

History of St. Michaels to 1800

by Irma Harper

In the years of researching from historic research and genealogical research I've had a lot of interesting experiences, and as a researcher, most of us are intelligent, but also devious and sneaky especially when we want to accomplish a mission. I have been known to use all sorts of things to get to a place of, or point of research that I want to get to. Several years ago I was interested in a family in Concordia Parish, Louisiana and had given it considerable thought, had written some letters, very unsatisfactory. So my husband and I went on vacation and low and behold we woke up one morning in a hotel in Matches, Mississippi, which is right across the river from Concordia Parish, Louisiana. He was surprised. I wasn't. Anyway we spent the night and during the evening, I explained to him how we happened to be here. So he agreed to go along. He's very good about that. The next morning we left the motel, he started the car, and I said "wait a minute, I forgot to ask for directions". I said keep the motor running. I dashed back into the motel, and I said to the clerk, she was a very southern lady, "could you direct me to the courthouse at Concordia?" "Yes", she said, "it's right directly across the bridge from Matches. You cross the bridge, and when you get over the other side, there will be Vidalia, a little town. The courthouse is the white building on the right hand side, you can't miss it." Of course with her words trailing in my ears, out the door I ran, hopped in the car and away we went across the bridge. Sure enough when we crossed the bridge, there in the little town of Vidalia, the big white building appeared on the right hand side and my husband parked the car. He said that he would kill a few hours walking around the town; and in the building I went. It was early. Most courthouses are active by 8:30, certainly by 9:00. It was around 9:00, I walked into a central hall that just didn't seem right, it didn't look right and I felt ill at ease. There were a table and a couple chairs up in the center hall, the office doors were all closed and I walked down the central hall... Clerk of Court's Office, Register of Wills Office on the doors. I stood there but I was aware that there was no activity, and I thought this is odd. Maybe its a holiday, but the doors were open. I waited a few more minutes and I entered the office that said Clerk of the Court and when I opened the door and walked in, I thought that perhaps I was in the middle of a nightmare. I couldn't believe what I saw. The room was entirely empty. The shelves were empty, no books, no clerks. There was a broom and mop laying on the floor, and a couple empty cartons. The window blinds were all askew, so I stood there a moment in shock, backed out into the hall and shut the door. About that time the door opened down at the end of the corridor, another outside door, and a young lady approached and she said, in this lovely southern voice, "May I help you?",

and I said, "I'm looking for the Register of Wills Office, but I don't know where I am". And she said, "Oh we built a new courthouse three years ago. Its down on the right on the right-hand side in a big white building. You can't miss it".

So the experiences have been wonderful, and I have enjoyed this research about St. Michael's. We might use an old adage, that I know you've all heard of and probably when you were children learned for the first time. For the want of a nail, a shoe was lost, and for the want of a shoe, a horse was lost, and it goes on. Well we will paraphrase that in reverse, and using St. Michael's to say because of a Saint a river was named, and because of a river a hundred was named, and because of the hundred a church was named, and because of the church the town was named. So if that would help you to keep it in context how St. Michael's came to be.

To cover a little bit of Maryland history, so that we get a full background I'm just going to go briefly through it. Maryland was a charter colony granted to George Calvert in 1632 and his son Cecilous Calvert sent the first colonist in 1634. But prior to this, the royal colony of Virginia to the south of the new colony, Maryland had established a trading post on Kent Island in 1629. From 1629 to 1662, a controversy arose over the ownership of Kent Island, with Virginia claiming it and the colonists of course claiming it. This was finally settled in 1662 by new patents and an oath of allegiance of the settlers on Kent Island. At the same time, or a few years earlier, a group of Puritans from Virginia came into Maryland because of religious tolerance here in Maryland and they settled in Anne Arundel County. From there, came across to Kent Island. I'll give you a picture of the background of the colonists of Kent Island, and from that time those settlers on Kent Island eyed the main land across the water, they were very interested in the land across the Wye River and the land that extended up along the St. Michael's River on both sides. The first grants that were issued in this area were in 1658 and the surveys for those grants called the river St. Michael's River. Now of course St. Michael's is one of the patron Saints of the Church of England, and the rents that were due on the plantations were paid on the two highest feast days, the one for the Virgin Mary in the spring, the Easter Feast Day, and the one for the feast day of St. Michael's in September. The homes that were established were first, they were palisaded forts. They were actually like little forts with palisades surrounding them, not only to protect the people from the Indians, but also to keep the livestock inside. During the day, stock was let out to roam at large, and were identified with owner's marks. They were notches, cuts, slits in ears and some were branded. Of course, primarily our water ways served as a means of transportation and they sailed down these rivers out across the bay to Saint Mary's which is where the first courts were held. Now under the Conditions of Plantation, as they were called the Calverts offered fifty acres

