

Marvels on the Eastern Shore

A Documented Chronology
by Pauline Manning Batchelder [61336593]

VIRGINIA

12 August 1649: John Marrell was listed as a headright¹ for Edmund Scarburgh (Jr.) in a patent for land on Occohannock Creek, which is in Accomack County, Virginia, on the bay side of the peninsula called "the Eastern Shore." This may have been John Marvell; many of the names listed were also listed, along with John Marvell, in a patent to Edmund's brother Charles Scarburgh; see next entry. (Source: Nugent, Cavaliers and Pioneers, first vol., p. 183.) (See map on page 16 of this document.)

10 May 1652: John Marvell was listed as a headright in a patent to Charles Scarburgh for land on Pungoteague Creek, Northampton (later Accomack) Co. (Nugent, p. 286.)

27 November 1652: John Marvell was listed as a headright in a patent to John Browne for land on the seaside, Northampton Co. (Nugent, p. 267.)

John Marvell married Ann _____. Two dates have been offered: " 1651 (John Everett Marvel, Waynesville, Ill., in Virkus, Compendium of American Genealogy, IV, 680); and 1663 (Daisy (Marvel) Jones, "A Brief History of the Marvel Family," 1960). (Burwell's history relies on the Jones' history for information on the early generations of Marvels.) Jones says that Marvell married Ann West, but I have found no proof and suspect this is a guess, based on John Marvell's will (1707-1708), see below.

Some miles north of the area settled by the Scarburghs, between Little Back Creek and French (or France) Creek, is an area of marsh, divided by narrow channels into two islands. These were early called Marvell's Islands. And Little Back Creek was called Marvell's Creek or My Lord Marvell's Back Creek--a possible indication of where John Marvell eventually settled, although there is no record of his having owned land in the area himself. The islands had originally belonged to Col. Edmund Scarburgh, father of Edmund Jr. and Charles.² (Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, II, 1107.)

Marvel listings in early Accomack Co. tax lists:

- (1) John Marvell 1662 (while area was still called Northampton). (Northampton Co. Order Book, 1657-1664)
- (2) Tho. Marvill 1666 (Who was he? If son of John, this indicates a much earlier marriage date than the suggested 1663 for John; a small child would not have been taxable.)
- (3) John Marvill again, most years, 1667-77 (1677 is last year John is listed).
- (4) Moses Marvill 1691 (origin unknown).

(Nottingham, Accomack Tithables (Tax Lists) 1663-1695.) Did John Marvill become indigent or disabled after 1677, so that he was no longer taxed?

John Marvell had at least two children: Thomas, named in his will, and John Jr., who appears in Accomack Co. court records but not in the will.

16 May 1682: John Maruell bound his second son³, John Maruell, to William Jarman until John should reach the age of 21. In exchange, William Jarman granted John

Maruell, Jr., 100 acres of land, part of the tract on which Jarman lived, "at back branch". (Accomack Co. Land Records, 1676-1690, pp. 306-07.) The purpose of this bargain may have been to provide John, Sr. a place to live.

20 June 1688: Will Jarman sold to John Abbot 250 acres of marshy land, between Oyster Creek and "my Lord Marvells back Creek". (Accomack Co. Land Records, 1676-1690, p. 483.) So perhaps John Marvell, Sr. was now living on the land that Jarman had granted to John Marvell, Jr.

19 February 1694[5]: John Marvell, Jr., planter, traded his 100 acres to Samuel Young in exchange for 100 acres of Samuel Young's plantation, part of a dividend of land on which Young's father in law (stepfather) and mother were then dwelling, in the southwest corner thereof. This was on the south edge of the present town of Parksley. (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1692-1715, pp. 125-26.)

14 September 1695: John Maruell, Jr. of his own free and voluntary will granted to his mother and father, John Maruell and Ann his wife, the land whereon they then lived during their lifetime. This is the same land John Jr. had acquired from Samuel Young early in the year. (Accomack Co. L. R., transcribed Part 1, 1692-1715, p. 159-160)

16 December 1695: John Marvell, Jr. sold to William Hutson (Hudson) the 100 acres that he had received in trade from Samuel Young. (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1695-1715, pp. 164-65.)

17 December 1695: John Marvill, Jr. came into court and acknowledged that the grant of 14 September was his real act and deed to his father and mother. (Accomack Co. L.R., transcr. Part 1, 1692-1715. p 160.)

