasker mentioned a price of 1,700 pounds for Belair, actually no money had changed hands. Ogle further contended that, despite the fact that such documents had been passed, it was not the intention of the Taskers that

from Baltz, Shirley Vlasak. "The History of the Belair Estate and Its People." A Chronicle of Belair. (Maryland: Bowie Heritage Committee, 1984)

he "should be concluded thereby on the contrary it was their design that your Orator should have it in his election to accept of the said Sum of 1,700 pounds sterling or to take the said house and Plantation when he should attain his Age and in Case your Orator should elect to have the house and Plantation that the Interest of the said 1,700 pounds should be considered in the Nature of rent and be set against the profits."

According to Ogle there was no way to ascertain the true value of the estate without posting notice of, and exposing it to, public sale; and that having failed to take such proper steps, the Taskers would have committed a breach of trust if they had intended that he, Ogle, should be bound by their agreements and deeds. "After the said Deeds had been passed," Ogle continued, "the aforesaid Colonel Tasker being informed that it had been said his purchase was ineffectual because contrary to equity that he should be a purchaser in the manner the affair had been transacted he expressed some resentment in the hearing of some of the defendents and declared that he did not intend to take advantage," that Ogle would be at liberty, on reaching the age of 21, to take the plantation or the money.

The 1,700 pounds sterling mentioned in the deeds exchanged between the elder Tasker and Daniel of St. Thomas Jenifer, in 1765, were only purported to have been paid. These too, Ogle claimed, were only deeds of trust.

Depositions were taken from the principals involved and from other persons closely acquainted with the family and aware of details relating to Belair. In some instances Ogle's statements were corroborated, and in others, there was disagreement on various points. The time needed to secure testimony led to repeated postponements in the proceedings, and as a result, the suit dragged on through several years.

Finally, on 27 April 1774, the decision of the Chancellor was handed down. It ordered that the defendants were to deliver up and put the complainant in possession of all contested lands and to pass deeds conveying to him all their rights and claims. It was further decreed "that an account be taken and entered into by and between the Complainant and the Defendants and that the Complainant return...to the Defendants the sum of 1,700 pounds paid by Col. Tasker to the Complainant." Years would pass before all the details were completely settled, but following a second sale of Colonel Tasker's effects held at the plantation the first week of that month, "Mr. Ogle had entire possession of Belair on or about the 6th day of April 1775."¹²⁵

During the course of the litigation, the Ogles' lives had progressed on other levels. First, Benjamin and Henrietta had become the parents of two children,¹²⁶ Ann, born on 17 January 1772, and Samuel, on 1 April 1773.

Shortly after Samuel's birth, Benjamin had bought the house in which he had been born and had spent a good part of his childhood. His mother, just prior to her departure for Europe, had sold him lot number 108 in Annapolis. He was now occupying the same townhouse his father had rented over twenty years earlier.¹²⁷

In the family tradition, Benjamin had entered political life, having been sworn in as a member of the Governor's Council at the end of October 1773. That same month he had played host to a most distinguished dinner guest, George Washington, who was in Annapolis to attend the races.¹²⁸

Anne Ogle and fellow-passenger, Horatio Sharpe, had left that city aboard the RICHMOND and by the 1st of September had "arrived safe at Dover." The former governor, who had been replaced by Sir Robert Eden in 1769, had family and business matters which required his presence in England; Anne's purpose in going was two-fold -- to place her grandson, Samuel Ridout, in school and to visit her daughter, Meliora, who had married James Anderson and was living in Hertford. For Anne, the question of Samuel's schooling was easily solved. Having made inquiries, she found "Harrow in most esteem and there he was sent in December."¹²⁹

Meliora, however, presented her with a number of difficult problems. James Anderson gave substance to the classic image of the wastrel and ne'er-do-well. After running his father's business into the ground, squandering an inheritance and borrowing heavily from relatives and friends, he sailed in 1774 for Maryland, abandoning all the members of his family, never to see them again. According to Anne, "They had but a hundred pounds when he left England to maintain nine in the family & his poor wife with child." Included in the nine were his two older children, James and Anne.

In February 1775 Anne Ogle had a sad tale to send back to her son-in-law, John Ridout, in Annapolis. "I have wrote to Molly [Mary Ogle Ridout]," she told him, "but said little of her poor Dear unhappy sister whose situation this winter had been truly distressing - for three months Mrs. A[nderson] the mother & Meli's sweet little boy were dying at the same time she with a broken heart & he with the effects of the measles." The boy's aunt reported to other relatives in Maryland, in the same month, that he had been "lost...in a decline, which he fell into from being one of the healthiest children in the world."¹³⁰

By November the news was even more depressing. Concerned about Meliora's health, Anne had gone to Hertford and "found her with a bad cough & a continual fever." Reluctantly, Meliora agreed to her mother's request that she come to London to consult with Doctor Fothergill, although she believed the curing of "a breaking heart was out of his power." On the doctor's advice she visited the hot wells, "but after trying them near five weeks," she was told by the physician attending her that "it was in vain to stay any longer as she was much worse." Returning to London, Meliora asked Doctor Fothergill "if he thought it was the uneasy state of her mind that had brought on a consumption & he said there was no doubt of it, he prescribed very little for her as she told him to do nothing to prolong a life of misery....she liv'd....only a fortnight after coming to town."¹³¹