of land to every settler that came over. That was man, women or child. It was whether you paid your own way, or whether you came as an indentured servant. Indenture is a contract. Servant was a name that was tacked onto anyone who, served in the contract. It has become demeaning to some people to learn that their ancestors were indentured servants. It wasn't demeaning, all sorts of people came under indentureships. After the service, terms of service, which usually extended from the time of your arrival to the age 21, or sometimes from 5 to 7 years if you were an older person. You were awarded a suit of clothing, (this was the law), a bushel of corn, and 50 acres of land. If you were lucky and didn't promise somebody that you had been working for or were associated with, you were, you received your money. But the people who paid for their own way, they also were entitled 50 acres of land along with the ship's captains, and the freighting companies. So sometimes the land of one person, with their entry into the county, was given to three people. In other words the freighting company got 50 acres for the person, the captain of the ship got 50 acres, and the person himself received it. So at this time, of course a lot of people have put a lot of (lets see what I want to - strife, not strife because they didn't use it that way). Anyway, in the story about the convicts, and I for one don't believe that, I refuse to say that we were established by convicts. Most of them were political prisoners that came over. Some of them were taken from the jails of London, but most of the time the courts over there said, you either go to the jail or go over to the new colony.

As I said, the establishment of the land grants in Talbot County brought about a need for a court system over here and in 1662 Talbot County became an established county. The records show that courts met here at private homes, and in 1669 is the first mention of a St. Michael's Hundred. In the court records of that time, they, the entry said that John Newnam was to act as Constable of St. Michael's Hundred. In 1671 the record again shows that Isaac Abrams was ordered to be constable of St. Michael's Hundred. So there we have the Hundred around St. Michael's River. The court days, and as I said it was a circulating court, must be the good old days when everybody went to court to see what was going on, and court, believe it or not was like a modern soap opera. There was slander, scandal cases, suits over land, suits over defamation of character, suits where the people had said the King of England wasn't any good. Anything that could be tried was brought into court. The justices meted justice swiftly. For instance, this entry for a servant of Dr. James Benson, who owned land directly to the south of St. Michael's: It says Jane Tomlinson has been censured for having a bastard child and being therefore convict, it is therefore ordered by the court that the said Jane be carried to a public whipping post, and there to have 30 lashes well laid upon her bare back, and the Sheriff to serve the execution thereof, and the sentence was carried out.

There were wolves and bears prevalent here. They had levies their heads. They were given 200 lbs of tobacco for every head that was brought in. Of course with the growth of tobacco, there became a need for a transfer of, in trade, of the tobacco from one person to another, and they wrote pieces of paper, like receipts. In other words, it said, "I obligate myself for 2000 lbs tobacco payable when the crop is due or payable when the crop is sold to another person. That man in turn gave that to someone else as currency. Tobacco bills was our first paper money. That's how they got into establishing and issuing paper money. When people died and the estates were put in for probate, all the tobacco bills that had been issued by the deceased were called in. Of course it created bedlam, because they had gone to three or four different people. It meant that you may be holding a tobacco bill from someone in the next county, and if you didn't know that he was deceased, and after the probate time was up, then your currency was no good. So there we have what was the first rubber money, you would call it. So this is a typical estate bill of Alexander Maxwell, a tailor, who presented a bill against the estate of Thomas Williams. To two yards of crating cloth for making a surge suit, 60 pounds of tobacco; for making a cloth coat, 70 pounds; for making a flying coat, (you'd think it was coat that has flip tails, I don't know what a flying coat was), 50 pounds; for three yards of ribbon, 24 pounds; for making your daughter a suit, 80 pounds; for altering two petticoats, 20 pounds; for making you another suit, 60 pounds; and for threading silk, 30 pounds. Of course that was paid from the estate.