2 June 1697: Samuel Young sold to William Young (his brother) the 100 acres he had received in trade from John Marvill, Jr. Marvill witnessed the deed. (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1692-1715, pp. 277-78.)

5 October 1697: Another deed to William Hudson repeating the transaction of 16 December 1695, with a couple of details added, on 5 October 1697. John Marvell, Jr. sold to William Hudson 100 acres, "being part of a dividend of land whereon the said Wm. Hudson now dwelleth." (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1695-1715, pp. 297-98.) (William Hudson was evidently Samuel Young's stepfather.)

June 1698: William German (Jarman) made a statement clarifying the status of the land he had sold in 1682 to John Marvill, Jr. in exchange for John's being bound to him until the age of 21, which land Marvill sold to Samuel Young and Samuel sold to his brother William Young. "The sd John Marville having duly performed and fully served ye sd time ... now therefore for the considerations aforesaid with the which I hold myself fully satisfied and contented and for the more sure making of my sale good do therefore give and grant and make over unto William Young ... the before recited one hundred acres" (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1692-1715, pp. 355-56.)

William Jarman and his wife Dorothy (Truitt) later moved to Somerset Co., Md., settling southeast of the Pocomoke River.

5 March 1699[1700]: Samuel Young sold to William Hudson 50 acres, bounded "westerly by the land whereon John Marvell now liveth". (Accomack Co. L.R., transcribed Part 1, 1695-1715, p. 399.)

The foregoing confusing series of court records, 1695-98, suggests a young man too carefree to do things right the first time. He may have been in a hurry to wind up his affairs. The last firm indication of John Marvill, Jr.'s presence in Accomack Co. was the deed of 5 October 1697. He may have died after that, or he may have left the county. More on that below. He was not mentioned in John Marvill, Sr.'s will.

29 July 1707: John Marvill, "being now very aged weake and feable" wrote his will (it was probated on 3 Feb. 1707[8]). He made bequests to his son Thomas Marvill (a heifer), Mr. Jonathan West (5 barrels of corn), and Mrs. Catherine West (a heifer named Kitty), but his principal legacy was to his "most Kinde and Ever loveing friend Mrs. Matilda West," whom he also appointed his executrix. The will was witnessed by Tully Robinson, John West, and John Lewis. (From a copy furnished by the Virginia State Archives, from Accomack Co. records.)⁴

Earlier Marvel histories state that John Marvill eventually moved to Worcester Co., Md. But the evidence indicates otherwise. In any case, Worcester Co. Md, did not exist until 1742. Marville descendants did move to the part of Sussex Co., Del., which was then considered to be in Worcester Co., but that was nearly 50 years after John Marvill's death.

MARYLAND

Is this what happened to John Marvill, Jr.? A John Marvell shortly after 1700 was occupying two tracts, not quite adjacent, in Somerset Co., Md., fronting Big Sound Creek, which flows into the north side of the Manokin River near Dames Quarter. On 2 April 1705 there was surveyed for him a strangely shaped 27 acre parcel called Marvells Chance, which was between the other two parcels and was the means of linking them together. (Somerset Co. Rent Rolls, Md. Historical Society, pp. 174, 193, 213.) Marvell received a patent for Marvells Chance on 10 October 1708. (Md. State Archives, Patent Book PL-3, pp. 15-16.) The other two tracts were Locust Hammock (50 a.) and Front of Locust Hammock (75 a.). The 27 acres was due John Marvell by assignment from Ephraim Poalke out of a large tract granted to Poalke just a couple of weeks earlier.

There is no record of Marvells Chance ever having been sold or passed on by inheritance. Perhaps it got swallowed up, in effect, by the other two tracts, or reverted in some way to Ephraim Poalke. In 1716, Locust Hammock and Front of Locust Hammock were purchased by Poalke. (Somerset Co. Land Records, Book EF, pp. 21-24.) One wonders whether John Marvill, Jr. married a Poalke, but no proof has turned up.

The earlier family histories have all stated that the Thomas Marvill who was father of David, Thomas, Phillip, and Robert was the son of John Marvill, Sr., who named son Thomas in his 1707 will. But this is highly unlikely. It appears now that Thomas was older than John Jr., who was probably born about 1674. Thomas the father of David was married in 1721, had children from 1723 to 1737, and died in the mid-1750's, so was more likely to have been born around 1700 than around 1670. Therefore we should look for a missing link, and I suggest that link may have been John Marvill, Jr. John Jr. was the right age to have been father of Thomas, and if he is the same John who acquired land at Dames Quarter he was in the right place. When Thomas was able to acquire land of his own he simply would have moved northward a few miles, in conformance with the typical pattern of settlement on the peninsula.

