

**MARYLAND'S COLONIAL
EASTERN SHORE: HISTORICAL
SKETCHES OF COUNTIES AND
OF SOME NOTABLE STRUCTURES**

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Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore: Historical Sketches of Counties and of Some Notable Structures by Swepson Earle & Percy G. Skirven

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SWEPSON EARLE & PERCY G. SKIRVEN

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Maryland's Colonial Eastern Shore

Historical Sketches of Counties and of
Some Notable Structures

Illustrated



SWEPSON EARLE, Editor
PERCY G. SKIRVEN, Asst. Editor

Baltimore, Maryland
1916

DEDICATION

I fondly dedicate this book to the memory of my grandfather, SAMUEL THOMAS EARLE, of "Melfield," Queen Anne's County. A progressive agriculturist until his death, (1904), in the 87th year of his age; a man who loved his family and home, and one ever ready to extend a helping hand to his friends and neighbors; an Eastern Shoreman of the Old School.

Swenson Earle.

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PREFACE

THE reader will observe that this book is the result of true Eastern Shore coöperation. Historical facts, as well as traditions, could only be procured from those familiar with their own particular sections of our Peninsula.

Judge James Alfred Pearce in his splendid tribute to the Eastern Shore tells of the land of our forefathers. He calls attention to the productiveness of our Peninsula. He speaks of men of distinction who were born on the land lying on the easterly side of the Chesapeake. Every citizen of the Eastern Shore knows, either personally or by reputation, this distinguished jurist of Kent and for his contribution alone this book will be valued by many.

The principal reasons for my determination to publish this book are as follows:

First: There seems to be a demand for a publication of this character, because the average Marylander is unfamiliar with the geography and history of this part of his State. This applies to residents of the tidewater as well as of the interior sections of Maryland. While residents of each county are more or less familiar with the geography and history of their particular county, their knowledge of other counties is often very limited, and it is hoped that this book will be of use and permanent value to those who are interested in these subjects.

Second: To interest all Eastern Shoremen and the general public in old landmarks of the State that are fast disappearing with the march of time. The early settlers received grants to tracts of land from the proprietary government of the Calverts and built their homes along the banks of the Chesapeake and its tributaries. Their descendants inherited these properties, usually subdivided among large families, and built other houses. A chain of these colonial homes is found in

all the counties and they form connecting links in the family histories. With their passing and the loss of family records future genealogical research will be made difficult, and in some cases impossible.

Third: The interest in the affairs of the Eastern Shore manifested by the members of the Eastern Shore Society of Baltimore City was an additional incentive to produce this compilation and I hope the work will prove a further stimulant to their interest in the delightful land of their birth. This society is composed of natives of the Eastern Shore who are residents of the City of Baltimore. They are formed into chapters—one for each of the nine counties. The compilation includes a historical sketch of each county and short sketches describing nine places of historical interest in that county. The sketch for each county has been contributed by a well-known county man familiar with its history. Indeed, the love for and interest in their native land shown by all Marylanders now living where'er it has pleased God to call them has been sufficient inspiration to undertake this publication.

To do credit to all of the important historical places on the Eastern Shore of Maryland worthy to be included in this publication would require a volume of several times this size. It is with regret that I am obliged to leave out such well-known places as "Gilpin Manor" and "The Washington House," of Cecil; "Broadnox," "Janvier Homestead," "Worton Manor," "Stoneton," and the homes of the Wickes, Perkins and Beck families, of Kent; "Cloverfields," "Conquest," "Sunnyside," "Wye," "Cheston-on-Wye," "Bolingly" and the Wilmer and Embert homesteads, of Queen Anne's; "Hope," "Perry Hall," "The Rest," "Myrtle Grove," "Plimhimmon," "Beechwood," "Fairview," "Bolton" and other places, of Talbot; "Arlington," "Westover," "The Cedars," and "Almodington," of Somerset; "The Hill," and the homes of the Stewart, Bayly, and Simmons families, in Cambridge, the Hooper and Edmondson homes in East New Market, and "John's Point," the colonial home of Col. Roger Woolford, of Dorchester; and other homesteads scattered throughout our Peninsula; but in order to cover each county geographically the selection had to be made without any discrimination on my part.

The shores of the nine counties known as "The Eastern Shore of Maryland" bear the distinction of being washed by the Chesapeake Bay or one or more of its tributaries. During the days of the Colony there was an unlimited supply of game and wild water-fowl and the game pegs are still found in the cellars of old houses, then seldom relieved of their burdens, and on the cellar floors beneath the "canvas-backs" and "red-heads" crawled the diamond-back terrapin—no luxury in those days—"just food for all white folks," the poor and rich had a bountiful supply of them and fared alike. In fact, at one time there was a law on the statute books of Maryland limiting the number of times slaves were to be fed on terrapin each week. While these resources have been very much depleted, oysters, fish and crabs are still plentiful and with the enforcement of conservation laws and broader education on the subject the supply of these water-riches should remain with us for many years to come.