Now getting back to the land and this is primarily what we are most interested about. The land was issued at first through three different processes. The first was the warrant, and that merely said that somebody had applied for 50 acres or 100 acres or whatever they were to receive. The word came back from Lord Baltimore that the warrant was issued and then the surveyor or deputy surveyor laid off the land. After the survey was made, the survey certificate was entered and a certificate or patent was issued for the land. The surveyor started from usually a tree which was called the first bounded tree and it was notched with the number of notches in the survey. They read 2 over 2, 4 over 4, meaning that 2 courses are on the northern bearing and 2 courses are on the southern bearing, or 4 courses on the northern bearing and 4 courses on the southern bearing. Some of the surveys that I've read, read 12 over 12 and when you start the plat then you're really into something. The first survey, or certificate of survey, was issued here in 1664 for The Beach. This was the long black line right over here to the left, runs down here. It was approximately a mile long from the present location of the Yacht Club and ran almost to the vicinity of Seymour Avenue which is where the . It was 413 feet wide, a mile long and it was called "The Beach" because it took in the beach, which is really about as far from the audience here now, and of course extended back to the water. Like I said, at the yacht

club, and took in this area here which was a beach, which is Porter street, and far as what was later called Church Creek.

The second one that came in 1666 was Chance. By the way, you will notice that these are either all rectangles or squares. In other words, they were four courses in the survey. Chance was survey for a man named, I don't know his name anymore, but anyway he was from up in Queen Anne's County. It later came down to a man named George Taylor by and he plays an important part in our story tonight. In 1667 a man named Christopher Stopper who had an Inn over on the other side of the Miles River had 50 acres surveyed for what is now the center of St. Michael's. It extended again from water the here, which is the harbor, to the water of what we call back creek, Santa Domingo Creek. All the surveys touched on water, either at one or two or three points if you were lucky. In 1675 a doctor, Dr. Humphrey Davenport, surveyed his track some 400 and some acres which is Perry Cabin Farm today. In 1681, Hughes Sherwood, which is not on here but I want to just bring this in to show you and tell you something about that. He surveyed Crooked Intentions. The name Crooked Intentions means a lot of different things to a lot of different people. But to me it says, Crooked Intentions is not a true rectangle or in other words the sides are not parallel, and to me it says my intention is crooked, in other words it doesn't mean that I'm dishonest, but that the lines were not correct. In 1681, Bently Hay, which we all know that name, it touched on the boarder here and ran out not quite to the river, Miles River. In '81 again, John Hatton, who surveyed Bently Hay surveyed Hatton Storm which lies to the south of town on that side. Then in 1695 Edward Elliot surveyed Elliot's Lot and then in 1695 again, John Hatton discovered this section that was not taken up by anyone and he surveyed it and called it Jane's Province. His wife was Jane Hatton. She was Jane Isner before she was married, and this land, the center line here runs up that way. George Taylor who I told you about a while ago who owned Chance in 1695, he discovered that between Crooked Intentions and Chance between 100 acres land, that hadn't been taken up and he patented that and named it Taylor and Jane's Discovery. It has been said by some historians, I have not been able to verify that he named it, because Jane Hatton was a kinswoman of his. Now like I said, I haven't been able to verify that, but he certainly did put some woman's name on there named Jane.

Now of course with the Church of England being the church in name, they decided that it really needed to have some work done on the enlarging of the parishes and trying to get more people into the congregation. In 1672 a man named James Clayland was sent here from England. A minister and a surveyor Andrew Skinner, who was a cannor originally from York, England, gave him 50 acres of land called Fourth Neck on Worton's Creek. Now Worton's Creek is up across the river on the, lets see I don't know how to tell you exactly, but its out toward

