

Brent

The ancient family of Brent flourished in various counties of England, principally in Somerset, Gloucester and Kent. The family in Kent became extinct. According to the "Red Book of Knight's Fees" found in the office of the Exchequer, Odo de Brent held the lands of Cossington in Somerset from the twelfth century. The name of his son is not known but he was succeeded in direct line of descent by Jeffery de Brent, Nicholas, four Roberts, John, another Robert and finally a Robert with sons John and Robert. John's line died out during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I. The Somerset estate of Cossington reverted to kinsman John Brent, son of the 6th Robert Brent and was possessed by his heir until the end of the 18th century when they were inherited by descendants in Virginia. The English, Maryland and Virginia Brents are all descended from British Peers, Magna Charta Barons and ancient royalty.

Information about the 7th Robert is that he resided in concealment in Somerset under the assumed name of John Burston for a time. He married the daughter of George Colchester, Lord of Stoke and Addington. Robert 7th's son Richard had sons Giles 1st, Stephen and John.

Stephen had a son John of Cossington who died in 1676 without issue. Giles 1st married Elizabeth Reed daughter of Edward Lord of Tusburie and Witten and his wife Katherine Greville. Her family claimed descent from John of Gaunt, Duke of Lancaster and Thomas of Woodstock, Duke of Gloucestershire, both of them sons of King Edward 3rd. He and Elizabeth had a son Richard of Stoke and Addington who was high Sheriff of Gloucestershire in 1615. Richard's wife was Margaret, daughter of Sir John Peshall Baronet of Horsely, Stafford. Their Issue: Fulke b.1598 d.1656. Entered Oxford University in 1613 and was a member of the Maryland Assembly three times from 1638-1642. He died childless.

- : George married Marianna Peyton the daughter of Sir John Peyton of Doddington.
- : William entered Gray's Inn (Oxford) in 1629 and died childless.
- : Mary emigrated to Maryland.
- : Margaret emigrated to Maryland.
- : Anne wed Governor Leonard Calvert.
- : Giles emigrated to Maryland.

He arrived with his brother and sisters, Mary and Margaret on November 22, 1638 (Fulke returned to England in March 1639). The family transported at least two maidservants and two male blacksmiths into the province with them, for whom they undoubtedly claimed land rights at 50 acres apiece. By October 9, 1639 officials "sett forth for Mr. Giles Brent a portion of Town Land lying nearest together about Smiths' Forge lately built by Giles". The land along St. George's River contained about 63 acres.

Earlier, upon his arrival in 1638 Giles received a grant of the manor of Kent Fort on Kent Island. One year earlier in November 1637, the governor of Maryland had sent an expedition against William Claiborne and the Puritan forces who had come from Virginia to establish a trading colony within Lord Calvert's grant. The proprietor's forces captured the fort without resistance and ended Claiborne's jurisdiction. Giles served the Maryland colony and its

proprietor as commander of Kent Island, appointed February 3, 1639; deputy governor, April 15, 1643; acting governor in Leonard Calvert's absence to England (Virginia?) in 1643/44; Lieutenant General of militia and Admiral of the colony's navy; treasurer of the Province from 1639 to 1643; member of the council from 1638 to 1644 and from 1647 to 1649 and member of the Assembly for six sessions.

He was a strong loyalist to the king during the Civil War by Cromwell and the Puritans in England. Parliament called him to account for seizing a skip in Chesapeake Bay and attempting to persuade the crew to carry him to Bristol where he intended to join the King's forces then in possession of the city.

During the period of England's Civil War against the monarchy, Captain Richard Ingle attempted to usurp the power of the Calverts. Ingle had threatened to beat down the dwellings of various colonists including that of Governor Brent. Sworn testimony was laid before Giles that Ingle had used such language as "the King is no King, etc." Ingle finally occupied St. Mary's city in 1645. Acting governor Brent issued a warrant for Ingle's arrest, his goods were formally confiscated and a guard was placed over him with instructions "not to permit Richard Ingle to come aboard". This action taken by Giles with the support of the Council and the Assembly placed the Maryland Province definitely in support of King Charles 1st. Other problems involving Secretary Lewger's assistance of commissions to Captain Fleet caused Giles to remove Lewger from the Council. Fleet was to prevent the friendly Piscataways from making any treaty with other tribes without the consent of the Christian Queen Mary Kittamaquand who was living with her husband Giles Brent in St. Mary's in 1644. The Piscataways had been allies of the colonists because of the union of Giles and Mary Kittamaquand.

