

Poplar Neck

A History of Pine Whiff Beach

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Contents

Preface	
Chapter 1: Maryland Colonial Settlement & Headright System	1
Chapter 2: Poplar Neck	7
Chapter 3: Mitchells Creek	17
Chapter 4: London Town: A Neighbor to the Southeast	23
Chapter 5: 18 th Century Poplar Neck	27
Chapter 6: 19 th Century Poplar Neck	45
Chapter 7: South River Property	67
Chapter 8: Pine Whiff Beach	71
Epilogue	83
Appendix A: Chart of Poplar Neck Ownership	89
Appendix B: Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association By-Laws	93
Appendix C: Pine Whiff Beach Articles of Incorporation	101

Preface

Nestled on the southeast side of a peninsula whose beaches adjoin the protected waters of Almshouse Creek is a community known as Pine Whiff Beach. Residing in Anne Arundel County, Maryland just off the South River and approximately three miles west of the Chesapeake Bay, Pine Whiff Beach is now home to nearly 100 residences. By land, Pine Whiff Beach is bounded by the communities of South River Landing, South River Park as well as the county fields of Edgewater Park (see figure 2-2).

The history of the peninsula on which Pine Whiff Beach resides is largely unknown to the general population and even to many of its current residents. As time has passed, many of history's day-to-day details have quietly faded into the generations. Fortunately, the essential records have been preserved, enabling the tract of land originally known as "Poplar Neck" to recount its lineage of land ownership. In some instances, enough detail has been preserved allowing Poplar Neck to describe the stories of those who've called this peninsula "home" over the centuries.

What began as a simple curiosity regarding the different generations of people who may have roamed the shores of Almshouse Creek and Pine Whiff Beach, evolved into a quest to document the entire lineage of land ownership. In addition, this quest evolved to understanding as much detail about those

who lived on these shores before us, as the tides of time were willing to reveal.

The community of Pine Whiff Beach was founded in 1926 and as this book will describe, this is far from the beginning of this peninsula's history. Continuing the search for deeds older than 1926 into the mid 1800's proved to be relatively straightforward. The only challenges encountered were based upon the penmanship of the clerk, as every deed in this chain prior to 1911 was hand written.

Deeds prior to the mid 1800's generally don't incorporate a reference to the prior deed's land recordation, only to the prior owner, the name of the tract of land and a description of its surveyed boundaries. In the case of individuals dying intestate, (without a will) the links often become broken causing a search through early court records to determine the resolution of the inheritance. The settlement of these cases was often complicated by colonial inheritance procedures, which were borrowed from England until the late 1700's.

Our modern generation has become accustomed to the convenience of search engines, which have the ability to return thousands of results on a specific topic within seconds. At some point in history, all the original documents will become searchable in this way after the task to digitize the documents and interpret the cursive handwriting of the era has been completed. Until then, researchers are at times left with the search techniques of the 17th century. This includes browsing through pages and pages of handwritten indexes by year, indicating (by land tract name) when a deed change was recorded in the land records.

Portions of the archived documents have been scanned onto microfilm, allowing electronic access to those records. In other instances, the only way to view the documents is by accessing the original records, which are held at the Maryland Archives.

Holding one of the original documents provides an experience that can't be replicated with modern digital media. The 17th, 18th and 19th century documents tell the story of an era beyond simply the words on its pages. Each document contains the ink of sweeping cursive handwriting drawn from the tip of a quill pen onto the fibers of yellowed colonial paper. The original documents bear worn and stained edges boasting their handling and centuries of age. Holding and reading one of these original documents is the closest any of us will ever come to those who penned the original document and lived in the era. While some of the documents have now been officially retired and are no longer available for public viewing based on their age or condition, many of the original documents continue to be available for the public to view and research.

Once the entire documented history has been assembled, many current residents will be surprised to learn the documented land ownership of what is now Pine Whiff Beach began in the year 1650 and was part of *the first tract of land in Anne Arundel County to be officially surveyed.*

Across nearly four centuries, Poplar Neck has witnessed the transformation from the first colonial settlers seeking freedom of religion and the pursuit of dreams offered by the “new world,” through the fully developed communities it now supports. This book will provide a documented framework of this entire history to ensure the heritage of Poplar Neck is forever known.