Eastern Bay more and I believe that this was the sight of the first worship in the St. Michael's Hundred. In other words, the beginning of the St. Michael's parish was at this sight. The parish was said to be 10 miles wide and 30 miles long. I believe that because it was closer to Kent Island, and was a development down in this section, it hadn't been accomplished that the first place of worship was up there. In 1692 the order came from the Church of England to establish all churches in Talbot County in or near ports. Now St. Peter's Church was over in the eastern part of Talbot County and refused to be moved, because they were a well established parish with a large congregation, and at this time again, it is my belief that the Church in St. Michael's was built. I think that they realized that this was an excellent site for a church because it was afforded between two bodies of water. This one leading down into Broad Creek and out into the Tred Avon that way, and then of course this one by the waters from all up around Wye Island and down around Claiborne. There are no records that I can find that establishes the church in St. Michael's before 1692. Reverend Barnes succeeded James Clayland. His records are in existence of his baptismal services, marriages, births and deaths. Now the Church of England hired Edward Elliot, Senior to build their church. He was a carpenter and he was affiliated with the Quakers, but he was not a working Quaker. I can't find any record of him being a working Quaker. He was a relative of William Elliot, who was a great Quaker leader and who was established on Kent Island. The records of course say that Edward Elliot built the first church. Doctor Gray who was assistant to the Bishop of London at this time realized ministers libraries needed to have new books in them. So in 1696 there are records that are still in existence of the packing and freighting and the straw that was used to ship new books to, for parochial libraries, over here. In Talbot County 25 were sent to St. Paul's, 15 to St. Peters, and 13 to St. Michael's. It doesn't say, it says to the St. Michael's Parish again, not to St. Michael's as a town. Then Doctor Gray decided to visit the colony to see how his idea was working. In his visit, it has been said that he learned of a need for additional libraries. So in 1701 he sent over, what was called the Layman's Library. He sent 20 different volumes of 20 different titles to 9 different locations, and they were all alike except St. Mary's, St. Michael's, and St. George's. Now St. Mary's and St. George's is on the western shore. Of course, St. Michael's is our parish. These three parishes each received 300 additional copies of books. Some of the books, by the way, if you might be interested are, one of them is *'Ashton's Deathbed Repentance - The Divine Art of Prayer' this forces on Ye nature necessity and the benefit of the sacraments*; *"The Dwartkins Familiar Guide - accounts of these societies where the reformation of manners"*; *"Short Vindications - Earnest Persuasive to the Observation of Lord's Day"*; *"Kind Cautions - Profane Swears"* *"Rebukes to the Scene of Uncleanliness"* *"St. Sypriene's Discourse on Unity"* sounds like really heavy reading. But is what is of interest to us is that I

thought this was really something, it says that St. Michael's only received 5 copies of "*Serious Flaws to the Quakers*", and "*The Christian's Daily Devotion*", of which he sent 50 additional copies. So we learn a little bit more about St. Michael's.

Now to get back to the history of our land. Christian Stopper who owned this piece of land called Stopper evidently died and testated without heirs because this land became what they call as cheap, in other words, it was returned literally to Lord Baltimore, who was called the Lord of the Soil, he owed all the land. This was found in its cheap condition by Joseph Harrison, who was the son of Robert Harrison of Crooked Intention and he had married Elizabeth Ashcroft, who was Edward Elliot's granddaughter. So you seem, the families already are beginning to develop a little history. The land, this land right here, after it was re-patented by Joseph Harrison, and called Joseph's Lot, remained in the Harrison family from 1741 to the early 1800s. After the 1800 it was leased. Very little of the land was sold until the late 1800.

Now getting back to John and Jane Hatton, who owned Jane's Province, Hatton's Garden, and Bently Hay. They had between them they believed, by two marriages by Jane - seven known daughters, and possibly another one; having eight daughters. They had seven son-in-laws and when John Hatton died he left everything he owned to Jane. Jane died without a will, so you can imagine what happened then. All the son-in-laws and all the daughters got into the act. The daughters had married Whales, Harringtons, Roberts, Cocklys, and Hughes. Now of these names, Whales and Harrington are still prevalent in this county today. David Hughes who married one of John Hatton's daughters left his land to John Hughes and I'm not going to get into the division of land because its a little bit too much in detail. But John Hughes was the Sexton of the Church here in St. Michael's. After John Hatton surveyed this land, and this by the way I neglected to tell you, is the location of the church. They gave them two acres of land eventually. But when John Hatton surveyed his land they discovered that his survey covered the land where the church was. Of course in order to put the right of ownership in the Church of England in 1744 John Hughes gave as a deed of gift to the Church of England these two acres of land. At the same time George Taylor, who I said a while ago was supposed to be related to Jane Hatton, gave these two hundred acres of land by this time to one of Hughes boys too. So the Hughes family at that time owned a great deal of land here in St. Michael's. In 1754 John Hughes who was the Sexton died. I want to read to you the valuation of his property because it gives you a picture of what this was like in this area. The valuation says that these two men who were the appraisers of the estate entered the estate and this is what they found. One log dwelling house 20 feet long by 16 feet wide; one old tobacco house 30 feet long, 20 feet wide, worth repairing, (all the tobacco houses were worth repairing in these things, by the way); 15 old apple trees; 4 young