Captain Cornwallys got authority from Giles to raise a company of militia to go against the Susquehannaocks, a warlike tribe of Indians who regularly invaded Maryland from the north. Giles was later appointed a judge by Governor Thomas Green. Giles eventually broke completely with Lord Baltimore, objecting to the privileges conferred on the proprietor and his family.

Margaret Brent was granted a tract of 2,000 acres jointly with Mary by Lord Baltimore in 1639. They named their estate near St. Mary's city "Sisters Freehold". From the time of her arrival Margaret was agent for her brothers and many other colonists in the courts. She was a sister-in-law of Leonard Calvert who appointed her his confidential advisor and upon his death as his sole executor. She was involved in affairs affecting the entire colony. For example she was responsible for paying the soldiers recruited to regain the colony from Richard Ingle.

While Margaret was still living in Maryland, Father White converted the Tayac Chitomachen, now known as the Indian Emperor Kittamaquand. His seat was about 15 miles southeast of Washington, D.C. Kittamaquand, father-in-law of Giles became Tayac of his tribe after murdering his brother Uwano. Uwano was a visionary whom legends say dreamed of the white men long before colonists arrived in 1634, but after Captain John Smith had explored this area. When Fathers White and (Governor?) came to his village to preach Owano claimed to have seen them in a dream and wished them to educate his son. The rule of descent of Indian tribes was collateral rather than lineal, so Kittamaquand killed his brother so as to take no chance to

outlive Owano.

Kittamaquand listened as intently as any of his fellow tribesmen to the preaching of Father White but his very success of overthrowing his brother made him wonder if the tribe's gods had caused the downfall of Owano in anger of his inclination towards the priest's white god. Legend has it that Kittamaquand had a dream in which his long dead father appeared accompanied by a god of strange dim color who beseeched him not to forsake his god for the god of the white men. However, Governor Calvert and Father White appeared in the dream with a marvelously beautiful god whiter than new fallen snow who gently beckoned the Tayac to approach. When he awoke from the dream that occurred in June 1639, he insisted that Father White live with him and would allow no one to serve him except the Tayac's favorite wife. Later when the Tayac became gravely ill the priest proved successful in curing him after some forty medicine men had failed. This convinced him to become a convert. He abandoned his many wives save one, studied the principals of Christianity with the devotion of a scholar, learned English and began dressing in the fashion of the English. He realized that he could not pass his office to his daughter so he decided to trust her well being to the English.

On July 5, 1640 the Tayac took his queen, infant son and young daughter 120 miles down the Potomac to St. Mary's city to be baptized in the bark chapel he constructed for the very event. In the presence of Governor Calvert and secretary Lewger, he was christened Charles and his wife Mary. Thereafter a marriage ceremony was solemnized. Kittamaquand took his 7 year daughter to St. Mary's city to be educated. She became Margaret Brent's special ward and was christened Mary. At about the age of 12 she was married to Giles Brent.

The Tayac died about May 1641 and the Piscataways repudiated his daughter and chose another male of the royal line. When Giles later laid claim in his wife's behalf to her father's domain he was rebuffed. (See pages 434 through 441 of Priests, Piscataways and Patuxents for the people and events involved and a biography of Mary Kittamaquand in a file folder.)

Giles and Mary had 6 children: Giles 2nd born 1652 wed his first cousin Mary of Stafford county, Virginia, the daughter of George Brent of Defford England and Marianna Peyton. Mary's brothers George and Robert Brent lived in Woodstock, Virginia. Giles' mother taught him Indian languages and customs as well as an undying hatred for the marauding tribes to the north. He saw himself as a Piscataway rather than an Englishman who considered his most important mission in life to continue the wars against his tribe's ancient enemies. He died September 8th 1679 at age 27, grandfather of Brent Nuthall. Giles and Mary's issue:

Richard who needs further research

Henry who died young

Katherine wed Richard Marsham

Mary wed John Fitzherbert

Giles 3rd b. 1679 wed Jane Chandler

William born 1679(-) died 1710 in England

Margaret born 1679(+) wed George Plowden of Resurrection Manor

Mary born 1675 died 1698 wed John Nuthall 1693/94 aged circa.19 years.

Giles 1st resettled in Virginia around 1645 where he patented large tracts of land in the northern neck of Virginia across the Potomac from the District of Columbia. He named his estate located in Westmoreland County "Retirement".

Giles died circa 1671 as his will was proved in Stafford County on February 15, 1671/72. In it he made a bequest to "the right heirs of my honored father Richard Brent Esquire, deceased, anciently Lord of the Manor of Admington (Addington) and Lord Stoke of the County of Gloucester in England".