Several months prior to Meliora's death, Anne had taken up residence on Welbeck Street, Caverdish Square, and she remained abroad throughout the Revolutionary War. It was to her mother-in-law that Henry Ogle addressed a letter in February 1776. In it she complained, "Annapolis is vastly dull, many Families having left it and almost everyone preparing to go. We have neither Balls or Routs and very little Dining and Supping out. The same dull Scenes forever." Entertaining was impossible for her at the moment, "our House hear being in Confusion and litter with Workmen and most of our Furniture sent to Belair." Construction of the ballroom wing, on one side of the house, was probably underway. Perhaps things had returned to normal by the time artist Charles Willson Peale recorded in his diary on November 12th that "Mr. Ogle's Negroes carried home Ogle's whole length [portrait] yesterday evening."¹³²

A third child, Benjamin, was born to the Ogles on 9 February 1775. Evidently young Samuel had died by the time the above letter was written for in it Henry stated, "My two little ones are quite well. The boy is just beginning to walk and talk, a little Blue-eyed Delicate thing [in all likelihood Benjamin, who would have been a year old]. Nancy is full of her age & has been growing fat this Winter." There was a gap of ten years between the birth of Benjamin and that of the fourth and last child of Benjamin and Henry. Mary arrived on 14 December 1785. Although life for the Ogles was centered in Annapolis and its vicinity, Benjamin continued, at least to some extent, the practice of traveling between the town and Belair. This is clear from the advertisement he inserted in the Gazette on 18 September 1777, which offered a \$4. reward to the person who returned "a gold-headed CANE, with the letter A engraved thereon," lost on the road from Annapolis to the Governor's Bridge.

In October Benjamin suffered a more severe loss, one that underscored once again the logic of putting the kitchen in a building detached from the main house. About 9 o'clock in the morning on the 30th, a fire broke out in the kitchen on lot number 108 "which consumed the same; but by the timely assistance of the inhabitants, it was prevented from spreading to the dwelling house, or doing any further damage." Fire insurance was not yet available in Maryland so there was no recompense for Benjamin Ogle. He bore the cost of replacing the vitally-needed facility, erecting a single-story, brick, combined kitchen and laundry.¹³³

By the year 1777 Ogle was working the several parcels of land Henry had inherited from her Grandfather Hill. They lay on the main road from the city to Talley's Point on Chesapeake Bay. These he later combined, through a resurvey granted him, into two large tracts named Ogleton and The President. They were usually referred to, however, as "Mr. Ogle's farm near Annapolis." There and at Belair he carried on another family tradition, that of breeding fine horses for racing.¹³⁴

Ogle had been a member of the Annapolis Jockey Club since before the war, his Britannia having finished second for the Jockey Club Purse in 1772. As the colonies made preparations for a showdown with Great Britain, the Continental Congress, in late 1774, adopted a list of resolutions. By one, designed to foster economy and frugality, it was agreed "That we will...discountenance and discourage every species of extravagance and dissipation, especially horse racing and all kinds of gaming." When news of the resolutions reached Annapolis, the jockey club cancelled the rest of its meet and remained inactive through most of the war.¹³⁵

Although matches were curtailed, no restrictions were placed on the breeding of thoroughbreds. Sweeper, who "was got by Othello, which was bred by Col. Tasker," was in stud at Belair in the springs of '79 and '80. Badger stood on the farm near Annapolis in 1780 and then at Belair in 1781 and 1782. He went on, in May 1784, to capture the Annapolis Jockey Club Purse of 60 Guineas.¹³⁶

In the midst of the period chronicled immediately above, the Belair area experienced its one and only direct contact with the logistics of the Revolution. In September 1781 French forces under the command of the Comte de Rochambeau marched into Annapolis on their way south. There the troops boarded French warships to complete their journey by water. When there was not enough space on board to load the wagons and artillery, those vehicles, and the men tending them, were forced to head overland toward Virginia.

Traveling west they reached a point on the Patuxent probably slightly below where present Maryland Route 3 crosses that river. At that time the spot was called "Ashton's Ford." By the French account, "Both the entrance and exit of the ford, which is very poor, need repair....the Patuxent...is not more than 60 yards wide. The riverbed is firm and smooth."

On the west side of the river they camped on the property of the Reverend John Ashton [Whitemarsh] which they found could furnish "abundant forage and water within reach." Ashton's land and Belair met at the northeast corner of the latter, with a road linking the two.

The next morning the Frenchmen left Ashton's place, entered the Georgetown highway and, a little farther on, passed "quite a fine house on the left." From the distances and directions given, there is every probability it was the Belair mansion they sighted.¹³⁷

Henry Ogle had been much impressed when, early in the spring of 1781, another contingent of French had encamped on their land across Spa Creek from Annapolis. "I like the French better every hour," she wrote to one of the Lowndes cousins in Bladensburg. "The divine Marquis de la Fayette is in town, and is quite the thing. We abound in French officers, and some of them very clever...But the Marquis -- so diffident, so polite, in short everything that is clever!"¹³⁸

In June of that year Benjamin Ogle was commissioned a Third Lieutenant in "Captain Samuel Harvey Howard's Independent Company of Militia in the City of Annapolis." Previously, in November 1775, he had been nominated in Prince George's County as a likely Field Officer "to the Battery on the upper part of Patuxent." His name was also on that county's lists of persons taking the Oath of Fidelity in 1778. By that oath he swore that he was no longer "bound to the King of Great Britain," but that he would remain ever "true and faithful to the state of Maryland." Those distinctions, plus his having been paid by the state for providing lead and other supplies, have placed him among the ranks of Revolutionary War patriots.¹³⁹