Throughout this book, the spelling of words within quoted material were kept as originally used, although at times they contradict today's spelling of the same words.

This book is dedicated to my family for their support throughout this endeavor as well as the past, current and future generations of Pine Whiff Beach.

Protect and embrace the rich history of this peninsula.

Chapter 1: Maryland Colonial Settlement & Headright System

George Calvert was born of modest means as the son of a yeoman farmer in Yorkshire, England. ¹ He received his degree from Trinity College, Oxford in 1597 ² and through his secretarial service to Sir Robert Cecil, ³ one of King James' most trusted advisors, ⁴ George Calvert's political career began. Calvert became a member of the Privy Council, received the honor of knighthood and held public service positions as high as Secretary of State. ⁵ In exchange for his loyal public service, King James bestowed upon Calvert the title "Baron of

Baltimore" in about the year 1624. Subsequently known as Lord Baltimore, Calvert became interested in the hopes and promises of the "new world" through his participation with the Virginia Company, an organization which established the Jamestown settlement. ⁶



Upon the completion of his public service, Calvert pursued his interest in the new world with an attempted settlement in Newfoundland. ⁷

*Figure 1-1: George Calvert
MSA SC 1545-1101*

The harsh weather conditions and resulting illnesses ⁸ led Calvert to petition the new King (Charles I) for land ownership in a different location. This ultimately resulted in Calvert being granted nearly 7,000,000 acres of land in the Chesapeake Bay region. ⁹ This land was called Land Maria or Mary's Land (now Maryland) and was named after King Charles' wife, Henrietta Maria. ¹⁰



Figure 1-2: Henrietta Maria, wife of King Charles and namesake of the State of Maryland, MSA SC 3520-14042

George Calvert died in 1632, several weeks before the land grant was finalized and thus his eldest son, Cecilius (Cecil) continued with the grant and assumed ownership, becoming the second Lord Baltimore. ¹¹ Cecil, who was 26 at the time of his father's death, was now responsible for leading the colonization of Maryland.



Figure 1-3: Cecilius Calvert MSA SC 1545-1126

Given the tumultuous political climate in England at the time, Cecil chose to stay in England with his wife Anne Arundell to protect his grant. He would provide guidance and leadership for the Province from England and Leonard Calvert (Cecil's brother) was sent to become the first Governor of Maryland. ¹²



*Figure 1-4: Leonard Calvert
MSA SC 3520-198*

In November, 1633, Leonard Calvert led a group of colonists to the new Province of Maryland aboard two ships named the Ark and the Dove. They arrived in Maryland in March 1634 establishing their initial settlement under the new colony ¹³ in what is now St. Mary's County Maryland.

Historical Perspective: The average voyage from England to Maryland took 3-4 months by ship during colonial times.

To accelerate the colonization of the Province, the Calverts employed an incentive, known as the headright system. This was an agreement between Lord Baltimore and an individual, exchanging land rights for settlement within the Province. The headright system employed in Maryland was similar to the system successfully utilized in Virginia to establish earlier settlements.

Under the headright system, any settler who transports themselves and others is entitled to a grant of available land. The laws varied throughout the colonial years regarding the number of acres a settler would receive per head. When the headright system began, a gentleman agreeing to transport himself and five yeoman of working age would receive 1,000 acres. ¹⁴ By 1648, the policy changed and a colonist was granted 100 acres of land per head for themselves and each person they agreed to transport. ¹⁵ The number of acres was reduced over time as the Governor was concerned “the people will be too remotely scituated from one another and the whole

Province perhaps in a short time taken up by just a few people leaving little or no conveniency for others to come and add strength and comfort to them.”¹⁶

As an example of this system, if a husband and wife were to come to Maryland in 1648, they would receive 200 acres of available land at no charge. As part of the agreement, they would be obligated to pay a yearly tax, also referred to as “rent,” on the property. This is one of the methods used by the Calverts to convert their charter of 7,000,000 acres into wealth.

The headright process to establish a settlement consists of three elements: Demand / Warrant, Survey and Land Patent.