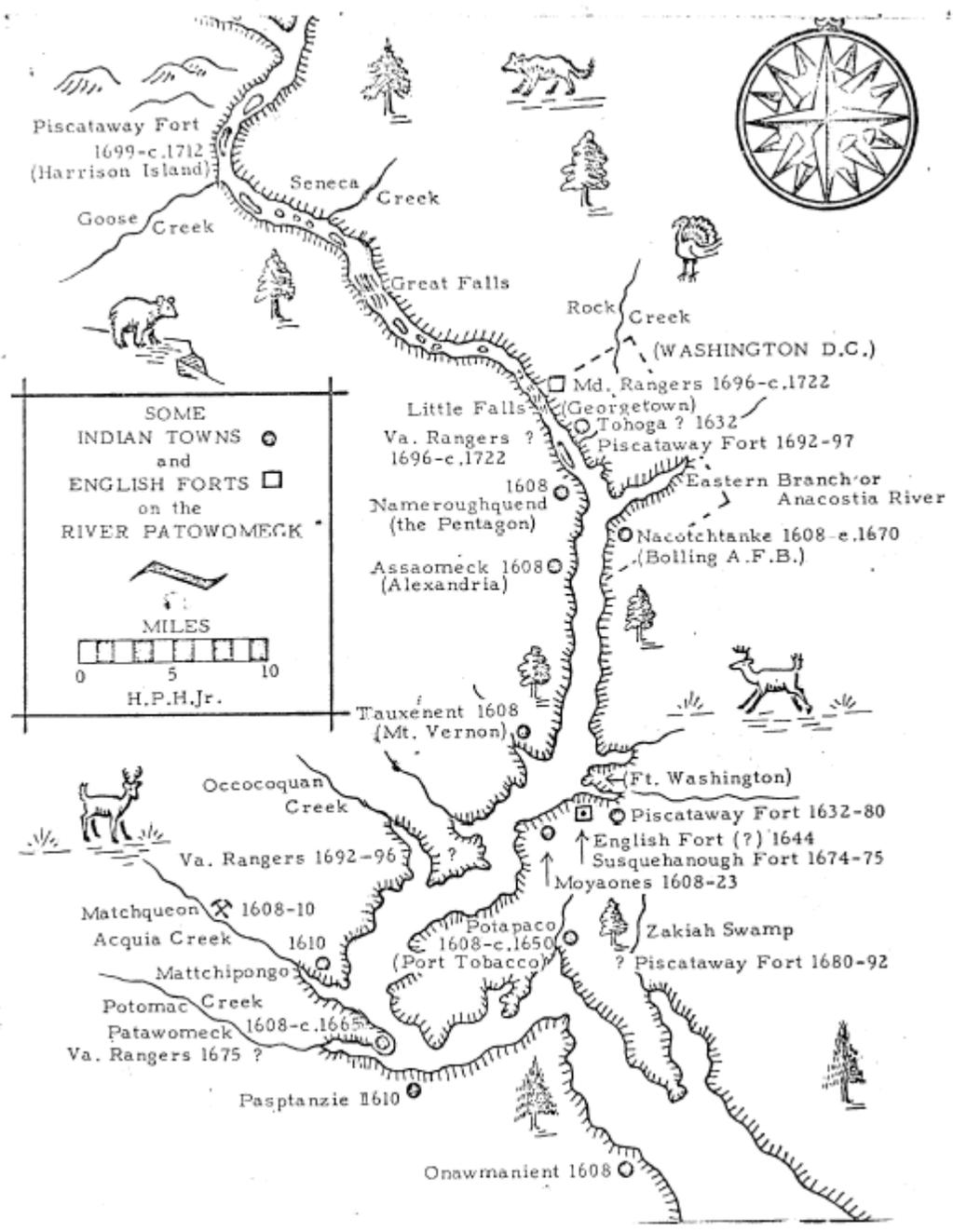
Between 1654 and 1657 Giles' sister Margaret also settled in Virginia where she took up several hundred acres in Westmoreland County which she named "Peace".

The Brent family was Catholic. Giles' children were educated at St. Omar's school conducted by English Jesuits in Belgium. Father Copley visited Margaret and Mary at "Peace" and Fathers Hubbard and Cannon resided with the Brents while in exile from Maryland during the rebellion in 1689. Margaret spent the rest of her life in Virginia until 1671 when she died unmarried.

Giles 2nd was a planter in sole possession of the estate "Retirement". He became a Ranger in Virginia with the rank of Captain by 1675.

