

# THE MONTGOMERY COUNTY STORY

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## THE TALE OF TRIADELPHIA, THE TOWN BENEATH THE LAKE

By Mary Charlotte Crook

On the Patuxent River in Northeastern Montgomery County there was, for a brief period in the nineteenth century, a thriving industrial town called Triadelphia. The waters of the Patuxent River powered its cotton, grist and saw mills. Later those same waters at flood stage caused such wide-spread damage that the town was eventually abandoned. Today the waters of the Triadelphia Reservoir which cover its ruins have effectively washed away even the memories of the little town.

Triadelphia, which means three brothers, was founded by three men who were not actually brothers but were, in fact, brothers-in-law. These men, Caleb Bentley, Isaac Briggs and Thomas Moore, had each married a daughter of Roger Brooke, IV, and his wife Mary Matthews. All three men were Quakers, and all three possessed exceptional talent as engineers and artisans.

Caleb Bentley was born in Chester County, Pennsylvania, in 1762,<sup>1</sup> the son of Joseph and Mary Thatcher Bentley. Caleb and his brother Eli were clock makers and silversmiths by trade. After plying his trade in York, Pennsylvania, Caleb moved to Leesburg, Virginia, where he formed a partnership with Mordecai Miller in the design of silverware. A short time later he moved again, this time to Sandy Spring, Maryland, where he married Sarah Brooke on April 20, 1791. Sarah died without issue on July 18, 1806. Caleb Bentley then married Mary Henrietta Thomas on August 26, 1807.<sup>2</sup>

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1. Roger Brooke Farquhar, "Historic Montgomery County, Maryland, Old Homes and History" (Baltimore, Maryland: Monumental Printing Company, 1952), p. 108.
  2. Richard Bentley Thomas, "A History of Triadelphia," Annals of Sandy Spring, Vol. V, 1950, pp. 318-319.

Caleb Bentley built a home in Brookeville, Maryland. Here he operated a store and served as postmaster from 1802 until 1815. It was in this house, now known as Madison House, that President James Madison sought refuge in August 1814 when the British burned the White House and other public buildings in Washington, D.C.<sup>3</sup> Later Caleb and Henrietta lived at Bloomfield, a house in Sandy Spring which had belonged to the Thomas family.<sup>4</sup> Bentley was also one of the charter members of the Brookeville Academy and treasurer of the Board of the Academy.<sup>5</sup> Bentley died in 1851 at the age of 89.<sup>6</sup> Of the three men Bentley was the most involved in the operation of the Triadelphia mills.

Isaac Briggs was born in Haverford, Pennsylvania, in 1763, the son of Samuel and Mary Ashton Briggs. He received a bachelor's degree from Pennsylvania College (now the University of Pennsylvania) in 1783 and a master's degree in 1786. At the time of his marriage to Hannah Brooke on August 27, 1794, he was identified as Isaac Briggs of Georgetown, printer.<sup>7</sup> Isaac and Hannah lived at Sharon, a simple log house built by Isaac with the aid of his father and located between Olney and Sandy Spring. Soon after his marriage he taught at a little log schoolhouse in Sandy Spring.<sup>8</sup> With Andrew Ellicott he surveyed and laid out the city of Washington according to the plans of Major L'Enfant and George Washington.<sup>9</sup> He became a close friend of Thomas Jefferson, who appointed him Surveyor General of the Louisiana Purchase. He also served as Chief Engineer of the Rome-to-Utica section of the Erie Canal and for a time of the James River and Kanawha Canal. When the latter project was completed, Briggs returned home to work on the Chesapeake and Ohio Canal. Before surveying of that canal was completed, Briggs and all of his workers became ill. Briggs was never able to return to work and died of malarial fever at home in 1825.<sup>10</sup>

Thomas Moore was born in Waterford, Virginia, on June 12, 1760, the son of Thomas and Elizabeth Moore. His parents had come to Pennsylvania from Ireland in the middle of the eighteenth century. They then moved to

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3. Jean Barfield and Alice Koch, "Madison House, Seat of Government for a Day," The Montgomery County Story, Vol. 25, No. 4, November 1982.
  4. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 108.
  5. "The Bentley Family," handwritten manuscript, Montgomery County Historical Society.
  6. Montgomery County Wills, Book HH 3, p. 262.
  7. Robert Barnes, "Maryland Marriages, 1778-1800" (Baltimore, Maryland: Genealogical Publishing Company, 1978), p. 25.
  8. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 283.
  9. Ella Kent Barnard, "Isaac Briggs, A.M., F.A.P.S., (1763-1825)," Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. VII, No. 4, December 1912, p. 409.
  10. Ibid., pp. 409-419.

