

Fiery Talbot Wanted 'Lebensraum'; So He Maintained Fort Near Christiana



By Staff Photographer.

A story that has all the elements of adventure and romance . . . young Harvey Lewes of Christiana looks over the roadside marker near his home, commemorating the fort of Col. George Talbot.

Roadside Marker Commemorates Effort of Lord Baltimore's Cousin to Establish a County of Ireland On The Eastern Shore; Exact Site Is Not Known

By WILLIAM P. FRANK

"Lebensraum" was a word not in the vocabulary of the tempestuous Col. George Talbot but it was exactly what he wanted—living room and plenty of it.

It was something for which he was willing to fight and while Talbot is just a name today in the footnotes of Delaware-Maryland history, a granite boulder on the side of the road near the village of Christiana commemorates the ambitions of the fiery Irishman who built a fort there and determined to establish a bit of Ireland on the Eastern Shore.

Colonel Talbot desired land—acres of it, rolling hills, broad fields, good streams.

But it was only a beautiful dream. All that reminds us today of Colonel Talbot's vision of a little empire on the Eastern Shore is this granite boulder and a bronze highway marker. It stands on the side of the road to Newark, about five-tenths of a mile from cross roads at Christiana.

The tablet reads:

Talbot's Fort

Colonel George Talbot, cousin of Lord Baltimore, in defiance of William Penn's claim to Delaware erected a fort nearby in 1684 on the land of the widow Ogle. Talbot dispossessed settlers between here and Iron Hill who refused to acknowledge Baltimore as proprietor. Fort garrisoned for two years. Boundary settled by agreement, 1760; surveyed by Mason and Dixon, 1763; confirmed by proclamation of the provincial governor, John Penn, 1775.

That, in as brief a space as possible, tells the essentials of the story of Colonel Talbot but it does not disclose the love and sentiment Talbot had for his native Ireland.

The root of the story—as it is the root of many a romantic adventurous yarn about the Delmarva Peninsula—is the long fight between the Penn and Baltimore families for the Peninsula. It is a complicated history but it is sufficient to note that both rival proprietors—Baltimore of Maryland and Penn of Delaware and Pennsylvania—wanted control and ownership of the Delmarva Peninsula.

George Calvert, third lord of Baltimore, at the time needed valor and diplomacy. He found assistance in his cousin, Colonel Talbot, an aggressive gentleman who had killed an English revenue collector

and sought haven in the province of Maryland.

'County of New Ireland'

From his cousin Talbot received a grant of 32,000 acres of land, lying between the Susquehanna and Northeast Rivers and extending far into Pennsylvania. Originally the tract was known as Susquehanna Manor but Talbot changed it to New Connaught. He renamed the Northeast River as the Shannon. The entire domain from the Susquehanna east to the Delaware River below the 40 parallel latitude he proclaimed as the County of New Ireland.

Talbot set up courts, dispensed frontier justice quickly and efficiently and then moved to the vicinity of what is today the town of Christiana where he built his fort of logs and manned it with a garrison of Irishmen.

It wasn't long before the sheriff and several magistrates from the town of New Castle showed up at Talbot's Fort. They demanded to know by what right Talbot was collecting rents and dispossessing Penn settlers.

Told Them To 'Git'

Talbot's philosophy was that a straight line is the shortest distance between two points. He had the guns of his men levelled at the New Castle worthies. Then he read his commission from Lord Baltimore and whatever he said later amounted to a very strong, emphatic, "Git goin' boys."

Talbot made raids on nearby settlements that were friendly with the Penn family. Dispossessing allies of the Penns was commonplace but the aggressive man eventually found himself opposed, not by arms nor return of sword play but by the courts of England.

The dispute of the Penns and the Baltimores finally drifted toward a settlement and Talbot gave up his dreams.

There are no traces today of the fort. Even its exact location is not known. The highway marker was placed as near as possible to what might have been the site.

Actually the only trace of Talbot's influence is the name of a county on Maryland's Eastern Shore.

April 27, 1933

Edward W. Cooch, Esquire

Equitable Building

Wilmington, Delaware

Dear Mr. Cooch:

I have received your letter of April 25 and will send you a reply thereto upon my return from Washington.