When Mary Carroll, the wife of the signer, died in June 1782, Henry was particularly affected. "I am afraid this cold weather will make us all sick," she told her uncle, John Thomas, at West River. "I am very unwell, and quite low-spirited, was much shocked at Mrs. Carroll's death, but think she was almost to be envied. She died so happy & was sensible till a little time before she breathed her last...We attended the funeral. Mr. Ogle was pall Bearer."¹⁴⁰

Annapolis during the winter of 1783-84 must have been much more to her liking. The Continental Congress was in session, and Annapolitans went out of their way to entertain the delegates. Dinners were given in their honor, invitations were extended to attend the fortnightly balls in the Assembly-room and plays were performed at the theater on West Street. In short, there was a constant social whirl. Sir Robert Eden, the last provincial governor, and Henry Harford, heir of the sixth Lord Baltimore, were also in the city, each in an effort to reclaim properties that had been confiscated as Loyalist. Their presence lent a continental air to events. "The town is very agreeable," Henry assured Miss Lowndes in another letter.¹⁴¹

When General Washington resigned his commission in the Maryland State House on 23 December 1783, Mary Ogle Ridout was among the spectators filling the Ladies' Gallery of the Senate Chamber. Until the war caused them to follow divergent paths politically, she and her husband had been close friends of the Washingtons, welcoming them at times to their lovely house on Duke of Gloucester Street. To her mother, Anne Ogle, she described the dramatic scene: "the General seem'd so much affected himself that everybody felt for him, he addressed Congress in a short speech, but very affecting many tears were shed, he has retired from all public business & designs to spend the rest of his Days at his own Seat. I think the World never produced a greater Man & very few so good."

She also reported in the same letter, "My Brothers Family are pretty well, though their Son was dangerously ill this autumn. I think him a weakly Child...their Daughter is healthy & rather pretty."

"This you will certainly receive," she told her mother confidently, "as it goes by a Gentleman that carries a Copy of the definitive Treaty ratified by Congress who are in this town." Mary's letter traveled in exceptional company, for it was the Treaty of Paris, the document that officially recognized the United States as an independent nation, to which its writer referred.¹⁴²

Since at least 1778, Anne Ogle had been living in Boulogne, an ancient port lying across the English Channel on the northwest coast of France. Perhaps her attitude that "I think as an American" had made continued residency in Britain uncomfortable. Harriet Anderson, the lone surviving child of Meliora, and Samuel Ridout had joined their grandmother, and when in "the latter end of July" 1784, she at long last returned to Maryland, they came with her.¹⁴³

In the summer of 1785 Benjamin Ogle received a communication from an old friend. "I thank you for your obliging offer of two or three Fawns," it read, "but presuming

ason is now too far advanced either to catch or gentle
I will not send before I hear further from you on this
st. If it is too late to obtain them this year, I would
you for the like number next Spring; by which time I
have a proper inclosure for them." George Washington
ded his letter "with compliments to Mrs. Ogle."¹⁴⁴

Following spring Washington notified George William
ax, "I am not a little obliged to you for the assurance
tributing to this, by procuring for me a Buck and Doe of
st English deer; but if you have not already been at
trouble, I would my good Sir, now wish to relieve you
st, as Mr. Ogle of Maryland has been so obliging as to
at me six fawns from his park at Bellair."¹⁴⁵

at summer, as directed by the court,¹⁴⁶ Anne Ogle finally
her rights to Belair to her son.

April 1790 Benjamin Ogle gave notice that, "pursuant to
rections of an act of Assembly," he intended "to apply
next county court...for a commission to prove and mark
ncient bounds and lines of the following tracts of
...to wit, BELLAIR, WOODCOCK'S RANGE, part of LARKIN'S
P, RIDGLEY'S ADDITION, and part of ENFIELD CHASE." Using
itions made by longtime residents of the area, which
ed to the various beginning points of the lines, the
urveyors spent the rest of the year planting stone
s and reestablishing the boundaries. They completed
chore on the 11th of December.¹⁴⁷

le engrossed to some extent in the survey, the greater
of Benjamin Ogle's attention must have been devoted to
er matter. A serious misunderstanding had developed
en Ogle and William Paca, a Maryland signer of the
ation and third governor under the state constitution,
E such proportions that it brought them to the verge of a
To clarify the record, Philip Barton Key and John Kilty
compelled to publish all the details concerning
ement of the incident. Their story appeared in the
e on the 17th of June.

Finding a report to be in circulation, that the
dispute between Mr. Paca and Mr. Ogle was settled by
the former's asking pardon - In order to remove an
impression so injurious to the character of that
gentleman, we deny that any such degrading
submission was made, or required; and do agree to
the following short statement of facts:

Mr. Ogle having called Mr. Paca to the field for
satisfaction, Mr. Paca agreed to meet him for that
purpose, and we were appointed their seconds: But it
appearing to us that the dispute was not of

consequence enough to occasion a serious quarrel
between men of such respectable character, and that
it probably could be honourably settled on a proper
and thorough investigation of it, we therefore
exerted ourselves to this purpose: and, finding that
Mr. Paca has misconceived an expression in a letter
of Mr. Ogle's (supposing it to convey an intended
reflection on his son) and under this supposition
had written those letters which occasioned Mr. Ogle
to call on him, we reported to the gentlemen the
terms on which we conceived the matter might be
adjusted - Accordingly, upon Mr. Ogle's declaring
that he had no such intention, Mr. Paca then made a
handsome and gentlemanly apology to Mr. Ogle for the
letters which were the subject of the dispute, they
having originated from a misapprehension which Mr.
Ogle's candor removed.