Demand / Warrant: The process begins with a demand by the settler to the Province for an available parcel of land. The demand would also indicate the total number of settlers they were transporting, thus determining the size of the parcel.¹⁷

Survey: The approval of the demand / warrant prompts a survey of the land by the Province. The survey is intended to ensure the availability of the tract of land and defines the boundaries of the new land grant. The survey also becomes the official document for taxing purposes.¹⁸

Surveyed tracts of land were each given names, which would be used as an identifier for the particular tract of land in subsequent deeds. Often times the tracts would be named after the original patent holder, a unique characteristic of the property or any name of the owner’s choosing.

Land Patent: The final step in the process is the issuance of a land patent. This is in essence the conveyance of the land from the Province to the individual.

The headright system for land grants was ended on May 15, 1682 and from that day forward, land acquisition was to be accomplished by purchase or transfer to heirs.¹⁹

Chapter 1 References:

1. The English Colonization of America, Neill, 1871 p.182
2. The History of Maryland, Bozman, 1837 p. 232
3. The History of Maryland, Bozman, 1837 p. 232
4. The Maryland Colony: Lord Baltimore, Jim Whiting 2008 p. 8
5. Discourse on The Life and Character of George Calvert, The First Lord Baltimore, Kennedy, 1845, p. 17
6. Discourse on The Life and Character George Calvert, The First Lord Baltimore, Kennedy, 1845, p. 19
7. Sir George Calvert, Created Baron of Baltimore, Neill, 1869 pp. 9-10
8. Maryland Historical Magazine Vol. II No.1, 1907 p. 217
9. The Maryland Colony: Lord Baltimore, Jim Whiting 2008 p. 10
10. The Maryland Colony: Lord Baltimore, Jim Whiting 2008 p. 10
11. The Maryland Colony: Lord Baltimore, Jim Whiting 2008 p. 10
12. Maryland State Archives SC 3520-191
13. Profiles in Colonial History, Loker, p. 39
14. Parceling Out Land in Baltimore 1632 to 1796, Garrett Power, Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. 87 No 4 Winter 1992 p. 454
15. First Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1649 – 1658 Donna Valley Russell, 1999 p. x
16. Archives of Maryland, Proceedings and Acts of the Generally Assembly of Maryland January 1637/8 to September 1664, p. 331
17. First Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1649 – 1658 Donna Valley Russell, 1999 pp. x-xi
18. First Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1649 – 1658 Donna Valley Russell, 1999 pp. x-xi
19. Maryland State Archives, Volume 180 p. 6

Chapter 2: Poplar Neck

During the mid 17th century, it was common for individuals to migrate from England to the “new world”¹ in pursuit of a place they could freely practice their religion. The hope of this freedom led individuals to abandon their established lives and embark on a long, harsh and uncomfortable voyage across the Atlantic. When they arrived in the “new world,” they knew they would face the hardships associated with undeveloped land and an immature infrastructure to support their efforts. The desire for this freedom was so strong, it outweighed the risks associated with all known and unknown adversities they would face. Though these freedoms were associated with the new world as a whole, not all colonies offered equal benefits.

With the passage of *An Act Concerning Religion*, also known as the *Religious Toleration Act of 1649*, Maryland in particular became attractive to those seeking refuge from religious persecution.

The following is an excerpt from *An Act Concerning Religion* describing the Province of Maryland’s initial protection of freedoms of religion:

...and set forth that no Person or Persons whatsoever within this Province or the Islands Ports harbours Creeks or Havens thereunto [professing] to believe in Jesus Christ shall from henceforth be in any ways troubled molested or discountenanced for or in respect of his or her Religion nor in the free exercise thereof within this Province or the Islands thereunto...²

This was one of the first laws of this type to be passed in any of the colonies. Although the initial Act was addressed

specifically to Christians, the gesture of the passage made Maryland an attractive settlement to those practicing other religions as well.