Proof has not been found that John Marvill of Dames Quarter was the father of Thomas, but there are a few bits of circumstantial evidence. Thomas bought his first land from a family that were neighbors of John Marvill in the Dames Quarter vicinity. Thomas had as neighbors in the new area members of some of the same

families who had earlier lived at Dames Quarter, or even, in some cases, in the area of Accomack Co. that the Marvills had occupied. And one of Thomas's sons after moving to Delaware, named one of his tracts Marvells Chance. Was he carrying on a tradition started by his grandfather?

16 June 1721 (not 1720, as per Burwell): Thomas Marvill married Elizabeth Huggins (Huggins) in Stepney Parish, Somerset Co., Md. (Stepney Parish Register, p. 10.) Earlier histories say she was the daughter of Edmund and Ann (____) Huggins, and although I haven't found any proof of this, it is plausible, because Edmund was the only Huggins appearing in the records in the right area. He had owned land on the north side of Wetipquin Creek, and in 1718 he bought land on the Nanticoke River a few miles north of where Marvill would soon settle. (Md. State Archives, Patents, 1695, Vol. BB-3, pp. 381-83; Somerset Co. L.R., Book EF, p. 211.)

Thomas Marvill purchased two tracts of land on the Nanticoke River on the site of the present little village of Riverton, once known as Bacon Quarter, in Somerset (now Wicomico) Co., Md.:

- (1) Gladstones Adventure, 150 a., 6 December 1723, from the heirs of Peter Elzey, an early settler on the Manokin River, a few miles east of Dames Quarter (Somerset Co. L.R., Book GH, pp. 108-10); and
- (2) Hardship, adjacent to the first tract on the north, 200 a., 14 July 1725. (Somerset Co., L.R., Book TH, p. 24.)

For proof of the location of these tracts, see Somerset Co. L.R. Book LW-4, pp. 341-2, 11 Jan. 1849. The land at this spot is high, by local standards, and very sandy, with a lovely outlook across the Nanticoke River.

Thomas and Elizabeth (Huggins) Marvill had the following children, according to the Stepney Parish Register (p. 10):

Abigall, 5 Apr. 1723;
Viley Clear, 4 December 1726 (not 14 Dec., as per Jones);
David, 5 January 1729 (not 1721, as per Burwell);
Thomas, 11 November 1732;
Phillip, 30 November 1735;
Robert, 15 May 1737.

1739: Robert Marvell was listed in the 1739 Tax list for Somerset Co. as being in the household of Parris (or Pharez) Chipman, in Nanticoke Hundred. (Jody Powell, Somerset County, Maryland, Tax List, 1990) But Robert was only two years old, not of taxable age. Is it possible there were two Robert Marvells in the area?

20 (10?) March 1753: Thomas Marvil executed two deeds of gift, in which he divided his personal property and his real estate among his family. To sons David, Thomas, and Philip he gave personal effects and livestock, and to Job Gastineau (relationship not stated) he gave a mare. David received 100 acres of land "in the middle of the tract"; Thomas received 100 acres, "the back part of the tract"; Philip did not get any land. Robert Marvil, in exchange for caring for his father for the rest of his life, received the largest portion of personalty and the dwelling plantation with 150 acres of land belonging thereto. George Lewis Gastineau (a schoolmaster and father of Job) was a witness to the two deeds. (Somerset Co. L.R., Book A, p. 292.)

Thomas Marvil had probably died by 1754, when son Robert acquired the land in Sussex Co., Delaware.