In that same year, 1790, Benjamin Ogle II was enrolled in
the newly opened St. John's College, Annapolis. He continued
there as a student through '91, '92, and '93, but nowhere is he
listed as a graduate of the school.¹⁴⁸

Earlier his father and other prominent Maryland gentlemen,
"approving the liberal principles upon which...a College is
proposed to be founded on the Western Shore of this State, and
desirous to promote the special Execution of the Same, for the
benefit of our Country," had promised "to pay...the Sums
annexed by us to our respective names, to be applied towards
founding and carrying on the said College." Benjamin Ogle I
had pledged 35 pounds, payable in three yearly installments
commencing in June 1785. His actions, however, proved unequal
to his good intentions, for only 17 pounds 10 shillings was
credited as paid. Regardless of his failure to meet the
obligation, he was elected¹⁴⁹ again in the year 1790 - to St.
John's Board of Visitors.

Anne was the first of Benjamin and Henry's children to
marry. Having "spent the earlier days of her life in the
refined and brilliant society of Annapolis," she accepted the
proposal of Colonel John Tayloe III, scion of a distinguished
Virginia family and owner of Mt. Airy plantation in that
state. "When a young lady she visited the beautiful Nellie
Custis at Mt. Vernon, while residing with General Washington
and his wife, and preserved in after-life a vivid recollection
of the household and mode of living which prevailed there."¹⁵⁰

On 25 February 1796 William Faris, the Annapolis
silversmith, made the entry in his diary, "this Evening Mr.
Benjamin Ogle Junr to be married to Miss Nancy Cook." Nancy
was actually Anna Maria, the daughter of William and Elizabeth
Milghman Cooke. By December, in the capital city, the couple
welcomed their first child, Benjamin Ogle III.¹⁵¹

December also brought them another acquirement. "For and consideration of the love and affection" he bore, plus a token payment of shillings, Benjamin I deeded Belair and the surrounding tracts "together with all the...household furniture, pictures, farming utensils and stock of every kind hereon" to his son. "During the rest of his natural life...at all and any time he may think proper so to do," the other reserved the right to freely enter the premises "with servants, dogs and horses to chase, kill and carry away any deer." ¹⁵²

When the 1798 Direct Federal Tax Assessment was made, it cataloged Belair as containing the mansion with a greenhouse, 15 feet by 15 feet, adjoining, the 40-foot square kitchen-office, a 10-foot square poultry house, a single-story dwelling, 24 by 12 feet, a meat house and a stable, all built of brick. Additional outbuildings included a frame stable, a deer house, a barn, a corn house, a windmill with one pair of stones, four tobacco houses and several houses for Negroes. It was by far the most valuable and best equipped plantation in that section of Prince George's County.

Under the constitution adopted by the state of Maryland in November 1776, the governor was chosen not by popular vote but by a joint ballot of both houses of the Assembly. His term of office was one year, and if re-elected, he could serve no more than three consecutive terms.

In 1798 the resignation of Governor John Henry created a vacancy, and in November the legislature set about choosing his successor. Writing from Annapolis on the 14th, J. N. Thomas told his wife Sarah, at West River, that "a very unexpected event has taken place - Tom Lee declined accepting the Appointment of Governour - and this Morning Mr. O & M. Carroll were nominated as Candidates to fill the Office upon casting up the Ballots, there appeared 42 Votes for Mr. O. - & 18 for Carroll, to the great joy of many of Us - Numbers have been here today to pay their Compliments to the Governour who is qualified about One o'clock in the Senate Chamber, when a general Salute was fired on the College Green." Mr. Thomas was possibly a kinsman of Henry Ogle, and of course, Mr. O. was Benjamin, whose election was confirmed in the next day's edition of the Maryland Gazette. ¹⁵³

Ogle, a Federalist, bridged the turbulent period during which that party declined in power, and the Jeffersonian Republicans became the prevailing force in government. He performed no monumental tasks but provided stability at a time when it was badly needed. He evidently discharged his job to the majority's satisfaction, for he was re-elected in 1799 and again, unanimously, in 1800. ¹⁵⁴

Shortly after the commencement of Ogle's second term George Washington died. Immediately upon receipt of the news in Annapolis, the legislature ordered that the governor, all state officers and its own members be "furnished a scarf and hatband...to be worn during this session as an external mark of their unfeigned grief." Further, "to give the people a public opportunity to regretting the irreparable loss", it resolved that a message "be communicated to the governor requesting him to appoint...a day of mourning, humiliation and prayer, throughout this state." In response, "February 22nd next" was settled upon by the governor as most appropriate, and a proclamation to that effect was issued. The dawn of the designated day "was announced by a morning gun, and the colors were suspended from the dome of the Stadt-house, in mourning." At half past 10 o'clock, as the minute guns were fired and the bell tolled, Ogle led the procession of dignitaries and ordinary citizens which marched from the State Circle to St. Anne's Church to hear a memorial discourse delivered by the Reverend Mr. Higginbotham. ¹⁵⁵

In the meantime, under the third generation of Ogles, Belair continued to function as a stud farm. Gabriel, "a dark bay, 15 and a half hands high, and a fine, powerful horse" with an impressive list of victories, was standing for the season in 1799, "at 20 dollars a mare and a dollar to the groom" ¹⁵⁶

Following the turn of the century, the younger Ogle is reputed to have entered his horses in the races sponsored by the Washington Jockey Club. The meet, held in the new federal capital, usually took place in November.