Very truly yours,

GHR/MM

EDWARD W. COOCH
ATTORNEY AT LAW
WILMINGTON, DELAWARE
EQUITABLE BUILDING

April 25, 1933

Dr. George H. Ryden
University of Delaware
Newark, Delaware

Dear Dr. Ryden:

Yesterday I gave Miss Lincoln a suggested inscription for Talbot's Fort. She will no doubt send you a copy very shortly.

I have been giving some thought as to where it should be located. The accounts tell us it was near Christina Bridge on land of the widow Ogle. I find from the records in the Register of Wills office that a John Ogle died a few months prior to the time Talbot made his raid and erected the fort, and that letters of administration were granted to his widow, Elizabeth Ogle. This is undoubtedly the widow Ogle referred to in the histories.

I have also had a talk with Mr. Robinson of the County Assessment office. He has for some years been making a plot of New Castle County showing the original property owners. He is going to make a further investigation and let me hear from him in a few days. He thought, however, he could assure me that John Ogle owned a tract on the north side of the road leading from Christiana to Ogletown and Newark, beginning on the edge of Christiana Village. If Mr. Robinson's investigation verifies his belief that this is the land which Elizabeth Ogle received from her deceased husband, there would be strong reason to believe that it is the land which Talbot seized and on which he erected his fort. Another indication is that there are some high places on it, giving a good view in nearly every direction. In other words it was just the kind of a place which Talbot was in the habit of selecting for his lookouts.

I have spoken to Mr. Davis with regard to changing the date of the duPont-Van Dyke wedding on the Van Dyke House plaque. He said it would have to go back to the factory. I think the order for this change should be given as soon as possible in order to complete it before we go out of office.

I would like to hear from you with regard to the above matters as soon as you have had time to consider them.

Very truly yours,

EWC:CB

Edward W. Cooch

Lord Proprietary's Letter to the Governors concerning:
the difference betweene him & Penn, concerning the bounds
of his Province.

Gentlemen

The difference betwixt Penn and me about Delaware
haveing been heard by the Lords of the Comitte^e &ca they made
their Report, which being approved off by the King in Councill,
An order thereupon was immediatly made that the lands betwixt
Delaware and the Bay of Chesepeake from Cape Henlopin to the
Degree of fourty Northerly latitude shall be equally divided,
The lands on Delaware side being adjudged to the King, and
those on Chesepeake to remaine as comprized within my charter;
This order of Councill was past unknowne to me, ^I haveing not
had any Summons or the least Notice given me to be heard any
further in that affaⁱre, which seemed very strange to severall
psons as well as to myself; But I hope that ere it be long, I
shall be able to obtaine of his Majesty that at least noe more
land may be taken from my Charter, then what is actually culti-
vated on Delaware; ffor it was once the opinion and (as I was
very well assured) the Resolution also of severall of the
Lords of the Comitte^e that what of those lands were uninhabited
should still remaine within and belong to my grant; But it was
afterward carried by some few against the rest of the board, soe

that I must have patience for a little time, noe wise doubting but to find some way to informe his Majesty of the prejudice done me by this order In the meane time I desire and hereby order you to take care to prevent Penns people from making any settlements neere heads and branches of any of the Rivers that fall into Chesepeake Bay, and to encourage the Inhabitants of my Province that have already surveyed Lands in those parts to seate them in my right as soon as they cann, and pticularly to take care the Penn-Sylvanians make noe further Incroachments on the Lands where Coll George Talbott was seated, and to secure the fort neere Christina Bridge, untill you heare further from me, being resolved notwithstanding this order to keepe possession of what is surveyed, and to be on the defensive part, rather than be forced to complaine; Lett me therefore desire you to be carefull that our Neighbours brake not in upon the heads and branches of my Rivers on the Eastern side, and then I shall in a little time contrive it so that the Division which is ~~considered~~ to be made shall be no great prejudice to me nor my Country. This is what I very earnestly recommend to your care and Kindness, untill it be my good fortune to see you, which I hope will not be long, and soe I rest,

Your very Loving ffriend

London Decemb. the first 1685. C. Baltemore.