- 8 March 1755: Robert Marvin [sic] sold to Thomas Cooper, Sr. and Samuel Cooper, Jr. two tracts, "One Called Hardship and the Other Called John Gladsteance . . . made over unto the Said Robert Marvin from his Father Thomas Marvin of Somerset County on or About the tenth day of March in . . . 1753 by a Certain deed of Gift." (Somerset Co. L.R., transcribed Book B, p. 74.)
- 16 March 1756: David Marvel sold to Joseph Rawle his 100 acres of Hardship and Gladstones Adventure. This deed also refers to the gift as of 10 March 1753. (Somerset Co. L.R., transcribed Book B, p. 129.)
- 12 August 1758: Thomas Marvell of Worcester Co. sold to Abraham Taylor his 100 acres of Hardship and Gladstones Adventure. (Somerset Co. L.R., transcribed Book B, p. 237.)
- Job Gastineau later went to Kentucky, where the name was repeated in succeeding generations. (Jillson, The Kentucky Deeds Land Grants, etc.)

DELAWARE

The Marvel brothers now began acquiring land in the southern part of Sussex Co., Del., which was then considered part of Worcester Co., Md. Robert Marvel had surveyed for him 20 July 1754 a tract called Marvells Industry "on the south side of said Marvells Plantation," about a quarter mile south of Lone Pine Savannah. (Lone Pine Savannah was at head of Deep Creek, which flows into Nanticoke River.) (Sussex Co. Land Records, Rownds Surveys A, pp. 128-29.)

Robert's land was west of the area where the other three brothers settled, which was south of present day Georgetown, in a location later called Pine Grove Crossroads.

- 21 October 1760: Thomas Marvell, Jr. had surveyed for him a tract called Marvells Folly, on the north side of Miery (Miry) Branch in a neck called Saw Mill Neck. (Sussex Co. L.R., Rownds Surveys B, p. 55.) On 19 February 1776 Thomas received a warrant for survey of a tract adjoining Thomas Marvel's plantation, to be called Marvells Chance. (Sussex Co. L.R., Surveys & Warrants B 1776, p. 20.)
- 7 March 1776: David Marvel had surveyed for him a tract in Indian River Hundred called Venture, on the south side of a road leading from Blackfoot (or Blackford) to the Iron Works on Deep Creek, adjoining lands of William Rodney⁵ and Zachariah Jones. (Sussex Co. L.R., Shankland Warrants & Surveys 1, p. 41.)
- 13 March 1776: Two tracts were surveyed for Phillip Marvel on the north side of Miery Branch--This or None and Second Choice, both lying to the east of Marvells Folly. (Sussex Co. L.R., Shankland Warrants & Surveys 1, p. 19.) .
- 12 Dec. 1793: A vacant parcel of land of 40 acres was surveyed for Prettyman Marvel. It was surrounded by land of David Marvel, John Rogers, and Robert Prettyman. On 13 October 1795 Prettyman Marvel assigned the land, for \$20, to his father, David Marvel. (Sussex Co. L.R., Certificates, Book S No. 18, p. 266.)

An unsolved puzzle is that of the wife of David Marvel. Jones and Burwell state that she was Sarah Prettyman. It is true that David Marvel's will refers to his wife Sally, and Thomas Prettyman's will names his daughter Sarah Marvel. But in the records of Lewis and Coolspring Presbyterian church, Lewes, Delaware, list the marriage of David Marvel and Sarah Prettyman in 1789. If the record refers to this David, Sarah had to be a second wife and not the mother of the older children, Prudence, Patience and Prettyman, who were grown by 1789. David had three younger

children, referred to as such in his will-- Elizabeth, David and Burton-- who were probably children by his second wife, Sarah; records of St. George's Church, Indian River, state that Betsy, daughter of David and Sarah Marvel, was born 25 October 1789. In 1803-04, David and Burton Marvel were listed in the Sussex Co. tax list with a guardian, Eli Pepper, so they were still under age at that time. (Janet Wilkins, Sussex County, Delaware, 1804-04 tax Assessment Records (1992, p. 46.) Perhaps Sarah had died by 1803. After David's death the widow Sarah married Moses Dazey (DeVlinger, Sussex County, Delaware, Probate Records, p. 267), and they had a son Prettyman Marvel Dazey 5 December 1797 (Wright, Vital Records of Kent and Sussex Counties, Delaware, p. 158). Levin Wilson, the first historian of the Knowles and Marvel families, stated that David's wife was Comfort Prettyman. She was Wilson's great-grandmother; his grandfather, James Knowles, was still alive when he was growing up, so his information could have been reliable. Wilson did not know of the existence of the three younger children, calling Prettyman his only son.

Another puzzle, probably tied to the first one, is that David Marvel named in his will his daughter-in-law Polly Prettyman. The term "daughter-in-law" frequently meant stepdaughter; whichever she was, her origin is obscure.