By 1800, also in Washington, John and Ann Ogle Tayloe were engaged in the construction of Octagon House, their handsome, brick mansion located at 17th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue, W. Upon its completion, Benjamin and Henry occasionally made the journey from Annapolis to visit with their daughter and her family. Through Ann, Henry was quickly admitted into the inner circle of women who set the pace of the city's social life. Its members were the wives of men whose importance and influence permeated the highest echelons of the federal government, the diplomatic corps and, because Dolley Madison was part of the group, eventually even the President's name. That association was to continue almost until the time of her death.

In Annapolis, Anne Tasker Ogle was living on Duke of Gloucester Street, having purchased the Ridout house, in 1797, part of the estate of her son-in-law. Even in her advanced years she was referred to as "the handsome grandmother." Anne posted a \$20 reward in July 1801 to anyone who could return "1 large and 1 small SILVER WAITER, or SALVER, 1 large and 1 small COFFEE-POT, with three crescents and an antelope's head engraved on them," which were stolen out of her dwelling "in the night of the 29th or morning of the 30th of June." As the crests bore the Ogle crest, they might have been part of the estate left to her by her husband so many years before.

On Sunday, 22 July 1804, at their home on the opposite side of town, Benjamin and Henry's last child, "the amiable Miss Mary Ogle," was married by the reverend Mr. Duke, the rector of St. Anne's, to George Bevans who was characterized as an "uncouth Englishman." In a letter, Rosalie Stier Calvert of Wincoburn told her mother about the unpleasant climate surrounding the wedding:

One thing which will astonish you is the marriage of Mary Ogle to Beavens whom you knew very well in Annapolis. It must be that Mrs. Ogle has lost her mind to have engaged her daughter, against the wishes of her father, to marry such a man, because it is altogether the fault of the mother, who is almost estranged from her son and Mrs. Taloe (sic) because they wanted to prevent it...Yesterday my husband [George Calvert] was at the house of the young Ben Ogle who told him that his father was so terribly worked up about it that he was afraid he

would die, being already in a precarious state of health. He is going to go to Bath with him for a while.

Exactly two months after the wedding to the day, the Ogles entertained Dr. and Mrs. William Thornton at dinner. The designer of the United States Capitol and his wife were spending a few days in Annapolis, and the Ogles used the visit as an opportunity to repay hospitality extended to them by the Thorntons during stays in Washington.

Although no longer the owner of Belair, the former governor's interest in racing appeared undiminished. His Oscar, sired by Gabriel, won the Jockey Club purses in Annapolis and Washington in the fall of 1804. The next year the horse repeated his performances in both locales and, in the spring of 1806, added the Baltimore Jockey Club purse to his winnings. In March of 1806, Benjamin I advertised that Dorimant, "got by the famous horse Gabriel" and a descendant of Selima, would stand at his farm near Annapolis.

Benjamin I had disappeared from the political scene at the end of his terms as governor. In 1806, apparently having recovered sufficiently from the "precarious state of health" which had alarmed his family two years earlier, he decided to re-enter public life. In September he was certified as a member of the state Senate, representing the city of Annapolis.

It was to his son that Benjamin I sent a letter on 2 February 1807. "My dear Ben," it began, "As I always found you willing to oblige me while living I doubt not you'll obey my last request - which is to order Shaw [John Shaw, the well-known Annapolis cabinet-maker, who also supplied coffins] to put me in the ground in the most private manner, no invitations whatever & beg that none of my family put on mourning."

Over two years passed before Benjamin II was called upon to carry out his father's wishes. In the interim, Mary Ogle Ridout died in Annapolis and was buried at her country home, Whitehall (off present-day Route 50, just west of the Bay Bridge).

The Gazette published on Wednesday, 12 July 1809, reported, "Departed this life, on Friday morning last, at 1 o'clock, after a long and painful illness, in the 61st year of age, Benjamin Ogle, Esq., formerly governor of this state. His remains, agreeable to his request, were privately interred the same evening on his farm, near this city." The whereabouts of his grave are unknown.

He had died, declared his grandson, Benjamin Ogle Tayloe,

loved and revered by all who knew him....Strict integrity, the most elevated and unsullied honor, united with the kindest and most amiable feelings of the heart, were the characteristics of my grandfather. One who knew him well, the late Colonel Nathaniel Burwell, of Virginia, said 'He was the most perfect gentleman; I never knew any one like him.'

The will of Benjamin I, drawn up on 4 February 1799, left no complicated bequests. All of his estate, both real and personal, with no further details, was devised to his wife, Henrietta Margaret Hill Ogle.¹⁰

The simplicity of the document masked the fact that Benjamin was deeply indebted to his mother. The situation was evidently one of long standing, inasmuch as almost twenty years earlier, he had written to her, "I think it is my duty to apologize to you for the damaged state of my affairs and to thank you sincerely for the indulgences you have always shown me - I began life in a stile which I could not afford, but swindled by Barnes and his father out of 5000 pounds and blundered by the [illegible] out of the rest of my money I became unable to pay your annuity and have twice bonded by which means I owe you more than I am worth." Of necessity Benjamin's widow mortgaged The President to Anne Ogle, thus giving security for the 8,858 pounds due her from her son's estate.¹¹

In June 1815, Benjamin II and Anna Maria were called to Annapolis to attend "his mother that is expected to die." The summons was premature for Henry lingered until the 14th of August. Soon after her passing, Benjamin successfully petitioned the Chancery Court to appoint him trustee to sell her real estate, a move designed to benefit the four minor children of Mary Ogle Bevans, whose husband had died the prior year. Mother and children were the main beneficiaries in Henry's will. One of the tracts disposed of was The President, and proceeds from its sale were more than sufficient to satisfy the mortgage held by Anne Ogle.¹²