Though most individuals emigrated from England, Maryland's freedoms attracted settlers from existing colonies as well. During this time, a couple named Richard and Rachel Beard migrated from Virginia to Maryland. Virginia was the first settled colony and retained a closer tie with the Church of England. It is likely the Beards migrated from Virginia in pursuit of a place they could freely practice their religion. "After William Stone, of Northampton, became the first *Protestant* Governor (of Maryland), Beard...removed to Maryland." ³

Rachel's sister, Elizabeth Robins came to Maryland near the same time as Richard and Rachel. After their arrival in Maryland, Elizabeth married a gentleman by the name of William Burgess. ⁴ The Beards and Burgess' would soon become neighbors in new settlements on the south side of the South River approximately 3 miles west of the Chesapeake Bay. William Burgess would later set the foundation for what would become the bustling seaport of London Town. Richard Beard would set the foundation for what would ultimately become Pine Whiff Beach centuries later.

On January 6, 1650, Richard Beard surveyed a tract of land to be known as "Poplar Neck," and this was the first actual certificate of land in this portion of the Province. ⁵ It is known there were earlier settlements in other portions of Anne Arundel County prior to January, 1650, however Beard's survey of Poplar Neck carries the earliest date of all documented surveys, ⁶ giving Poplar Neck the distinction of being *the first surveyed tract of land in Anne Arundel County.* ⁷

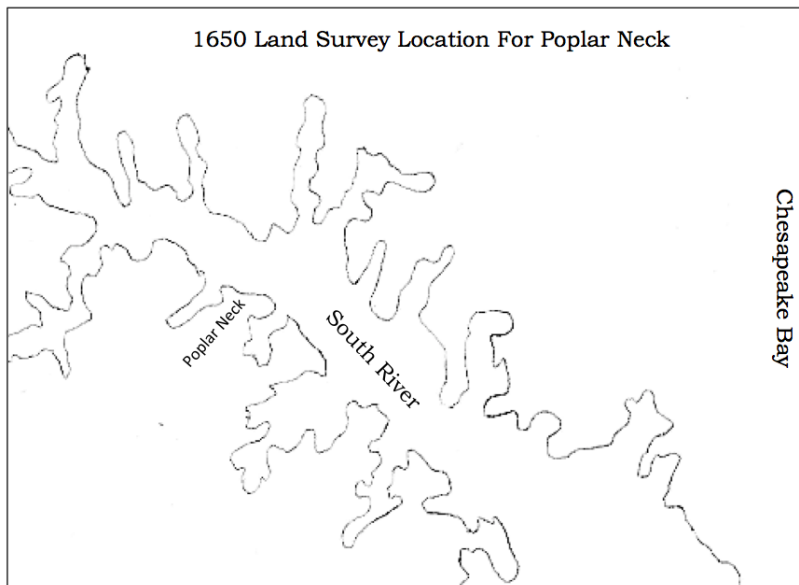


Figure 2-1: Re-Creation of Poplar Neck Land Survey Location

Pine Whiff Beach represents a portion of Poplar Neck, which includes the entire peninsula of land bounded by the South River and the creeks, which are now known as Almshouse and Warehouse. In effect, the combined communities of Pine Whiff Beach, South River Landing, parts of South River Park as well as a portion of Edgewater Park approximately represents the original Poplar Neck.