ffor Coll Thomas Tailler, Coll Vincent Lowe,
Coll Henry Darnall, Coll Wm. Digges, Major
Nicholas Sewall, and for the rest of the Deputy
Governors of: Maryland

Final work in connection with the erection of a marker for Talbot's Fort was completed yesterday. This is the last and one of the most important markers prepared under the direction of the Historic Markers Commission. It commemorates one of the most picturesque incidents in the long and bitterly fought contest between the Penns and the Baltimores for the possession of Delaware territory. This conflict produced the famous Mason and Dixon line and was largely instrumental in giving separate statehood to Delaware. In 1632 Lord Baltimore received a charter which included all hitherto uncultivated territory between the Delaware and Chesapeake Bays. Some years later William Penn received a charter for Pennsylvania and shortly thereafter added to his possessions by purchasing Delaware from the Duke of York. Baltimore admitted Penn's claim to the settlements at New Castle and Lewes and other places along the Delaware shore on the ground that they were territories which had heretofore been cultivated, but denied Penn's right to any other land lying between the two Bays.

About this time there appeared on the scene a man destined to play a brief but important part in the controversy, being the fiery and impetuous Irishman, Col. George Talbot. He was the cousin of Lord Baltimore and was one of his most ardent and loyal supporters. Shortly after the arrival of Penn in Philadelphia Talbot went there for the purpose of demanding Penn's withdrawal. His mission was evidently unsuccessful. Upon his

return Talbot ran a new line from the mouth of the Octoraro Creek on the Susquehanna to the mouth of Naaman's Creek on the Delaware. This line was intended to indicate the northern boundary of Maryland. Talbot marked it with notches on trees and defended it with a series of block-houses and beacons placed at points he believed to be strategic. Bacon Hill in Cecil County, formerly called Beacon Hill is said to have gotten its name from one of these beacons. Signals were established for the purpose of calling his clan together by the blowing of horns and the firing of three musket shots in succession to give notice of approaching danger.

Talbot now assumed dictatorial powers and attempted to bring parts of Pencader and White Clay Creek Hundreds under Baltimore's dominion. In April 1684 he made a raid upon the plantation of one Joseph Bowle, who lived about two miles east of Iron Hill. Talbot then proceeded to Christiana and he dispossessed Jonas Erskin and Andries Tille or Andrew Stilley and the widow Ogle. The widow Ogle was evidently the widow of John Ogle who had died only a few weeks previous and who with his brother William Ogle were extensive land owners near Christiana. Mr. Raymond Robertson of the County Assessment office has located various holdings of the Ogle family as extending from about the Methodist Church in Christiana to the White Clay Creek and including the present site of the village of Oglstown. Somewhere on these extensive holdings Talbot erected a small fort not so much for warlike purposes as to establish and maintain possession of the country west of it. Here he defied the Sheriff of New Castle County and his deputies, threatening them with muskets and exhibiting what he termed "My

Lord Baltimore's commission". The garrison in other regards seems to have been a friendly lot, mingling freely with the other inhabitants.

The records show that the fort was on land of the widow Ogle near Christiana Bridge. All traces of its exact location having long since been lost, the Historic Markers Commission selected a site on the northerly side of the state highway between Christiana and Ogletown. The site is adjacent to a hill having a commanding outlook in every direction. The inscription of the marker is as follows:

TALBOT'S FORT

Colonel George Talbot, cousin of Lord Baltimore, in defiance of William Penn's claim to Delaware, erected a fort nearby, 1684, on land of the widow Ogle. Talbot dispossessed settlers between here and Iron Hill who refused to acknowledge Baltimore as proprietor. Fort garrisoned about two years. Boundary settled by agreement, 1760; surveyed by Mason and Dixon, 1763; confirmed by proclamation of the provincial governor, John Penn, 1775.

Historic Markers Commission - 1933

The marker is a large granite boulder prepared by Elmer M. Thompson of Newark. It has a bronze plaque attached which was furnished by Elwood A. Davis of Wilmington. It is the only stone marker erected by the Commission with the exception of the one for John Dickinson in the Friends Burial

Ground in Wilmington. The sub-committee of the Historic Markers Commission having the work in charge consisted of Mrs. Francis de H. Janvier and Edward W. Cooch.