Loudoun County, Virginia, and named the place where they lived Waterford after their home town in Ireland. Thomas Moore, Sr., was a merchant and a miller; his son worked as a cabinet maker.<sup>11 12</sup>

Thomas Moore married Mary Brooke on September 21, 1791. Their home, called Longwood, was located between Olney and Brookeville.<sup>13</sup> A man of many talents and interests, Moore soon established himself as an expert on improved methods of agriculture. It is reported that men came from long distances to witness the deep plowing that Moore accomplished with a mammoth plow of his own invention and to admire his fine stock of cattle and fields of red-clover, timothy, and corn.<sup>14</sup> Moore is also recognized as the holder of the first patent issued to a Montgomery County resident. In 1803, he was issued a patent for a device he called a refrigerator and which he claimed would help farmers keep their dairy products fresh while being hauled to market.<sup>15</sup>

In 1805, Moore was paid \$24,000 to construct the causeway from Mason's Island (now Roosevelt Island) to the Virginia shore of the Potomac River. Soon after that assignment, he was employed by the U. S. Government to lay out the National Road from Cumberland to Ohio. In 1819, he became Chief Engineer of the State of Virginia and of the James River and Kanawha Canal. He too contracted a fever which brought on his death in October 1822 at the age of 63.<sup>16</sup>

In 1809, Moore and Bentley began to amass tracts of land on the Patuxent River. On January 3, 1809, they made their first purchase: 80 acres of "What's Left" was bought from Richard Dorsey and his wife Anne for \$1950.<sup>17</sup> The land straddled the Patuxent River, some of it in Montgomery County and some of it in Anne Arundel County (now Howard County). The deed mentions buildings, improvements, woods, ways, waters and water courses, and there was probably a mill on the site prior to the time Moore and Bentley acquired it. Indeed Dennis Griffith's 1795 map of Maryland shows a mill on the west side of the Patuxent River in this vicinity. On July 24, 1811, a 42½ acres tract of land was surveyed for Moore and Bentley and

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11. Thomas, op.cit., p. 322.

12. J. Thomas Scharf, "History of Western Maryland," (Baltimore, Maryland: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), reprint of 1882 edition, Vol. I, p.681.

13. Farquhar, op.cit., p.209.

14. Scharf, op.cit., p. 681.

15. Mark Walston, "Montgomery County Inventors and Inventions, 1803-1873," The Montgomery County Story, Vol. 29, No. 4, November 1986, p. 3.

16. Scharf, op.cit., p. 681.

17. Montgomery County Land Records, Book O, pp. 285-287 and Book Q, pp. 12-14 and Anne Arundel County Land Records, Book WSG 1, pp. 506ff.

called "Accommodation."<sup>18</sup> There is no record that this tract was ever patented. Later that same year the two men purchased slightly more than two acres from Stephen Penn and Eleanor his wife for \$29.88.<sup>19</sup> In 1813, Moore and Bentley added 160 acres of "Benjamin's Lot" which they purchased from Allen Green for \$2400.<sup>20</sup>

On these four contiguous tracts Moore and Briggs laid out the town of Triadelphia on the Montgomery County side of the Patuxent River. The original community consisted of nine houses, a general store, a saw mill, a grist mill, and the mill race in a rocky gorge just below Cattail Creek. Some of the houses were substantial stone and brick houses. A 275-acre farm on land at a higher elevation was also a part of the community. For a short time Isaac Briggs and his wife lived in Triadelphia, the only one of the three partners to do so.<sup>21</sup>

The establishment of Triadelphia occurred at a period in history when conditions were forcing an increase in manufacturing activity. In 1807, after fighting between the British warship "Leopold" and the U. S. Frigate "Chesapeake" brought on by the British impressment of sailors, President Jefferson got Congress to pass an Embargo Act forbidding all ships to clear American ports. Thus arose the necessity for the United States to become more self-sufficient. Whitney's recent invention of the cotton gin and the success of some cotton manufacturing in Rhode Island led several entrepreneurs in Baltimore to organize the Union Manufacturing Company. By 1810, Maryland had eleven cotton and woolen mills, including three in Baltimore, one in Washington County and one at Triadelphia.<sup>22</sup>

Little information can be found about the operation of the Triadelphia mills in the early days. The following description was written by Isaac Briggs in 1812-1813. "Our force of water is amply sufficient for driving a grist mill of 2 pair of stones, a saw mill and a cotton spinning mill of 5,000 spindles; and we have convenient room for all these mills. An adequate dam and race are already made. A grist mill of one pair of stones and a saw mill are now in complete operation. A cotton spinning mill is erected calculated for 1200 spindles in which we now employ 196 spindles, as already stated ... The profits of this grist mill and saw mill and the rents of houses, I suppose would be equal to the current expenses of our families."<sup>23</sup>

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18. Montgomery County Unpatented Survey No. 2, Maryland State Archives, Annapolis, Maryland.