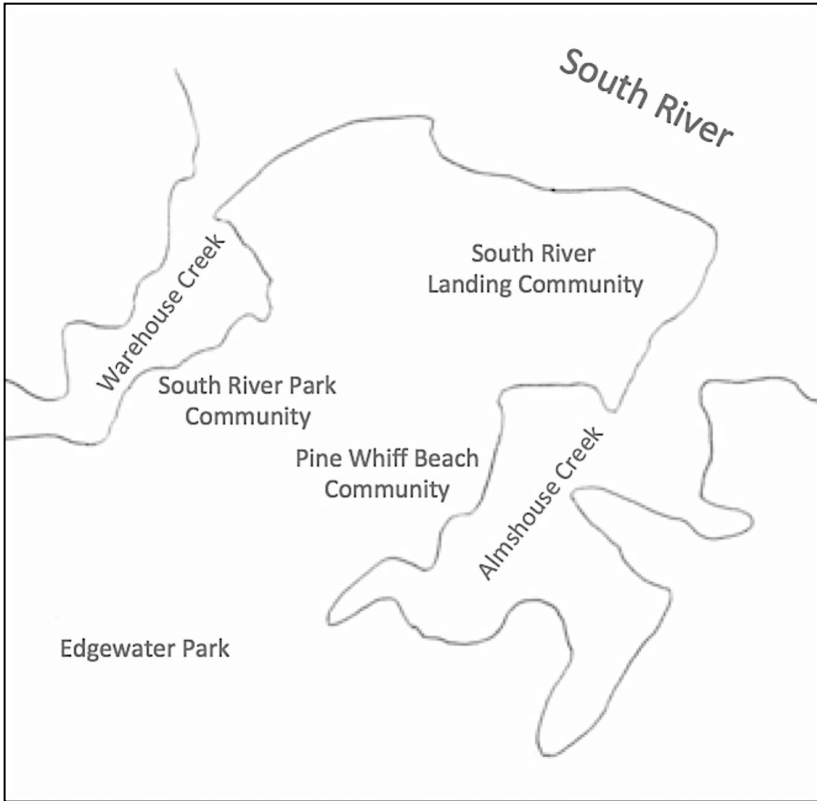


Figure 2-2: Modern day division of Poplar Neck by community as well as modern day naming of its creeks

Beard's 1650 survey was followed by the granting of an official land patent in 1663. As outlined in the land patent, Richard Beard received 200 acres of land under the headright system in exchange for transporting himself as well as his wife to the tract of land (100 acres for each head). Figure 2-3 is an image of the Poplar Neck Land Patent in its original handwritten form. The Maryland State Archives in Annapolis maintains the original documentation as well as many other documents related to the State's history, which are referenced throughout this book.

(588)

1663
Liber 588
(248)
Grant to Richard
Blount a parcel
of land

Richard Blount Esquire
and Charles Baron of Baltimore to all persons to whom these presents shall come granting in and by the following tenor that we or our heirs in and in consideration that Richard Baron of this Province planteth hath due unto him in a hundred acres of land for transporting himself and his wife into this Province here to inhabit Anno 1650 as appears upon record and upon such conditions and terms as are expressed in our conditions of plantation of our Province of Maryland under our great seal at James bearing date at London the second day of July in the year of our Lord 1649 and remaining upon record in our said Province of Maryland do hereby grant unto him the sd Richard Blount a parcel of land called Poplar Neck lying in the County of Queen Anne on the West side of Chesapeake Bay near the mouth thereof and upon the South side of the said Bay beginning at a marked Oak upon a Point and running South West 1/4 of a perch or the length of One hundred and fifty Inches unto a marked Oak bounding on the South with the sd Bay and again drawn West from the said Oak for the length of One hundred and twenty Perches to a marked Oak on the West with a bearing North and by West by a right Line side from the said Oak for the length of seventy six Perches to a marked Oak on the North with the sd Bay running East North East unto the said River on the East with the River containing and now laid out for two hundred acres more or less together with all rights profits and benefits thereunto belonging (except Millers Fees) to have and to hold the same unto him the said Richard Blount his heirs and assigns forever to be holden of us and our heirs as of our Manor of Queen Anne in respect and common socage by yearly rent for all manner of services Customs and Tolls here and yearly unto us and our heirs at our receipt and Mares at the two most usual feasts in the year viz at the feast of the Communion of the blessed Virgin Mary and at the feast of St Michael the Archangel by every two equal portions the Rent of so much things working in Silver or Gold or the full value thereof of such commodities as we and our heirs or such officer or officers appointed by us or our heirs from time to time to collect and receive the same shall accept in discharge thereof of the choice of us and our heirs or such officer or officers as at General Saint Mares under our great seal of our said Province of Maryland the four and twentieth day of September in the 32 Year of our Dominion over our sd Provs of Maryland Anno 1663 William our Dear Son and heir Charles Calvert Esquire Governour of our sd Province of Maryland

Poplar Neck

Cont. of pt. 47

Maryland

(four shillings)

Figure 2-3: Image of Original 1663 Poplar Neck Land Patent, Maryland Land Records Liber L5 Folio 588 SR7347

The following is a transcription of the original land patent for Poplar Neck. Punctuation was used sparingly at the time and the beginning of a new sentence is indicated with capitalization. Documentation at the time utilizes terms such as perches, whose meaning is different than modern day usage. In this context, a perch is a historic unit of measure equal to 16 1/2 linear feet. The normal acre was traditionally measured as an area 40 perches by 4 perches⁸ or 660 feet by 66 feet, thus

resulting in today's unit of measure for an acre of 43,560 square feet (660x66).