One day in July, 1674/75 ten drunken Indians turned up at his house at the time of the murder of Robert Hen. This half breed (Giles) with Colonel George Mason, commander rallied a troop of 30 horsemen on the occasion of the attack by the Indian tribe of Doegs. Their trail was followed for 20 miles to the mouth of Piscataway Creek. They camped for the night and the next day crossed the Potomac River and followed the trail at Piscataway Creek. When the trail forked Captain Brent took the one which led to an Indian cabin in the woods. Brent being half Indian himself, called to them in their own language "I have come for the murders of Robert Hen" A Doeg chief came to the door and said "I know nothing about it. My people had nothing to do with it." Then seeing the Captain was not convinced and that the Rangers were aiming their muskets at the cabin, the chief suddenly sprang from the door and started to run for the woods. Brent grabbed him by his long braided hair and shot him dead.

The pistol shot caused a stir in the cabin. Indians began firing from the windows and finding themselves surrounded rushed outside and tried to get away. Some escaped but the rest were shot down except for the eight year old son of the chief. The noise of the battle aroused another cabin full of Indians just as it was being surrounded by Colonel Mason's men. As the Indians ran out of the cabin into a volley of musket fire, one of the Virginians shouted "For the lord's sake shoot no more, these are our friends the Susquehannocks."



Mary Brent . . .

Mary Brent was born around 1632. She was just a young girl when the Maryland settlers landed.

When she was about seven her father the *tayac* (emperor) of the village was made a Christian. Mary wanted to be one too. Her father sent her to Margaret Brent to be educated and to become a Christian.

Mary met Giles Brent at M. Brent's home. They got married later when Mary was in her teens.

Mary would have been different from her friends even if she had never been educated or turned Christian. Mary was different because she was the daughter of the *tayac*. Also she married Giles Brent and she went back and forth in the two cultures.

Indian Girls . . .

All Indian girls learned to cook, skin animals and weave mats as soon as they could handle the materials. They played with dolls and in the woods.

As soon as girls were fertile they were married. They had children and taught the girls the same crafts.

Tayac . . .

The emperor of the tribe was in control. He had a room and bed of his own separated from his wives and children. He had special dress and led all the parades.

Who Were the Maryland Settlers?

Margaret Brent, Gentleman

Three hundred and forty-two years ago, a middle-aged spinster named Margaret Brent marched into the Provincial Secretary's house at St. Mary's City and asked the Governor of Maryland for the right to vote. It was an age when women possessed no political rights. In fact, a wife was technically the property of her husband. But Margaret Brent, unmarried, forthright and independent, crossed the traditional lines of propriety and demanded what she felt was her legal right as a landowner. Governor Thomas Greene flatly denied her request. The glimpse we have of the event is a brief entry in the proceedings of the Maryland Assembly of 1648. Unfortunately for us, the clerk did not embellish his notes with details, but did write down that Mistress Brent "protested against all proceedings of the present Assembly unless she may be present and vote."

As a kinswoman of the Calverts, Maryland's ruling family, Margaret Brent ventured to Maryland at age thirty-seven with her sister, Mary, and her brother, Giles. She carried with her two letters of commendation from Lord Baltimore requesting that she be allowed to take up land on more than favorable terms. She settled on land she named "Sisters Freehold" in St. Mary's City, the colonial capital.

It was not whimsy that spurred Mistress Brent to make her stand in 1648. An educated woman, she often acted as agent in the courts for fellow tobacco planters, representing their interests in land disputes and neighborhood quarrels. Her skills in management were evidenced in a later case involving Lord Baltimore's cattle.

In 1647, when Governor Leonard Calvert lay sick and dying, he summoned Mistress Brent to his side and told her to "take all and pay all," in effect, to administer the settlement of his estate after his death. Later, when soldiers whom Calvert had hired to help him recover his colony from the hands of rebels William Claiborne and Richard Ingles, threatened violence after waiting a long time for their wages, the Assembly refused to act. Margaret Brent took charge and executed the dead Governor's promise. She paid the soldiers with some of Lord Baltimore's cattle. From England, Cecil Calvert wrote an angry letter, criticizing her for her action at his expense. The Assembly, in a remarkable move,

replied in Margaret's defense. They informed Lord Baltimore that the colony's "safety was better at that time in her hands than any man's else in the whole province."

From early records that mention "Margaret Brent, Spinster," the court records abruptly changed to record "Margaret Brent, Gentleman." Her name appears in one-hundred twenty-four different court cases in an eight year period. "Margaret Brent, Gentleman" became the customary reference to her.