Elizabeth Ogle widow of John Ogle late
deceased hath delivered into this Office an
Inventory -- By Kings Authority in name
of the Proprietary of Pennsylvania
Empowers her to administer an estate
of John Ogle her late deceased Husband
Given at New Castle

19th day of the 12th month commonly
called February 168 $\frac{3}{4}$

Will Rec A-163

From page wires
not pages

1st of names wires

Diagrams

1st of names

Diagrams - claim A-163

1st of names

1st of names

of form like the late deceased Henderson
given at New Castle
of form like the late deceased Henderson
performer in & administration in order
of the propriety of Pennsylvania
provision - Prof Kings Courtship in name
because both believed into the office on
Elizabeth like version of form like late

John Ogle 3 deeds by Duke of York
105-133-136

A-1-124 Elizabeth Ogle Administratrix & Widow of John Ogle
Deed

January 19 1684 Conveys to John White
a certain parcel of land (think this is original 200 ac)
Elizabeth Ogle Widow & Exec of John Ogle
Log-house & lot in the Town of Newcastle
adjoining the market Place 180 x 190

B-1-3

B-1-26 Elizabeth Ogle Widow April 20 1687
to James Claypole 190 ac of land on both sides of Middle
Creek

B-1-44 Elizabeth Ogle Widow & Exec of John Ogle
to Peter Yocumbe May 13 1688

X
430 acres as granted John Ogle deed by Patent
5/26 1684 by Am. Penn
A-1-78

Deed A-1-78
A-1-108

A1-108 Elizabeth Ogle Widow of John Ogle
Confession of Debt - June 29 1685

Q 1-296 Andrew Stittley to Elizabeth Ogle in behalf
June 19 1686 of her 2 sons Thomas & John
1/2 m^onty back of land S of White Clay Creek
200 perches x 200 perches 205 ac

To all to whom these presents shall come Greeting know yee that Elizabeth Ogle the widow of John Ogle of this County Planter late deceased hath delivered into this office an Inventory of the Lands Goods & Chatties of her said Husband & hath entered into & give bond with suretyes her due Administration according to law, and for as much as her said late Husband dyed Intestate or without making of his last Will & Testament, She prayed to be admitted administration to his Land Goods & Chatties which is hereby granted unto her accordingly These are therefore by the Kings Authority in the name of the Proprietary & Governor of the Province of Pensilvania & Territories thereunto belonging To authorize & Empower her the said Elizabeth Ogle- To Administer upon the Estate goods Chatties Debts & other effects of the said John Ogle her late husband deceased, or to him in any wise whatsoever belonging or appertaining-- Hereby giving and granting unto her the said Elizabeth Ogle, ^{fully power & authority to enter upon and take} possession of all the Estate goods Chatties Debts & other effects whatsoever late belonging or appertaining unto the said John Ogle her late Deceased Husband And to sue for, Recover and obtain the same out of the hands of any person or persons that is indebted or owing unto or hath ought in His or Her Custody of or belonging to the said John Ogle And with the produce thereof to pay and Sattisfy his Just Debts And allot and allow his two Children by Her the said Elizabeth Ogle.. Theyer parts shares & portions by Law unto them And further to do Execut & perform Such other needfull Act & Acts Thing & Things in about or touching the premises as fully to all Intents & purposes as any other Administrator or Administratrix Lawfully may can or ought to do Given under my Hand & Seale at New Castle the 19th day of the 12th moneth commonly called February 1683/4 In the 36th year of the Reigne of the King & 3d year of the Proprietaries Government.

opinion

The Morning News, Wilmington, Del., Wednesday, Sept. 5, 1979 • •

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We've repelled Maryland before

Sound the clarion, Delawareans! Gov. du Pont, mobilize the Delaware Guard! To arms, citizens of the First State!

A certain editor of the Baltimore Sun is cooking up a plot for the takeover of Delaware.

Good grief! This guy has only to dig into the files of the Baltimore Sun and the history of his own state, to learn that more powerful men than he, once tried that—and failed.

A fellow by the name of Cecil Calvert, otherwise known as Lord Baltimore, thought he'd take over the three counties on the Delaware and he flopped. That was about 300 years ago.