19. Montgomery County Land Records, Book P, pp. 415-416.

20. Ibid., Book Q, pp. 385-386.

21. Esther B. Stabler, "Triadelphia: Forgotten Maryland Town," Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. XLIII, No. 2, June 1948, pp. 109-110.

22. Richard W. Griffin, "An Origin of the Industrial Revolution in Maryland: The Textile Industry 1789-1826," Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 61, No. 1, March 1966, pp. 25-29.

As Moore and Briggs became more and more involved in other engineering projects, operation of the Triadelphia businesses fell to Bentley. As president of the Triadelphia Company, Bentley received an annual salary of \$1000. Hence the mills became known for a time as the Bentley Company.<sup>24</sup> In 1815 Moore sold 1/12 of his interest in the real estate to Caleb Bentley and another 1/12 to Bernard Gilpin for \$1000 each.<sup>25</sup> On July 26, 1816, John Painter became a co-partner in the firm of Caleb Bentley and Company.<sup>26</sup> In that same year, an Act of the General Assembly of Maryland provided for the laying out of a road from Unity to Triadelphia thence by bridge across the Patuxent River to intersect the road from Roxbury to Elk Ridge Landing.<sup>27</sup> This bridge, plus the privilege granted to Moore and Bentley by Samuel Thomas allowing them "to raise the waters of Patuxent River and back it by dam for the purpose of procuring more and adding additional fall on said river ...",<sup>28</sup> were assets to the business.

A statement of the financial condition of Caleb Bentley and Company, which has survived among the descendants' personal papers, lists debts as \$14,444.62. An estimate of the profits and expenses of the cotton-spinning operation for 1815 projected the spinning of 400 pounds of yarn per week or 20,800 pounds per year which, at 70 cents a pound, would yield income of \$14,560. Projected expenses included \$6489.60 for 24,960 pounds of bale cotton, \$104 for hauling, \$3650 in wages, and \$104 for packing the finished product. After deducting interest owed, this "budget" projected an annual dividend of \$2900.<sup>29</sup>

Accounts vary as to the prosperity of the mills in these early days. Less optimistic reports are confirmed by Caleb Bentley's comments in the 1820 U. S. Census of Manufactures: "The demand now quite equal to what the above machinery in operation can make - The profits as shown from the above statement too small for the capital employed and has not been better for the last four years." The statement reports capital invested as \$30,000. The cotton mill then employed one man, two women, and twelve boys and girls; the annual payroll was \$2300. The 18,000 pounds of cotton, which cost \$3240, was processed by the six carding engines and 444 spindles in operation. The market value of the articles manufactured was \$15,550.

A more optimistic account of the business for the period 1820-1825, written by Charles Brooke at a later date, states: "At that time the

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23. Stabler, op.cit., p. 114.

24. Ibid., p. 113.

25. Montgomery County Land Records, Book S, pp. 414-421.

26. Ibid., Book BS 4, p. 84.

27. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 78.

28. Montgomery County Land Records, Book BS 4, p. 88.

29. Stabler, op.cit., pp. 119-120.

factory, mill and store and farm were busy and a large tenantry could hear the hum of machinery from morning till night. The business was like clock-work in every branch, perfect system prevailing everywhere."<sup>30</sup>

In 1830, after the deaths of Moore, Briggs and John Painter, Bentley was ready to retire. At this time Caleb Bentley's share of the company was 7/12; the heirs of Thomas Moore owned 4/12; and Bernard Gilpin owned the other 1/12. (Briggs may never have had a financial interest in the enterprise. He was not a party to any of the land purchases, and there is no record of a sale of his shares.) The surviving partners, Caleb Bentley and Bernard Gilpin and the heirs of the deceased partners Thomas Moore and John Painter, sold the property and privileges of Triadelphia to Samuel P. Gilpin, the son of Bernard Gilpin, for \$27,600. The deed states that on these contiguous lots were a cotton factory, corn and saw mills, and a number of dwelling houses and other improvements.<sup>31</sup>