Transcription of Original Land Patent for Poplar Neck

Cecilius absolute Lord and Proprietary of the provinces of Maryland and Avalon Lord Baron of Baltimore To all persons to whom these presents shall come greeting in our Lord God everlasting know yee that we for and in consideration that **Richard Beard of this Province planter hath due unto him two hundred acres of land for transporting himself and Rachel his wife into this Province here to inhabit anno 1650 as appears upon record** and upon such condicions and terms as are expressed in our conditions of plantation of our Province of Maryland under our greater seal at armes bearing date at Sondon the second day of July in the year of our Lord God 1649 and remaining upon record in our said Province of Maryland **do hereby grant unto him the said Richard Beard a parcel of land called Poplar Neck lying in Anne Arundel County on the West side of Chesapeake Bay near a river called the South River and upon the South side of the said Bay** Beginning at a marked Oak upon a point and running southwest up a creek for the length of one hundred and fifty perches into a marked oak bounding on the South with the said creek and a line drawn West from the said oak for the length of one hundred and twenty perches to a marked oak on the West with a line drawn North and by West by a fresh run side from the said oak for the length of seventy five perches to a creek on the North with the said creek running East North East into the said river on the East with the river Containing and now laid out for two hundred acres more or less Together with all rights profits and benefits thereunto belonging Royal Mines excepted to have and to hold the same unto him the said Richard Beard his heirs and afsigns forever to be holden of us and our heirs as of our Mannor of Ann Arundell in free and common soccage by fealty only for all manner of services yeilding and **paying therefore yearly unto us and our heirs at our receipt at St. Maries at the two most usual feasts in the**

year Viz at the feast of the Annunciation of the blessed Virgin Mary and at the feast of St. Michael the archangel by ever and equall portions the rent of four shillings sterling in silver or gold or the full value thereof in such commodities as we and our heirs or such officer or officers appointed by us or our heirs from time to time to collect and receive the same shall accept in discharge thereof at the choice of us and our heirs or such officer or officers as afd given at Saint Maries under our great Seal of our said province of Maryland the four and twentieth day of September in the 32 year of our dominion over our said province of Maryland Anno Domini: 1663 wittnes our dear son and heir Charles Calvert Esq our Lieutenant General of our said province of Maryland ⁹

There are several key items accomplished within this land patent including:

Headright exchange: The patent summarizes the exchange of land for settlement within the Province. In this case, 200 total acres for Richard Beard and his wife Rachel in exchange for settlement.

Land parcel name: Each tract of land of this era was given a name in its initial patent to serve as an identifier within the land records. As noted in the patent, this particular tract became known as “Poplar Neck.”

Date of settlement/survey: Though it was written in 1663, the patent recognizes the original survey and settlement date of 1650, which establishes when the tax obligation began.

Description of land boundaries: The patent incorporates a description of the boundaries established in the initial survey. The description is indicative of the primitive survey techniques of the 17th century utilizing perishable boundary markers such as trees.

Annual tax amount and place of payment: The land patent establishes the annual tax due on the property (four shillings

sterling in silver or gold) as well as the location where they must be paid annually.

About Richard & Rachel Beard

Over time and in different documents, Richard Beard was identified with several different professions, statuses and affiliations, including: “Planter, Boatwright, Quaker and Gentleman.”¹⁰ The first two terms describe Richard Beard’s profession, with a planter simply being another term for a farmer and a boatwright being an individual who builds or repairs boats, particularly those made from wood. The identification of Beard as a Quaker describes his religious affiliation and the term Gentleman is a characterization of his social status. Beard also represented Anne Arundel County in the Assemblies from 1662 to 1663.¹¹

Centuries later, during the development of what is now the community of South River Landing, the initial excavation revealed an area Richard and Rachel Beard used for the disposal of their trash on the original plantation. Upon the discovery, the developer of the project (Gary Pyles) funded an archeological project to properly explore the contents. Pamela Rule and June Evans were the Archaeologists and subsequently published a report of their findings in the *Journal of the Archeological Society of Maryland* in September 1984. After a thorough exploration, the trash pit revealed the following items:

- 11 ceramic vessels
- 25 kaolin pipes (These are pipes made of clay, originating in England for the purpose of smoking tobacco)
- 4 wine bottles
- 2 snuff bottles
- 310 rose head nails
- 5 flint strike a lights (device pre-dating matches designed to create sparks to start a fire)
- Lead shot in two sizes
- 1 iron drawer pull

- 1 copper and brass furniture fitting
- 1 copper tobacco tin
- 1 gun spall
- 1 antler tine reamer
- Numerous remains of cattle, pig, chicken and oysters

The maker's marks of the pipes, combined with analysis of the bowls lead Rule and Evans to conclude this trash pit was utilized between the years 1660 and 1663. This coincides with the documented occupation of Richard and his wife Rachel on Poplar Neck.

After the analysis of the items and combined with historical documentation, Evans and Rule deduce the Beards held a position of status and relative wealth in the early colonial community. As an example, items we now consider commodities, such as nails, were in high demand at the time. The scarcity of nails caused some individuals to burn their dwellings before moving to a new tract of land to reclaim the nails so they were available to build homes on their new properties. This practice became so common in colonial Virginia, the Government passed a law in 1644-5 to discourage this practice and provided free nails for the new dwelling:

Each planter, when he gave up his dwelling, should be allowed, at public expense, as many nails as two impartial men should calculate to be in the frame of the deserted residence.”¹²

The discovery of 310 *discarded* rose head nails in the Beard's trash pit is indicative of an individual with means.¹³

Richard Beard subsequently patented “Beard's Habitation,” on September 22, 1663, which was a large tract of land on “Beard's Creek,” located to the northwest of Poplar Neck on the South River.¹⁴

Beard's son, also named Richard, became a Justice of Anne Arundel County from 1679 to 1692 and is credited with making the first map of Annapolis. ¹⁵

Chapter 2 References:

1. Early Colonial Archeology at the Pyles Site, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Rule and Evans, Maryland Archeology, Journal of the Archeological Society of Maryland, September 1984 ,Vol. 20, No 2, p. 25
2. Excerpt from An Act Concerning Religion, 1649, Maryland State Archives S 977-1 Folio 358
3. The Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties Maryland, Warfield, 1905, p. 49
4. The Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland, Warfield, 1905, p. 49
5. Maryland Under the Commonwealth, A Chronicle of the Years 1649-1658, Steiner, 1911, p. 11
6. A History of Anne Arundel County Maryland, Riley, 1905, p. 29
7. Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science, Vol. XXIX, 1911, p. 11
8. England Under the Norman Occupation, Morgan, 1858, p. X
9. Maryland Land Records Liber L5 Folio 588 SR7347
10. First Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1649 – 1658 Donna Valley Russell, 1999, p. 4
11. The Founders of Anne Arundel and Howard Counties, Maryland, Warfield, 1905, pp. 106-107
12. Economic History of Virginia In the Seventeenth Century, Bruce, 1896, p. 147
13. Early Colonial Archeology at the Pyles Site, Anne Arundel County, Maryland, Rule and Evans, Maryland Archeology, Journal of the Archeological Society of Maryland, September 1984 ,Vol. 20, No 2, p. 25
14. Land Grants in Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1650-1704, South River Hundred, Hall, p. 5
15. A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature 1635-1789 by Edward C. Papenfuse, et. al., Vol 426, p. 126

Chapter 3: Mitchells Creek

After the original land patent of Poplar Neck was recorded in 1663, the next entry in the Maryland land records is the sale of Poplar Neck from Richard Beard to John Mott.

Transcription of sale from Beard to Mott

Richard Beard hath assigned over this patent for 200 acres to John Mott in these words and willed that the same be putt upon the records Know all wereby these presents that Richard Beard any heirs Executors or Administrators and afsignes do afsign over and sell unto John Mott his heirs executors administrators or afsignes forever all my right title and interest of this patent as willing my hand this 28th September 1663 ¹

John Mott died within approximately one year of acquiring Poplar Neck. Although Mott's ownership of Poplar Neck was brief, it creates a link to the naming of the creek along its shores. In Mott's will, which was probated on October 29, 1664, he left his entire estate to his only daughter Elizabeth and his wife to use the same during her lifetime. ²