NOTES TO DOCUMENT

A word about spelling: In the early records, names were spelled in every possible way, sometimes even several ways in the same document. For the most part I've left the spellings of family names as they were in the documents referred to, not worrying about consistency.

1. In the early years, land was distributed through a headright system; that is, a person was entitled to 50 acres of land for each person (headright) whose way he paid into the area to help settle the land, including himself and family members. Appearance of a name on a headright list does not guarantee that the person was actually there because lists of names were frequently bought, or borrowed, from other enterprising adventurers, as may have been the case with the three land patents described here.
2. Scarborough: Col. Edmund Scarborough (1618-71) was a talented, aggressive, and powerful man. Held posts of high sheriff of Accomack Co. and treasurer and surveyor-general of Virginia, among others. Acquired much land, provided large tracts to his children. public-spirited, but his aggressiveness got him into trouble. He hated and abused the Indians. He incurred the wrath of Maryland by trying to claim a portion of Somerset Co. as part of Virginia. (Somerset Co. was founded and settled principally by settlers from Accomack.) Col. Scarborough married Mary, probably Littleton; children: Charles, Edmund, Littleton, Tabitha, Matilda.

Matilda Scarborough (1640? - 1720) married in 1661 (not 1655, as Jones says) Col. John West (1640 or earlier - 1703). West arrived on the Eastern Shore of Virginia in 1649 with his parents, Anthony and Ann West. (Anthony said to have been a cousin of Thomas West, third Lord de la Warr, first governor of Va., for whom Delaware River was named.) Anthony and Ann West had issue: John, Katherine, Ann. Ann is said to have married a Scarborough and to have died without children. Katherine married three times--Ralph Barlowe, a Charles Scarborough, and Maj. Edmund Bowman.

Matilda (Scarborough) West became a Quaker, ironically, in spite of her father's contempt for the Quakers. She is listed in the 1704 Rent Rolls for Accomack Co.

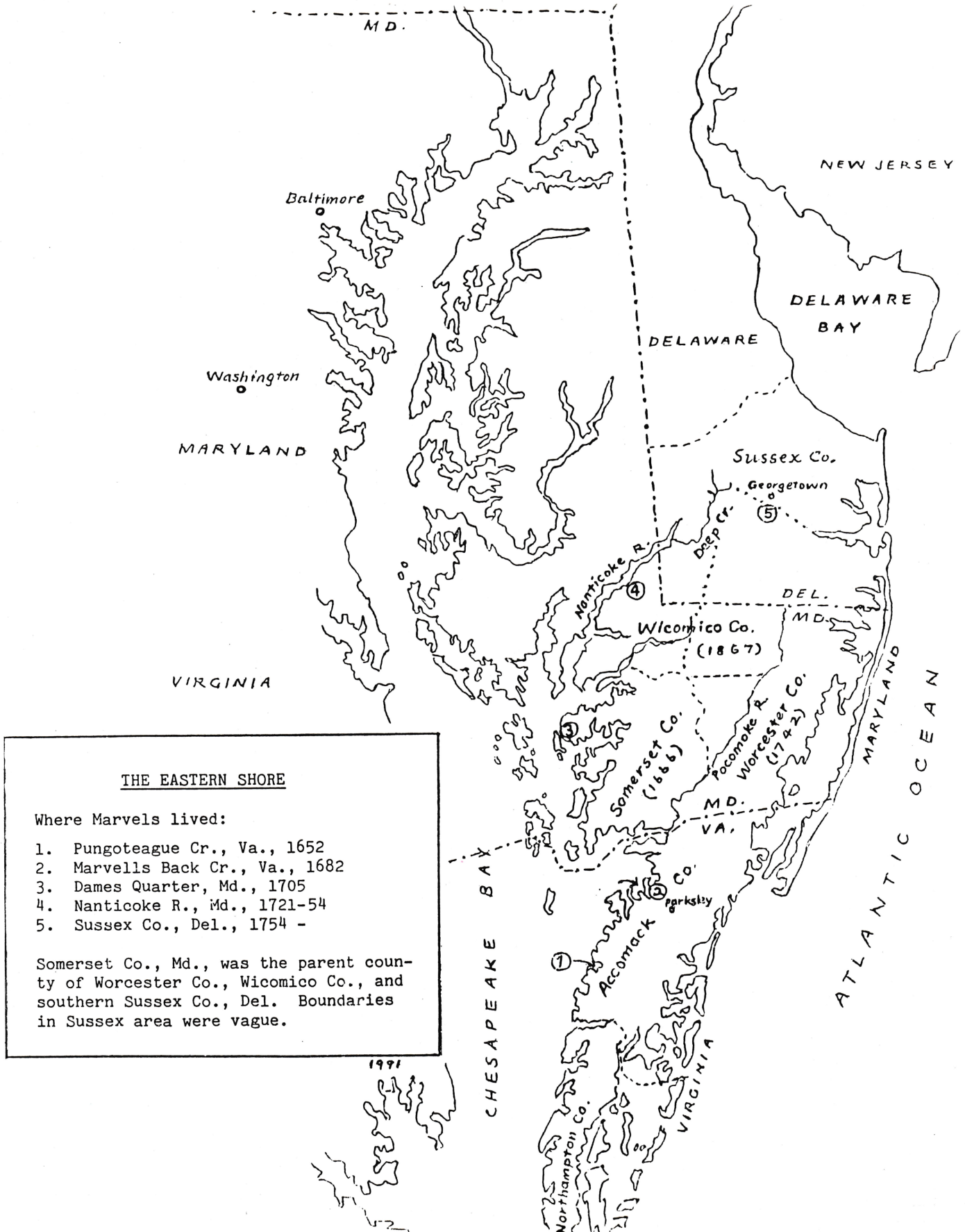
as owner of 3600 acres of land. She died in Accomack Co. in 1720. I have found no evidence that she ever moved to Maryland, in spite of Burwell's statement. John and Matilda West had 13 children, among them Jonathan and two sons named John (John the Elder and John the Younger). Jonathan West was married to Rachel Spooner at the time of his death; she could have been his second wife. (Scarburgh/West information from Whitelaw, Virginia's Eastern Shore, passim.)