The following year Samuel P. Gilpin mortgaged the property.<sup>32</sup> Apparently Gilpin was unable to meet his mortgage payments so the Court of Equity appointed Edward Stabler trustee and authorized the sale of the mortgaged premises of Triadelphia.<sup>33</sup> On September 20, 1836, Stabler sold the property to Edward Painter for \$14,219; apparently this sum was only a partial payment since Painter continued to owe money to Edward Stabler. Painter must have been unable to make a profit and pay off his mortgage since, in early 1840, Edward Painter and his wife Louisa sold the Triadelphia Cotton Factory, so named in this deed, to Thomas Lansdale of Anne Arundel County and Edward Stabler for \$15,000. The deed lists buildings, mills, factories, houses, tenements, machines, machinery and improvements, all water rights, ways, franchises and privileges.<sup>34</sup>

On March 16, 1840, the General Assembly of Maryland passed an Act to incorporate the Montgomery Company. The Act provided: "That Thomas Lansdale, Thomas C. Miller, John Berry, Thomas S. Berry, James Arthen, their associates, successors and assigns, are hereby made, constituted and declared to be a body corporate and politic, by the name and style of the Montgomery Company ..." The Act also granted all the powers, rights and privileges necessary for the purpose of manufacturing cotton, iron and other articles and of vending the same. The Act provided that the capital stock be divided into shares of \$100 each, that the affairs of the company be conducted by a president and four directors, and that general meetings of stockholders be held and that by-laws and regulations for the management of the company be enacted.

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30. Ibid., p. 114.

31. Montgomery County Land Records, Book BS 4, p. 84-89.

32. Ibid., Book BS 4, pp. 238-242.

33. Ibid., Book BS 8, pp. 262-267.

34. Ibid., Book BS 10, pp. 101-103.

With Thomas Lansdale assuming an active management role, the factory and mills once again were under the guidance of a competent engineer and talented inventor. Thomas Lansdale was born in the Berry District of Montgomery County in 1808, the son of Richard Lansdale and his wife Jemima Hyatt. His father moved to Ohio when Thomas was eight years old. At the age of fifteen, Thomas returned to Maryland and lived with his mother's family in Hyattsville. It is said that his father gave him a horse as his sole inheritance when he left Ohio. The horse provided his transportation back to Maryland and, when sold, the money to get his start in life. He got his experience as an apprentice in a cotton factory in Savage, Maryland.<sup>35</sup> He was one of the inventors and builders of the first wood-planing machines. He was also the first to introduce steam into a factory for heating purposes. In 1842 Lansdale came to Triadelphia as superintendent.<sup>36</sup>

In time Lansdale's enterprise and energy made Triadelphia a thriving village of four hundred people.<sup>37</sup> According to Farquhar, in the years before the Civil War, most of the grain in the lower part of the county was ground in the Triadelphia mills. Triadelphia had the only good blacksmith and wheelwright shops for many miles. Mails were brought twice weekly to Triadelphia from Sandy Spring and Ashton on the way to and from Baltimore and Washington.<sup>38</sup> Muslin, cotton duck, and products of the grist mill were hauled regularly to Baltimore by great six- and eight-horse teams, and raw cotton and other supplies were brought back.<sup>39</sup> The cotton duck was probably used for ships' sails. Griffin states: "From 1825 on, as long as the sailing ship was of importance, there was a close relationship between the textile mills and the ship yards of Baltimore."<sup>40</sup>

The success of the business is reflected in the 1850 U. S. manufacturers' census. The cotton factory employed 18 males and 52 females and its 44 looms and 1300 spindles produced 560,000 yards of sheeting annually with a value of \$39,200. The flour and grist mill employed 5 males and produced 1110 bushels of flour and 550 bushels of meal annually, valued at \$8250. The saw and plaster mill turned out 50,000 feet of lumber and 1300 bushels of ground plaster. The blacksmith shop shod horses and manufactured wagons.

In 1911, a story of Triadelphia by an unknown author was published in The Religious Telescope in Dayton, Ohio. Accompanying the article was

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35. Thomas, op.cit., p. 326.

36. Ibid., p. 326.

37. T. H. S. Boyd, "The History of Montgomery County, Maryland, from Its Earliest Settlement in 1650 to 1879" (Baltimore, Maryland: Regional Publishing Company, 1968), reprint of 1879 edition, p. 101.

38. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 317.

39. Thomas, op.cit., p. 324.

40. Griffin, op.cit., p. 36.

a map, a copy of which follows this page, of Triadelphia in 1850 as recalled by the author, who had left Triadelphia at the age of five and returned 50 years later. The map may be more interesting than accurate, although Richard Bentley Thomas described it as "reasonably correct."<sup>41</sup> However, it bears little resemblance to the few details of Triadelphia in the 1865 Martenet and Bond map or in the Hopkins Atlas of 1879.

With this map and the U. S. censuses for 1850 and 1860, some of the residents of Triadelphia can be identified with confidence. George Kinsey and Caleb Musgrove were blacksmiths, William Canby was identified as a manufacturer, Thomas Miller was a merchant, Levi Kinsey and Basil Lewis were millers, Hazel Hobb was a cooper who made barrels and kegs, William Wilson was a wagoner, William Dwyer was a stonemason, Ephraim Brown, Robert Brown and James Dwyer were identified as carpenters. According to the 1860 census, William Grody was the school teacher. Resin Duvall, Edwin Warfield, Grafton Holland and Evan, George and Perry Bowman were farmers.

Our unknown author described some of the features of the town in 1850. In the center of the village was a spring with a dairy house in which the residents kept their milk and butter. The schoolhouse and Odd Fellows' Hall were on different floors of the same building. The Methodist Church was located on a hill just south of town.<sup>42</sup>

Thomas Lansdale remained at Triadelphia only five years. He then went to the Ellicott Mills on the Patapsco River in Baltimore County where he built and operated a cotton factory near Granite, Maryland. During the period of Thomas Lansdale's absence, the mills are said to have been managed by Thomas C. Miller and two Warfield brothers. Allen Bowie Davis was elected president of the company in 1850.<sup>43</sup>

When Thomas Lansdale was unsuccessful in his attempts to purchase the factory at Granite, he returned to Triadelphia in 1856.<sup>44</sup> Lansdale was a member of the State Constitutional Convention of 1864 and was elected to the Maryland Senate in 1865. The U. S. census of 1860 lists Thomas Lansdale as a manufacturer and gives the value of his real estate as \$5500 and of his personal property as \$55,000. Lansdale was married to Harriet Franklin and, in 1860, their six children ranged in age from 24 to 8. The manufacturers' census of 1860 reflects a slight decrease in the products of the mills and in the employment levels but still indicates a sizable operation.

Beginning in 1860, natural disasters and the Civil War took their toll of the mill town. The Montgomery County Sentinel of April 6, 1860,