pear trees; two young cherry trees, 500 panels of good fencing, (they called a rail a panel); 537 panels of old fencing. They determined that the rent was to be 400 lbs of tobacco, and the guardian who was Peter Richardson was to be allowed to clear 8 acres on each side of the plantation. Now while the orphans, in any of these estates where small, or until they reached their majority, every year these evaluations had to be made and recorded with the court. So I thought this would show you what this small plantation was like. John Hughes inventory which is also a picture of life again here, contained a Best bed with a green rug, two sheets, two blankets, an old bolster, an old pillow, a bedstead hide and cord. The rug was not a floor rug, it was a heavy woven rug that laid over the top of the bed for warmth. They were called bed rugs. The bedstead hide and cord speaks for itself. The beds were wooden laced with cord, that of course had an animal hide laid underneath of it. The bolster is not a bolster like we envision a bolster today, like a pillow. A bolster is a deep feather tickling that went over the whole bed. He also had 4 old beds, 12 lbs of best pewter. Pewter came in grades, 13 lbs of second best pewter, 12 lbs of very old pewter; a box iron and heater, 12 earthen pots and jugs; 14 lbs of hog lard; 9 quarts of honey; 3 lbs of dirty bees wax; 2 earthen jars and a parcel of earthenware; 7 lbs of bread and a 1 lb. of wool; a parcel of trenches and 8 bottles. By the way, bottles are very important in inventory.

Glass was hard to come by and everybody valued their bottles. An iron pot and a pair of fire tongs; some yarn, thread; 57 lbs of iron hot metals; they weighed their pots, by the way that was made up into pots and everything, they just weighed them to get a value weight; a hattel and a pair of wool cards; 26 lbs of tanned wolves leather; 3 linen wheels; 6 old cycles; 5 lbs of pewter, which would probably be a melted lump that hadn't been recycled yet; 18 sheets of writing paper. Another high priced commodity was paper. A drum line and hook. They went fishing with a drum line, (I thought that was interesting); a looking glass, another thing that was highly priced, because looking glasses came over from the ships from England, and I suppose if you got one here without breaking it was really a treasure; an old cubbard; an old table; a cradle; and this is something new in this inventory that is very unusual, a Cricket stool. Now we usually associate Cricket stools with New England, but John Hughes had a Cricket stool in St. Michael's in 1754. He had a cotton wheel; 8 bushel of potatoes; 9 1/2 lbs. of unpicked cotton, that meant unseeded cotton; he had blacksmith's tools; a hand mill; cows; calves; pigs; a stallion; 2 mares; a canoe; a parcel of unbroken flax. He left a servant boy named William Kendall with 2 years and 7 months left of service. Now that may sound a little sad to us today, but it wasn't unusual.

- Side 2 -

He was from Liverpool, Lancaster County, England and it was captained by Richard Jennings. On board was a man named James Braddock. He was styled merchant with power of attorney,