To Benjamin, Henry left "my large Silver Waiter with the Ogle Arms in the Middle," and "as a small remembrance," she devised a silver bread basket to her daughter-in-law, Anna Maria. In a codicil, she manumitted Cesar Peterson, Orson, Jan Bowser, a cook, and Nance Timmons "who waited on me in my illness with great duty and affection."¹³

Benjamin must have gladly concluded the settlement of his mother's estate for he had much at home that demanded his time and attention. Following the birth of Benjamin III in 1796,

he and his wife became the parents of thirteen additional children. Their first daughter, Elizabeth, was also born in Annapolis. Henrietta, William, Anne and Sophie, the next four children, were born at Baltimore in a period from 1800 through 1805. The last eight - Mary, Susan, Catherine, Louisa, Eleanor, George, Richard and Rosalie - entered the world at Belair. The birth of the final member of the family occurred on 24 November 1821.¹⁴

Whereas preceding generations had considered Belair a second residence, to Benjamin II and his expansive household it was their primary and permanent dwelling place. Their lives were concentrated on the estate in Prince George's County with little relationship to Annapolis. Surely that circumstance led to the renovations that were carried out in the interior of the mansion early in the new century. The general upgrading featured the installation of chair rails, plaster cornices, inside shutters, closets, some paneling, new mantels, and as a touch of elegance, a plaster medallion in the ceiling of the large center hall. It was noted that the mansion "was comfortably and plainly furnished...as a gentleman's house of olden times ought to be." The father "lived like a gentleman of the old school," and the family's "associations were in the first circle of society."¹⁵

Even in governmental service Benjamin II participated strictly at a local level. Under a law enacted in 1803, he was one of the Prince George's County Commissioners appointed to act with those of Anne Arundel County to survey, lay out and open a road, not exceeding 36 feet in width,

from a large white oak tree, standing on the south of the main road leading from the city of Annapolis round the head of South River...to the fording place on Patuxent, known by the name of Ashton's Ford, and from thence by or through Benjamin Ogle's plantation...to intersect the road leading to Bladensburg.

The legislation further provided "that a bridge may be built over the Patuxent at Ashton's Ford aforesaid." Time and again, throughout his adult life, he was appointed by the county court to act as an appraiser of the real and/or personal property involved in the settlement of an estate.¹⁶

In June 1811 the Ogles were honored by the brief visit of an aristocratic guest. That month the new British ambassador, Sir Augustus J. Foster, along with his private secretary, Mr. Baker, and seven servants, landed at Annapolis from the Minerva Frigate, a vessel commanded, coincidentally, by Captain Thomas Bladen Capel, a grandson of Thomas Bladen and, therefore, a distant English cousin of the Ogles. Sir Augustus recorded his subsequent actions:

I dined the following Day on my Road to the Federal City at Mr. Ogle's of Belair, and gave him an English Cock Pheasant which I had brought for him with the Hen, but the latter had died at Sea....

Mr. Ogle told me that some years previously his Father and other Proprietors near the Shore had been much plagued by Visits from Sailors belonging to the Patriots and other French Ships of War lying in the Chesapeake, four of his Sheep having, on one occasion, been killed and carried off from a Farm belonging to him: a Complaint having been made to the Commandant, he advised the Gentlemen to arm their Negroes and order them to fire on the offenders if they attempted to do so another Time: but he never offered to pay for the Sheep, and the Sailors must have been under very loose discipline for the Messenger saw some of them drunk and playing Cards while their officers appeared to walk by without noticing them.

It was at least the second time that gentleman had visited Belair. Accompanying an earlier British ambassador, he had first come to Maryland in 1804. Keeping a journal of his travels, he wrote in one entry that the income of parsons was sometimes dependent on donations. "The Insufficiency, however, and the Humiliation attending such a Mode of Payment I learnt from the Rev. Mr. Scott, a very venerable, greyheaded Clergyman of the Scotch Protestant Church whom I met at the country home of Mr. Ogle a Gentleman of property in the State." Mr. Scott was possibly Thomas Scott who, from 1803 through 1812, was rector of Queen Anne's Parish which at that period still included Henderson's Chapel standing a few miles to the west of Belair.¹⁷

Anna Maria Ogle, the wife of Benjamin II, was part of a large family, one of nine children born to William and Elizabeth Tilghman Cooke. William, a native of Prince George's County, "was sent early to England where he studied law in the Temple." Returning to America, he "settled at Annapolis where he practiced law very successfully for many years, and acquired a just reputation for correctness, industry & integrity." In 1798 the parents and children William, George, Frank, Susanna, Sophia and Betsey moved to Baltimore.

During the winter of 1801-02, Betsey, "a young lady of great personal beauty and accomplishment," caught a severe, lingering cold "at a ball where she wore a Greek dress." Not long afterward, she met Robert Gilmor, "one of the most prominent Baltimore merchants," and within a short time, he proposed to her. A marriage date was set and postponed several times due to her "very delicate health," but at last,

on 1 June 1802, the ceremony took place. Immediately after the wedding Gilmor "carried her to her sister's, Mrs. Ogle's" (Belair), where they "remained a fortnight during which time she began to spit blood, which produced some apprehension of her lungs being seriously affected." The couple traveled back to Baltimore and Betsey's condition improved temporarily. By July, however, it was "believed she will die." A mere twenty years old, she¹⁸ "expired May 1st 1803, a victim of consumption."