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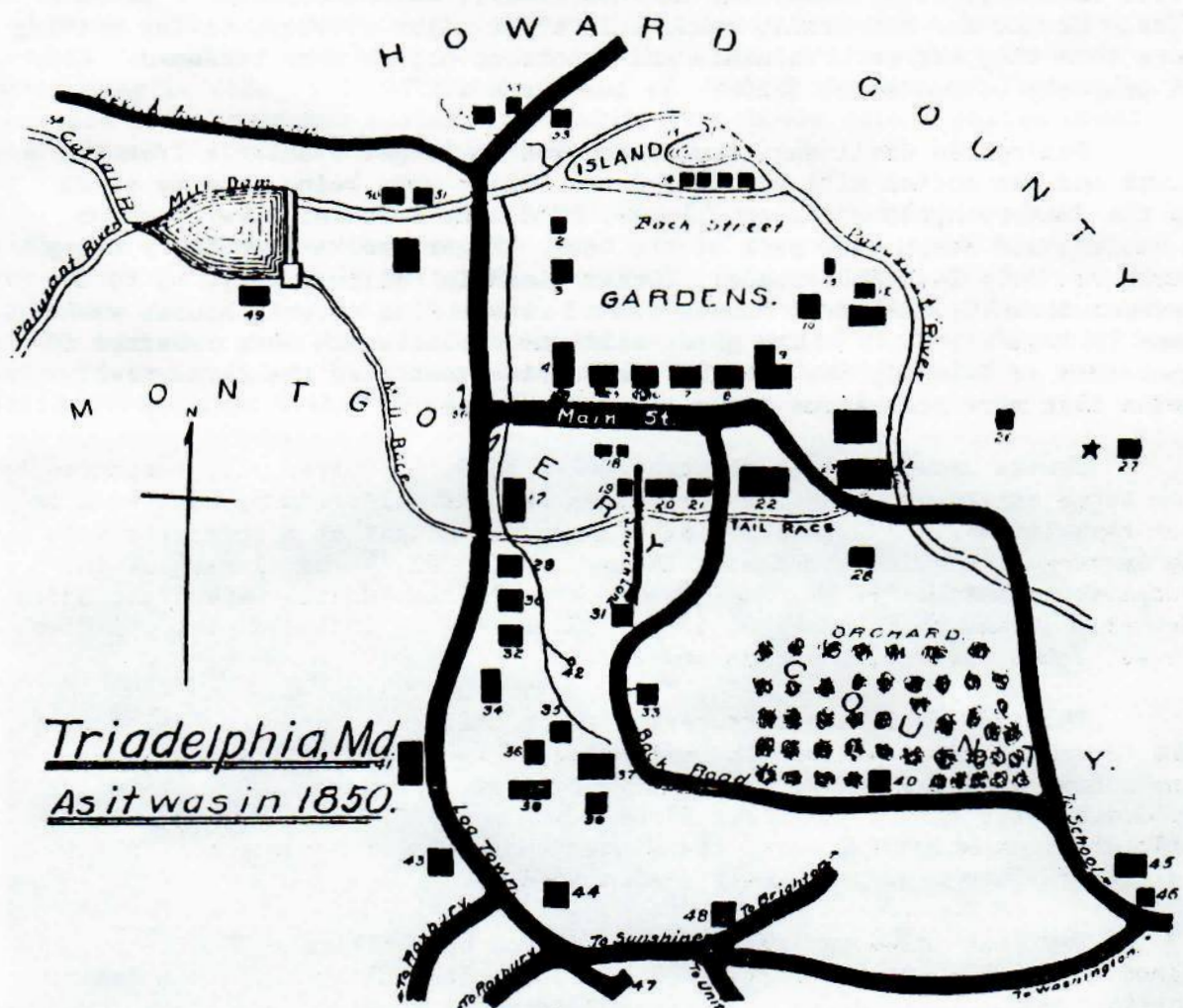
41. Thomas, op.cit., p. 328.

42. The Religious Telescope, Dayton, Ohio, August 23, 1911, Vol. 77, No. 34.

43. Thomas, op.cit., pp. 325-326.

44. Scharf, op.cit., p. 770.





Triadelphia, Md.  
As it was in 1850.

**References.**

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|--------------------------------------|--|--|
| 1 Geotkinsey's Blacksmith Shop.      | 21 Double House of Helm & Ream.            | 41 Double House of Kinsey & McKnew.        |
| 2 Robt. Brown's Log House.           | 22 Factory.                                | 42 Spring.                                 |
| 3 Ossire's Frame House.              | 23 Flour Mill.                             | 43 School House. (Burned Down)             |
| 4 Double House of Brane & Holland.   | 24 Bone & Plaster Mills                    | 44 Uriah Brown's Farm House.               |
| 5 do. do. of Harvey & Bowman.        | Formerly Brown's Chair Factory             | 45 Company Farm House. (Brane)             |
| 6 do. do. of Larman & Wicks.         | 25 Saw Mill.                               | 46 Lime Kiln.                              |
| 7 do. do. of Becker & Wohlen.        | 26 Hazel Hobb's Cooper Shop.               | 47 Mt. Garmel Methodist Church             |
| 8 do. do. of Ganby & Anker.          | 27 Resin Duval's House.                    | 48 Sunshine                                |
| 9 do. do. of Miller & Warfield.      | 28 Wm. Wilson's House                      | 49 Ice House                               |
| 10 Big Gotton House.                 | 29 Turner's Child Drowned                  | 50 Elizabeth Bright (Unlared)              |
| 11 Double House of Dwyer & Musgrove. | 30 Wilson Brown's House 1851-59.           | 51 Oliver Derry (Col. Steamster for Brane) |
| 12 Stables.                          | 31 do. da Cabinet Shop.                    | 52 Gauliflower Cabinet Maker.              |
| 13 Gotten Waste House                | 32 Church.                                 | 53 Old Whiteside House.                    |
| 14 Hog Pens.                         | 33 Widow Barnes' House.                    | 54 Down's House.                           |
| 15 Frog Pond.                        | 34 Meat House.                             | 55 Private School House                    |
| 16 Company Store                     | 35 Frail House.                            | 56 Bell & Everett Pole.                    |
| 17 Odd Fellows Hall (School Below)   | 36 Corn House.                             | 57 Sycamore Trees                          |
| 18 Spring and Dairies                | 37 Carriage House.                         | 58 } Burn Where Wheat was Flailed          |
| 19 Mrs. Lewis' House                 | 38 Stables Where Big Mule Teams Were Kept. | 59 White Oak Tree.                         |
| 20 Perego's Double House.            | 39 Hay Barrack                             | * Indicates Place of Explosion             |
|                                      | 40 Old Tobacco House                       |  |