Furthermore, this Lord Baltimore sent his fiery cousin, Colonel Talbot, on a military expedition to capture the present area of Newark, Del. It ended with Talbot being set back on his haunches by none other than the Widow Ogle.

This editor, Myron Beckenstein by name, seems to think that by infiltrating Delaware with disguised girl scouts, he'd be able to capture the state of Delaware and wipe us off the map.

Well, for one thing this Beckenstein should know that if he were so dastardly as even to try this, he'd find strong resistance by the Eastern Shore folk, our kissin' and huggin' cousins.

Well, you wouldn't expect an assistant foreign editor, as Beckenstein is tagged, to know what goes on in his own backyard.

So someone should tell him that on at least four, possibly five occasions, Delaware and the Eastern Shore folk discussed possible alignment with the Eastern Shore breaking away from the so-called free state of Maryland.

The plan ultimately failed when the Baltimore interests got scared and bribed the Eastern Shore people to cool it by offering them a railroad.

But getting back to basics:

In the 1630s when Lord Baltimore got his grant for most of present day Maryland, the stuffy lord claimed all of Delaware. He claimed the entire Delmarva Peninsula from the Delaware River and Bay to the Chesapeake Bay.

But the wily Quaker, William Penn, beat him. Armed with a grant for present day Pennsylvania and a long term lease for the three Delaware counties from the Duke of York (later James II), Penn persuaded the English courts to decide the Baltimore grant did not extend to the Delaware River or Bay.

However, to keep the peace, it was agreed to divide the peninsula in half. This division line was drawn by Charles Mason and Jeremiah Dixon and what was ratified in 1767 was the Mason-Dixon Line.

So when Assistant Foreign Editor Beckenstein writes that Delaware is clearly a part of Maryland, "unfairly cut off from its Eastern Shore heritage by parties unknown at some time unknown" he really doesn't know what he's writing about. It's all been documented in the minutest detail.

The only sensible thing Editor Beckenstein writes is his observation that there is no logic to the Delaware boundary. The Eastern Shore should be part of Delaware. We belong together. We have the same heritage, the same traditions, the same culture and the same love of freedom from the domination of the western Marylanders.

But what really hurts is the crack Beckenstein makes about our invincible Delaware National Guard. He writes:

"The Delaware National Guard is in notoriously poor shape."

Again, I refer the poor fellow to American history wherein he will learn to his dismay how the Delaware line often stood steadfast against the best of England's finest troops.

And let the Baltimore Sun editor come up to Gettysburg to see where the Delawareans met the Confeder-



bill frank

ates in true Delaware style and much to Delaware's credit.

I'd like to advise any Marylanders who may be influenced by Beckenstein: Don't try to tempt the Delaware troops. The Marylanders will recognize the Delaware troops by the way they stand shoulder to shoulder through the thick of fire, in the face of bombs and shell, the blue and buff flag always waving triumphantly over the field of battle.

It might also interest Beckenstein to know that some of our finest governors came from Maryland, much to Maryland's loss and our gain. I figure such governors as John G. Townsend, Elbert N. Carvel and Sherman Tribbitt learned that Delaware offered them a great deal more than Maryland could provide.

Even Millard G. Tawes, once governor of Maryland, came to Dover, Del., for his early education.

Once there was a noted military man from Maryland, by the name of John Dagworthy. He was a favorite of a Maryland governor; that was back in the days of what was known as the French and Indian War.

Well, this Dagworthy was given something like 10,000 acres of land in Sussex County, Del., but when Sussex County was deemed part of Delaware, did Dagworthy protest? No, sir! He was happy to be a Delawarean and lent his name to a charming town in Sussex County, known today as Dagsboro.

Also, may I remind this assistant foreign editor of the Sun that Baltimore and its shipping interests have the state of Delaware to thank for the benefits of the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

If it hadn't been for Delaware's General Assembly, there just wouldn't be any Chesapeake and Delaware Canal. Delaware's approval was vital before the canal could have been dug in the 1820s. That's how powerful Delaware has been in the interests of Maryland.

So much for that, sir. When you get to be a bit more learned, come back and we'll chat some more.