Susanna Cooke married William Elie Williams and settled with him on a farm in Ceresville, near Frederick, Maryland. Although scattered, the brothers and sisters, by means of visits and countless letters, kept in close contact with each other.

George Cooke later owned Hazelwood, a plantation at Elkridge Landing in upper Anne Arundel County, and it became a way-station as the clan traveled back and forth. Mr. and Mrs. Ogle usually stopped on their way to and from Baltimore, and singly or in groups, their children spent longer periods there with their cousins. William Cooke used Belair in the same manner as he headed for Washington, and George included Belair on journeys to either Washington or Annapolis, in some instances dropping off his wife and/or his children on his way out and picking them up on his return.

During the last year of the War of 1812 people in the Chesapeake Bay area were inclined to "abandon the idea of traveling" because it was considered too risky to leave their property "unprotected ag^t the possible depredations of the British & possibly the depredations of others if there should be any serious commotion."¹⁹ At the war's end they could once again move about freely.

A letter from William Cooke junior, written on 23 September 1816 to William Williams referred to one proposed trip. "Sophia, Mary Atkinson, Frank and George," it told the recipient, "go to Bellair the first good weather - they fixed upon today but the rain has stopt them - They calculate upon great sport - in hunting, shooting, and eating - Buck, Rail and ortolan - dainty dishes for such Epicures." The ortolan mentioned abounded in the Patuxent marshes "in almost innumerable quantities." At the time of the letter and for years afterward, September seemed to be the best season "for slaughtering and gulping down, bones and all, this delicious bird."²⁰

The door at Belair was always open to guests, and a letter to Mr. Williams, sent by his brother Edward in 1817, is indicative of the good times shared there. "You have enjoyed yourselves happily at the Deer hunts of Bellair and in the hospitalities of that charming family," he wrote almost

enviously. "I should have been delighted to participate in such pleasures but it was not in my power....I may yet eat pears with them this fall, or if later enjoy an evening fireside with Mr Ogle upon the never failing topic of Lowndes' Hill and the Cavalry."²¹

Benjamin II, it appears, was still caught up in the excitement of the Battle of Bladensburg which had occurred in August only three years before. The British troops, marching from Upper Marlboro, had swept down Lowndes' Hill as one course of entry into the town, and, undoubtedly, Lowndes relatives still living there had been able to furnish Benjamin with graphic, eye-witness accounts of the action.

There had been a personal, though vicarious, link to another aspect of the recent war. After over-running and dispersing the American defenders at Bladensburg, the British regrouped and made their way into Washington virtually unopposed. Starting that evening, continuing through the night and into the next day, they methodically burned, blew-up or wrecked a sizeable number of private and public buildings, including the Capitol and the executive mansion. President and Mrs. Madison, who had fled as the invading force approached, returned, upon the enemy's withdrawal, to a city dotted with still-smouldering ruins. The future "white" house stood blackened, gutted and uninhabitable, a desolate sight. The Octagon, standing only a short distance away from the President's house and its condition undisturbed, seemed a logical substitute. The government rented the property from the Tayloes, Benjamin's sister and brother-in-law, and James and Dolley Madison moved in. While still in residence there, the President signed the Treaty of Ghent, the agreement which formally brought the War of 1812 to an end. The noteworthy event occurred in the circular study on the second floor; the date was 24 December 1814.

A long chapter in the story of the Ogles came to a close in 1817. On August 14th, Anne Tasker Ogle, the matriarch, "departed this life in Annapolis...at the advanced age of 94." She had outlived all of her immediate relatives except her sister Rebecca who would survive until 1822, her 98th year. Mrs. Ogle's remains "were interred at Whitehall...in the family vault."²²

For the years 1814, 1815, 1816 and 1817, Benjamin II had been chosen as supervisor of the public roads in the upper part of Patuxent Hundred. Once again, in 1818, he was named a Prince George's County Commissioner. This time he and William Bowie, also representing the county, and two men from Anne Arundel were empowered to build a bridge at Priest's Ford (probably the earlier Ashton's Ford). The amount appropriated for the job? \$800!²³

The 1820s and 1830s were eventful decades for the Ogles. To begin with, many of the children had reached marriageable ages, and the Belair house was the setting for a series of weddings. Elizabeth, the eldest daughter, led the way when, on 27 June 1822, she married William Woodville, an English gentleman who had settled in Baltimore. On Thursday evening, 4 May 1824, Henrietta became the wife of William Henry Tayloe of Windsor, King George County, Virginia, and later in the same year, on November 23rd, Sophia married Julius Forrest of Upper Marlboro. Rounding out the '20s, Susan Ogle's marriage to John Hodges of Omahaw Hill, Prince George's County, took place on 16 June 1829.