Map of Triadelphia from The Religious Telescope of August 23, 1911

reported: "About 2 o'clock on Monday morning last, the dwelling of Mr. Thos. Lansdale, at Triadelphia, in this county, was discovered to be on fire. Mr. L. and his family escaped in their night clothes, saving nothing more than they had on. Valuable and important papers were consumed. Loss of property estimated at \$2500. No insurance ..."

During the Civil War, raw cotton was no longer available from the South and the cotton mill was shut down. Plans were being made to start up the factory again when, on July 24, 1868, the Patuxent River went on a rampage and swept away part of the town. Roger Brooke Farquhar's diary entry for July 24, 1868, reads: "Great flood in Ellicott City, 40 to 60 persons drowned; number of houses washed away. Also several houses washed away in Triadelphia."<sup>45</sup> The grist mill and a blacksmith shop remained in operation at Triadelphia, and the post office continued the three weekly mails that more prosperous times had made necessary.<sup>46</sup>

Thomas Lansdale died on October 24, 1878,<sup>47</sup> "universally respected by the large circle of operatives, business men and politicians, with whom he was associated ..."<sup>48</sup> In 1879 the Company was bought at a sheriff's sale by Harriet F. Lansdale, widow of Thomas, for \$6000.<sup>49</sup> Management of the company was assumed by her son, Thomas Franklin Lansdale. He married Eliza Wimberly Strain on February 5, 1880.<sup>50</sup> Their family included five children, James, John, Richard, Cornelia and Chloe.

The 1880 U. S. manufacturers' census reflects the operation of only the flour and grist mills. The mills had a capacity of 75 bushels a day. The normal work day was 12 hours and the daily wage was \$1.00. The mills produced wheat flour, buckwheat flour, corn meal, feed and hominy. The mill did "custom work," which means that the customer brought his grain to the mill and took home the finished product.

The final blow to Triadelphia occurred at the time of the Johnston flood, May 1889. On the morning of the 31st, "a dashing rainstorm began, continuing for twenty-four hours with increasing fury of wind and volumes of water. The heavy pall of black clouds, the steady downpour, and the shrieking blast, filled one with a feeling of terror."<sup>51</sup> Local newspaper

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45. "The Diary of Roger Brooke Farquhar of Montgomery County, Maryland, Part III," The Montgomery County Story, Vol. II, No. 4, November 1958.