After seventeen years as a Marylander, Mistress Brent, at the advanced age of 56, moved to Virginia. She made her new home in Westmore-



land County on a plantation she named "Peace." There, the records about her become fainter. Her will, made in 1663, left her large estate to various nieces and nephews, but the date of her death and the site of her grave remain unknown.

Old St. Mary's City plans to tell the story of this first American advocate of women's rights with an original play during its 1980 Summer Festival season. Marylanders and Americans should remember the courage of this little-known woman who, like so many other early Americans, is part of the foundation of our heritage of freedom.

" send a true copy of all such records of the said manors unto his lordship attested under your hand, and likewise to give his lordship particular notice from time to time of their proceedings as well as your own therein."

COUNCIL BOOK, C. B. fol. 51.

Cecilius, &c. Know ye that for and in consideration that our dear brother Leonard Calvert Esq. our lieutenant general of our province of Maryland hath done unto us many acceptable services and sustained much hazard and charge in reducing the Isle of Kent under our government, have therefore of and with the advice of our said dear brother and at his humble motion and request given granted enforced and confirmed and by these presents for us and our heirs doe give grant enfeoff and confirm unto our right faithfull and beloved councillor Giles Brent assignee of our said brother, all that neck of land lying nearest together about Kent Fort in the said Isle of Kent, bounding upon the west, east and south with Chesapeake bay, upon the north with a line drawn through the woods straight east from the northeastermost branch of the creek called North West Creek unto a swarap in the said bay on the east side of the said neck, containing by estimation and now set forth for one thousand acres be it more or less, and all woods, quarries, mines (royal mines excepted) waters, royal fishes, fishings, fishing places, advowsons and patronages of churches, wrecks not claimed by the owner within a year and a day, waifes, strays, felons' goods, free warren, liberty of hunting hawking and fowling for any sort of game whatsoever, and all other profits advantages comodities emoluments and hereditaments in or upon the same or any part thereof saving to us and our heirs, our royal jurisdiction and seigniorie as absolute lords and proprietors of the said province of Maryland, and saving unto Giles Basha and Thomas Allen their heirs and assigns their freeholds granted or to be granted to them, which nevertheless we will that they and either of them hold of the said Giles Brent and his heirs, paying the rents and performing the services for the same unto our said brother in such manner as the same ought to have been paid unto us or our heirs: To Have and To Hold the same unto him the said Giles Brent and his heirs forever. To be holden of us and our heirs as of our honour of St. Maries in free and comon socage by yearly only for all services, yielding and paying therefore yearly to us and our heirs lords and proprietaries of the said province at the place where the mill now standeth two barrells of good corne at the feast of our Lord's nativity, and we will and appoint that the said parcell or neck of land shall

from henceforth be one entire mannor, and be called by the name of "The mannor of Kent Fort," AND that 300 acres of the same shall be forever hereafter accounted and known for the demesne lands of the said mannor and shall be set forth by distinct mentes and bounds for that purpose, and that the said Giles Brent and his heirs may at all times hereafter grant or convey any other part of the premisses (excepting the said 300 acres) unto any other person or persons of British or Irish descent either in fee simple or fee taile for life lives or years to be held of him the said Giles Brent and his heirs as of his mannor of Kent Fort, by and under such rents and services as he or they shall think fitt. And further We Do for us and our heirs give and grant unto the said Giles Brent and his heirs forever, that he and they shall and may have hold use and enjoy within the said mannor one court in the nature of a *court baron* and in that court hold pleas of all and all manner of actions suits trespasses quarrells debts and demands whatsoever happening or arising within the said mannor which in debt or damages doe not exceed the sum of forty shillings of lawful English money to be from time to time held by the said Giles Brent or his heirs or his or their steward from time to time to be appointed and by the free suitors of the said mannor; And further shall and may forever hereafter twice in every year viz. in the month after Michaelmass, and the month after Easter have hold and enjoy a *court leet* or view of frank pledge, and all that to a court leet or view of frank pledge doth any way belong or appertain To be holden of him and them and by his or their reneschall or steward from time to time by him and them to be appointed, and therein to enquire of all crimes and offences committed or to be committed within the precincts of the same mannor, which may or ought by the law or custom of England to be enquired of in any court leet or view of frank pledge within the realm of England and to his and their own use to have and receive all and singular issues profits fines amerciaments and perquisites whatsoever which hereafter shall or may arise or come by reason of the said courts or either of them. Given under our great seal of our said province at our honour of St. Maries the seventh day of September Anno Dai. 1640—Witness our dear brother &c.

LIBER No. 1, fol. 48.