dated August 1774 from the Firm of James Gilhart & Gaywith of Liverpool. It gave Braddock the authority to represent and collect debts from particularly two men, George Glebes, a merchant and one Mose Straper, late of Maryland province, a merchant. The Power of Attorney was filed in Easton at the courthouse January 6, 1775. The first transaction that I can find for a James Braddock was that on January 24. Following of this Power of Attorney, he bought a Negro slave called, Memory from James Wrightson, who was a resident of St. Michael's. In 1775 from George Glebes the merchant, he was sent over here to collect debts from, he bought 21 1/2 acres of Chance and Jane's Province, which was part of this land here and here. This land by that time had been split up into different owners. But by 1775 he was in trouble, because we were approaching the war with England. His ship, Johnson, that was bringing in the supplies and bringing in trade goods, was forbidden to land. Braddock and some people from St. Michael's waited on his ship and talked with the Captain and he told the Captain you have to turn around and go back. You cannot land with the goods that are on board. There was a conversation and they decided that since the orders on the papers had come down, the new law didn't cover indentured servants. Some convicts were on board that they could land that. James Braddock brought them ashore. In 1776 he bought more of Chance and Jane's Province from George Glebes and then in '77 bought part of Elliot's Lot which is this land here 44 1/2 acres. So you can see what he was doing, he bought this 44 1/2 of this, he bought that, he bought more of this other there. (She's showing them a map) In 1777 again he bought from a man named Hopkins 21 3/4 acres of "The Beach", that was this land here. Harrison --- (cough) --- 50 acres. So in 1778 the final acquisition by Braddock was made and it concerned this land right here. This land which was 35 acres, this land right in the center and part of this beach land by this time. A sea captain named Weatherall had purchased that from the Hughes family, and Weatherall died without heirs and his whereabouts were unknown. He owed a lot of money. They went to the Maryland Delegate and asked that his land be sold to satisfy his debts. James Braddock purchased that 35 acres of land that makes up St. Mary's Square today. Of course, part of the town to the south for 1550 lbs of current money. That was Maryland currency. He laid all that part of the town, right here this 35 acres was his first plot and began selling lots in 1778. I think its of interest to note that he served in the 38th Battalion of the Militia under Captain Thomas Hopkins. So he was American by his own will. In other words, he had been touted as a British, loyal British subject he was not. He didn't live to serve in the second term of the militia. He died in 1782 without family. He left his blacksmith's tools to Thomas Wrightson and all the real estate to a man named John Thompson who had married Joseph Harrison's daughter, Mary. So the land was all in the family again. By 1783 according to the tax logs that were taken of the county, there were 9 houses in St.

Michael's. There were homes of a blacksmith, wheelwright, shipwright, carpenters, and several stores, besides private residences. Now St. Michael's was to play an important part in the revolution. There are records of course of privateers that were built here and other ships, but what is new material to me, and has just come to my knowledge is that the government ordered a number of barges to be built to defend Eastern Bay and down around Tilghman's Island. I think some of them even went as far as Shark's Island. It's a probability that some of the barges were built here in St. Michael's. In state record that I just looked at yesterday, and I have been wanting to go into further, says that they were wintered over in Church Creek, Church Cove, and put here for storage and repairs. In the records are receipts for repair work for Robert Richardson and Thomas and William Harrison and Joseph Dalton who were all St. Michael's residents. By the way, Dorchester County has claimed the story to the barges because they have a Church Creek. So this is really a feather in our cap. The 1798 tax roll again, were assessments just like we have today, shows nearly 50 homes here in St. Michael's. The buildings were mostly framed, several brick buildings, and only a few log buildings left. The log buildings and most of the framed buildings ran around 20 feet X 16 feet. Now there's an example of these small houses like some in "Hells Crossings" and there are some others here in town. Listed are shoemaker's shops, a tinter's shop, and an Inn. Windmills, the shipyards, a bolting house, which was used to make flour with, and a tobacco inspection warehouse. The grass areas around the houses were called pastures. Now this was the sight. St. Michael's was probably on the site of an Indian portage, which you can see was probably true. We certainly know that it was a portage used by settlers. It was the focal point for the religious activities of the Church of England from the very beginning. It was a first a river as I told you, a hundred, a church, and now a town which faced the 19th century with a lot of assurance. This assurance, of course was built on the newfound commercialism, the ship guild. They had a new sense of prosperity, and the streets probably rang with the noises of hammers building the houses and building the ships; the sound of ----, also accompanying that noise was the cluck and clatter of poultry because they roamed at large. Livestock was not allowed.

They had survived a great revolution and they were growing. There was talk of incorporation, of becoming a real town with officials and self-government. Little did they know that their village would shortly be plunged into another war which would be followed by a great depression, but that ladies and gentlemen is another St. Michael's story.

(Applause)

Questions

Question: What happens when it looks like two people own that little section, there for instance?

Answer: [Irma] Where they overlap? [man: Yes] The oldest survey has precedence.

Question: So they are getting cut off at the lower rectangle there?

In other words the one that is older has precedence and in 1800 this sort of thing was still being settled by heirs who kept the land here for 30 or 40 generations. By the way, this is a drawing of the harbor as it may have looked, certainly not as it looks now. An early history of Inn's or a history made by a man who travels on the eastern shore and the western shore said, "The trees were large with complete canopies touching each other. There were no underbrush, and were wide enough apart that you could ride a horse and carriage between trunks of the trees". The ships came directly to the banks. There were very little marsh, except for the great marsh in Dorchester County. But it must have been a beautiful spot.