46. Stabler, op.cit., p. 118.

47. The Montgomery County Sentinel, November 1, 1878.

48. Boyd, op.cit., p. 101.

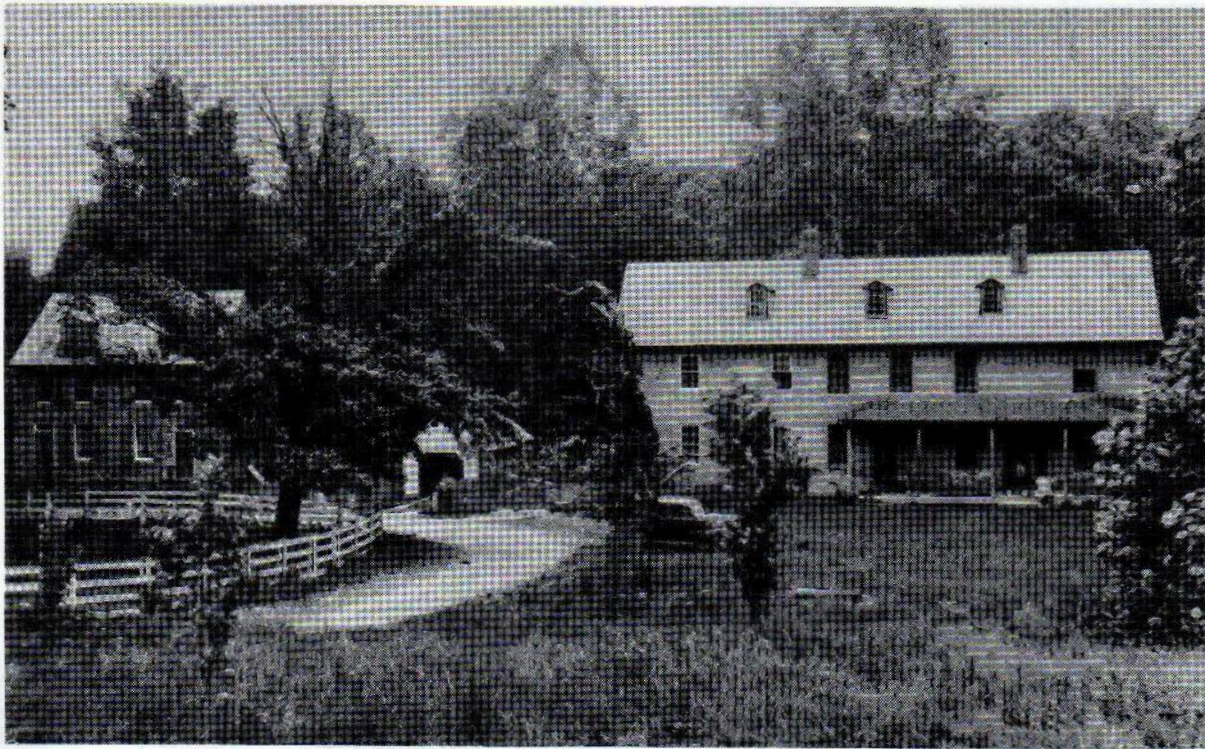
49. Montgomery County Land Records, Book EBP 23, p. 173.

50. The Montgomery County Sentinel, February 13, 1880.

51. "Annals of Sandy Spring" (Baltimore, Maryland: Thomas & Evans), Vol. II, 1902, p. 161.

reports on the destruction caused by the storm focus more on the calamity at Johnstown, Pennsylvania, than on local damage. The Sentinel briefly reported: "Thomas Lansdale's mill, at Triadelphia, received damage that amounts to a wreck and his house was flooded, his family wading in water waist deep to make their escape from it."<sup>52</sup> One of the sons of Thomas F. Lansdale later told his children of leaving the house with a pillow under one arm and a rooster under the other.

Although the Lansdale family did not live at Triadelphia after 1889, the property remained in the ownership of Harriet Lansdale and her estate until it was sold by trustees to Percy Garland Ligon in 1923.<sup>53</sup> The Lansdales and the Ligon probably farmed the land after 1890 while the site of the old town down along the river became a favorite place for picnicking, swimming and camping.<sup>54</sup> Two houses, shown in the photograph below, were still standing in 1941.



Triadelphia Houses in 1940

In 1942 Ligon sold the property to the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission<sup>55</sup> for the construction of the Brighton Dam and the creation of

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52. The Montgomery County Sentinel, June 7, 1889.

53. Montgomery County Land Records, Book 332, p. 63.

54. Farquhar, op.cit., p. 317.

55. Montgomery County Land Records, Book 882, p. 61.

Triadelphia Lake to insure an adequate water supply for the growing population of Montgomery and Prince George's Counties.

Today the Washington Suburban Sanitary Commission maintains picnic facilities at the dam and camping and boating facilities farther up river. Although the waters of the lake cover the ruins of the town, two reminders of Triadelphia can still be seen today. The Triadelphia cemetery was recently discovered on the WSSC property. It can be reached by a long trek through the woods from Triadelphia Lake Road. The Triadelphia bell hangs at the Sherwood High School in Sandy Spring. Purchased in the 1840's for the Montgomery Company, this bell, manufactured by G. H. Holbrook, Medway, Massachusetts, in 1837, was used to call the mill hands to their daily work. After the 1889 flood, the bell fell into disuse until 1902. In that year, Alice Farquhar, principal of Sherwood School, raised \$50 to acquire the bell. The bell was then installed at the Sherwood School, where it was used for 50 years to call students to class.

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have contributed to this Story. Special thanks are due Eleanor Cook and Sheila Cochran, who assisted with the research. Personnel at the Sandy Spring Museum were generous with their time in making their files available. Thomas F. Lansdale of Sandy Spring, Richard H. Lansdale of Bethesda, and Elizabeth Hill Cagle of Towson, Maryland, great-grandchildren of Thomas Lansdale, provided family facts. The information on the Triadelphia bell was obtained from the Office of the Watershed Manager at Brighton Dam. The support and cooperation of all these persons are greatly appreciated.

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