The trend continued into the next decade as Mary, the fifth daughter, married Edward T. Tayloe of Virginia on 22 December 1830. In 1834, for a second time, there were two weddings in one year. On May 28th, Ellen Cooke Ogle was the bride of Richard Belt Mullikin, and on the 16th of December, William Cooke Ogle married his cousin, Mary R. Bevans. The Reverend Dr. Marbury was called upon twice to officiate at ceremonies involving fellow-clergymen. On Tuesday morning, 10 October 1837, he married Louisa to the Reverend Upton Beall, and on 16 August 1838, he united Catherine and the Reverend Charles Goodrich. The decade closed with a marriage, on 25 November 1839, between Ann Ogle and Robert Neilson of Baltimore.²⁴

The matter of reparations, negotiated in the aftermath of the War of 1812, was not completely settled by 1821 when Benjamin received a letter from Lewis Neth, Jr., of Annapolis. Enclosed was a newspaper reprint of a message from John Quincy Adams, Secretary of State, to the governor of Maryland, a message stating that the Treaty of Ghent had prohibited British officers from transporting slaves from the United States and that claims for indemnity should be made without delay. "I suspect," Neth wrote, "that all those who left your mother come within the provisions of this arrangement." Right after the ratification of the treaty, he told Benjamin, he and Henrietta Margaret Ogle had gone aboard a ship in the Bay seeking the return of runaway slaves, but their mission had been unsuccessful. Feeling they both had rightful claims, Neth asked Benjamin to forward whatever information he had in order to more firmly verify their losses.

It wasn't until seven years later that Benjamin filed an "Additional Final Account" on his mother's estate. In it he reported the receipt of \$3,402 "for Negroes under the Treaty of Ghent" and the payment of a ten percent commission to himself in his capacity as executor.²⁵

Under an act passed in the 1824 session of the legislature, Benjamin II was appointed one of the tax commissioners who were charged with re-valuing and re-assessing real and personal property in Prince George's.

Near the end of the same year, perhaps Belair's residents made an effort to greet a most famous citizen as he passed nearby. The Marquis de la Fayette had returned to America on a grand, triumphal tour. By December he was in Washington, where his schedule called for a side-trip to Annapolis. Departing on the 16th, he stopped in Prince George's County at Northampton and spent the night as a guest of the Sprigg family. The next morning he and his party continued eastward, using Governor's Bridge to cross the Patuxent. On the far side they were met by a company of militia and a committee of dignitaries which escorted them into the capital. For his return to Washington, the Marquis chose a circuitous route via Frederick Town, so for most Prince Georgians there was no second chance to see the popular hero.²⁶

When a tariff meeting, comprised of "persons friendly to the protection of Domestic Industry," was convened at Waterloo, Maryland, on 19 October 1831, Benjamin Ogle II was one of the Prince George's County Committee. Delegations from Anne Arundel and Baltimore counties joined in the attempt to promote tariffs to protect American farmers and manufacturers from lower-priced foreign competition.²⁷

His attendance at the tariff conference was another instance of his continuing service to the county. He and Walter Bowie, along with two commissioners from Anne Arundel, were authorized, in 1837, to rebuild Belmar's Bridge which crossed the Patuxent at a point directly to the north of Belair. By 1840 Priest's Bridge was in need of some attention, and he was one of the group named to carry out the necessary repairs.²⁸

Matters of estate and finance came to the fore in the summer of 1836 and mainly involved Anna Maria. Her mother died in June and, in her will, provided for the division of \$20,000 among her heirs. To Anna Maria she bequeathed, "for and during her natural life the interest, profits and dividends of \$2,000." The principal was to be invested, Elizabeth Cooke directed, in "Stock, or other Security or property," whichever Anna Maria might prefer, but drawn in the name of Sophia Cooke as trustee; subsequent payments to Anna Maria were to be "for her sole and separate use," and after her decease, the principal was to be equally divided between Elizabeth C. Woodville and any unmarried daughters "Anna Maria may leave at her death."²⁹

In the same June, Benjamin and Anna Maria Ogle granted a deed of trust to Josias Pennington, a family-connected lawyer in Baltimore. It covered Anna Maria's one-seventh undivided part of some tracts in Allegany County, Maryland, which her father had devised to his children in common, and was executed

to enable Pennington to make sale of the land as a whole. In this transaction too the share of proceeds due Anna Maria was hers alone to control.

She forwarded the deed to Pennington on the 29th along with a letter expressing hope that "it will not be long before you can dispose of the land.

"The principal reason for wishing it done immediately," she explained, "is to enable my Son Richard to place himself in some situation, that will support him; he is extremely anxious to be employed; and much mortified at his fathers unwillingness to render that assistance which is indispensable. He says, it is from inability - be that as it may, I am determined to do all I can for him - knowing that 'Idleness is the root of all Evil.'³⁰

Son George departed from the family circle, at least temporarily, to attend the Maryland School of Medicine in Baltimore. He was an 1838 graduate of that institution, and throughout the ensuing years, various documents (particularly administration papers of deceased neighbors) recorded accounts due, and payments made, to Doctor George C. Ogle for medical services.³¹

The time was not without its sorrowful notes. Before their fifth anniversary, Sophia's husband Julius died. The young attorney-at-law was only thirty-one. Bringing her two children, Anna and David, and all of her furnishings, the widow returned to her parents' home to live.³²

Less than a year after her marriage to William, a childless Mary Bevans Ogle died at Belair, and on the morning of 19 January 1839, Benjamin Ogle III "terminated his own existence...by deliberately firing a ball from his left breast to his right shoulder - He expired instantly." His is one of the graves in the walled burial ground located a short distance below the mansion on the terraced side.³³

At an earlier age Benjamin III had called several times on Caroline Calvert of Riversdale and appeared to be "getting encouragement." Her mother Rosalie looked upon him as "a very handsome young man, although not very lively, but of good conduct and excellent character." She noted too that he was "from one of the best families of Maryland on both sides, which is not easy to find." The possibility of a match did not suit her, however, "because his father has nothing except his plantation, with nine daughters (of whom not a single one is married yet) and two other sons." That was in 1818. Nothing came of the courtship and somewhere, somehow Benjamin's life went awry.³⁴