3. No one has heretofore noticed the word "second" in this document. Admittedly it is hard to decipher. It makes incorrect Jones's statement that John was the older son.
4. Regarding the details of John Marvell's will: The will does not say he was 75, as Jones states. Jonathan West was one of 13 children of John and Matilda West, and apparently especially close to his mother. He acquired the home plantation after his parents moved elsewhere, and he became executor of his father's estate after his mother's death. For Matilda, see note 2. Mrs. Catherine West may have been the wife of Jonathan. Tully Robinson and John Lewis were the West's neighbors (Robinson was also a West in-law), and John West was one of several by the same name.

The statement in the Jones history that John Marvill married the daughter of Jonathan and Catherine West is probably based on a study of this will; if so, it's a virtual impossibility. Marvill's wife's parents would have been dead long since. However, there was certainly a close association between John Marvill and the Wests. Perhaps the Wests took John Marvill under their protection as he aged, John Jr. having disappeared from the scene. And there may have been a strong affection between John Marvill and Matilda, both probably widowed and of the same generation and probably both widowed.

I would like to suggest another possible tie (for which I do not have proof): John Marvill left identical legacies to son Thomas and to Mrs. Catherine West--a two-year-old heifer each. Might Thomas and Catherine have been brother and sister? If Catherine was John Marvill's daughter he might even have been living with Jonathan and Catherine, as might Matilda, whose husband had died in 1703. Jonathan West's wife at the time of his death (1727) was Rachel Spooner, but she could have been a second wife.

5. William Rodney, father of the William Rodney referred to, married Mary Inloes, widow of Thomas Inloes and mother of Elizabeth Inloes, who married Thomas Prettyman. Thomas and Elizabeth (Inloes) Prettyman were grand-parents of the first Prettyman Marvel's Wife, Lavina Rogers, daughter of John and Comfort (Prettyman) Rogers. (Inventory of Thomas Inloes, Md. State Archives, Prerogative Court, Book 20, pp. 396-97.)



THE EASTERN SHORE

Where Marvels lived:

1. Pungoteague Cr., Va., 1652
2. Marvells Back Cr., Va., 1682
3. Dames Quarter, Md., 1705
4. Nanticoke R., Md., 1721-54
5. Sussex Co., Del., 1754 -

Somerset Co., Md., was the parent county of Worcester Co., Wicomico Co., and southern Sussex Co., Del. Boundaries in Sussex area were vague.

Map of the Eastern Shore of Chesapeake Bay