Question: You mentioned St. Michael's Hundred. I know about Bay Hundred, but what was St. Michael's Hundred?

Answer: [Irma] St. Michael's Hundred was the whole area at one time. In other words, St. Michael's Hundred was the first. Then it got divided up into 9 different sections, which were Hundreds.

Question: Well what would that encompass, St. Michael's Hundred? (trying to talk over each other) as the town as we know it today?

The town?

Question: As we know it today.

St. Michael's Hundred was the forerunner of the parish, and the parish was 30 miles long and 10 miles wide.

Question: Why do they call it "Hundred"?

Answer: [Irma] The "Hundred" is based on the Old English Military term for having a 100 fighting families or 100 men from a fighting age from a certain area. They did a count like that sort of like a [man: "a small southern town"? Yes, but ours was not based on that. Ours was based on political, from political. They were political areas from the very beginning, but we didn't take poles, you know like they did in New England.

Question: It had nothing to do with ----?

Answer: [Irma] No.

Question: Didn't it originate from the Roman Legions that ----?

Answer: [Irma] That's a little bit out of my line.

Question: You mentioned patents, (something about patents)?

Answer: [Irma] The land patents were called, it was a piece of paper that was called a patent. It said it was your title to your property. Like a deed, yes. The patents books, by the way, are still in existence. They get laminated so that they can be examined and read. They are stored at the Hall of Records.

Question: What is a Cricket stool?

Answer: [Irma] A Cricket stool is little low stool that you put your feet on, you know in front of your chair.

Question: Where would you find all these records? In the library, or the courthouse or what?

Answer: [Irma] Courthouses and the Hall of Records in Annapolis, and the Maryland Historical Society. *[man: I've heard that the courthouses in Maryland are superb]* We have excellent courthouses, records, and Talbot County is blessed with probably one of the best set of records around. It might be of interest to you to know that St. Mary's County for one had 3 complete courthouse fires over a period since their existence up until present time; their records are of the one county, or the one county we should have records of, that are not available. The only records that are available for St. Mary's County are what was sent to the Central seat of government, which later became restored at Annapolis. Dorchester County had a bad courthouse fire which destroyed all their probate records. So Talbot County was left.

[Irma] Any other questions?

Question: Yes, Do you know anything about Mill Point, St. Michael's?

Answer: Mill Point? [man: yes] only that it was called Mill Point when James Braddock came here. I think my husband's aunt, Mrs. Ellis Harper has said that Susanna Ashcroft and her husband who was Thomas Ashcroft from Virginia had a mill there. Again I haven't been able to establish that.

Question: Do you know if it was a wind mill or a..

It would have been a windmill. Windmills were the first in existence and then horse mills came in and then we went into steam ones.

Question: You mentioned a ship yard and you said Church Cove. Do you have any documentation who might have owned that?

Irma: In Church Cove? well particularly from

Answer: [Irma] I have an excellent accounting of the ship yard in full production with all the sources, the material, the names of the companies and everything, and you'll have to read it in the book.

Question: Are you writing a book about this?

Answer: [Irma] Hopefully. I want to. I've been doing research on this. This has been one of my favorite subjects like I told you and I've been doing research on it for a long time. I'm never satisfied with what I come up with. I'm constantly homing that point, or doing more work on that one. So one of these days I'm going to have to say this is it.

Question: I think its well needed, I would like to know the history of where I live. I haven't been able to find anything except a church history of St. Michael's and I thought I'd (inaudible)

Answer: [Irma] Thank you, I'm looking forward to getting it out, but my shipyard, well that's fine, its really wonderful, its a working ship yard and it gives the accounts of, full recorded accounts of the working and it can be verified, and it gives you a beautiful picture of what a ship yard in St. Michael's was doing when they were going really at it. By the way, in that account, I'll give you a little piece of it ahead of time.

This was a major revelation to me, in the account they were building ships in St. Michael's, now this is for the revolution and the war of 1812 sending them to Baltimore to well known ship builders to be sold.

Question: (inaudible)

Answer: [Irma] I'm not going to mention anymore.

(Applause)

I want to thank you Mrs. Harper very much for your presentation and we would like to give you an honorary family membership to our favorite museum.