Elizabeth Mott married William Mitchell II on or about 1670. ³ Their marriage was relatively short as Elizabeth died in about the year 1674 and was estimated to be 34 years old at the time of her death. ⁴

Historical Perspective: The average life expectancy of the time was 35 years old. This was due to primitive medical practices, high number of infant deaths, unchecked epidemics and a general lack of sanitation.⁵

Elizabeth died intestate (without a will) and without any heirs (children in this instance). The inheritance procedures of colonial Maryland were similar to those of England at the time. Unlike modern procedures, which would transfer the property to the surviving spouse if the individual died intestate, the right of primogeniture was practiced. When an individual dies without a will, this procedure favors the inheritance along bloodlines and particularly to the eldest son or male lineage if available. The essence of this practice was employed in colonial Maryland through the 1700's.

In the event of an individual dying testate (with a valid will) it is common to set aside use of the land for the remainder of a surviving spouse's natural life at which time the property will then convey to the eldest son, or in the absence of a son, to the eldest daughter. An example of this was witnessed in John Mott's will when he left his entire estate to his "only daughter Elizabeth *and his wife to use the same during her lifetime.*"⁶ There are also instances of individuals dividing land within a will and leaving portions to their children, although not as common.

Given the inheritance procedures of the day and absence of a will, Poplar Neck did not transfer from Elizabeth to her husband upon her death as would be expected based on modern laws. Instead, ownership reverted to the oldest living male on Elizabeth's father's side of the family. A later transfer of Poplar Neck within the Maryland land records, describes the inheritance procedure upon Elizabeth's death:

...Elizabeth his daughter and only child of the said John Mott intermarried to William Mitchell... and surviving her said father and becoming seized of the said land died without any heir of her body by means whereof Adam Mott of Portsmouth on Rhode Island in New England the

brother of the said John Mott became and was (no other nearer heir living) the right full and apparent heir at law of the said Elizabeth and by virtue in right thereof did by his sufficient and authentic power... Empowering his son Adam Mott to sell a lien the same in fee simple and whereas the said Adam Mott the son did by virtue of the said letter of attorney by a conveyance bearing date the ninth day of March in forty second year of the Dominion of Cecilius Absolute Lord and proprietor of the province of Maryland and Avalon Lord Baron of Baltimore over this province of Maryland and in year of our Lord God one thousand six hundred and seventy four for the consideration herein exprefsed grant and confer same to the said William Mitchell... ⁷

In summary, after Adam Mott inherited the land from Elizabeth, he placed his son Adam in charge of the sale of Poplar Neck. Adam then sold Poplar Neck to Elizabeth's widower, William Mitchell on March 9, 1674, causing Mitchell to buy the land he previously lived on with his wife.

After William Mitchell's acquisition of Poplar Neck, he became remarried to a woman named Jane and had four children: William III, John, Edward and Elizabeth. ⁸ The will of William Mitchell II was probated on March 6, 1685, leaving Poplar Neck "equally at death of wife to sons William and John and heirs; sons to be of age at 18 years." ⁹ In the same will, William Mitchell II, leaves to son Edward and daughter Elizabeth a separate 200 acre tract of land known as "Mitchell's Chance," a name familiar to current residents of Edgewater.

Marking the first division of this tract of land since it's original survey in 1650, two Mitchell brothers now each held 100 acre portions of Poplar Neck. On December 10, 1702, seventeen years after their Father's will was probated, leaving each son half of Poplar Neck, William Mitchell III sold his 100 acre portion to Thomas Bale. ¹⁰

On January 1, 1706, Thomas Bale sold the same 100 acre portion of Poplar Neck to Seth Biggs. ¹¹ In a twist bringing

Poplar Neck back to its original 200 acre form, Seth Biggs purchased the remaining 100 acre portion of Poplar Neck from John Mitchell and his wife Susanna on August 23, 1706.¹² After this transaction, Seth Biggs is now the owner of Poplar Neck in the same form as originally surveyed by Richard Beard and his wife Rachel in 1650.

In a transaction completely independent of Poplar Neck and occurring on December 17, 1704, William Mitchell patented a tract of land to be known as “Mitchell’s Addition.”¹³ This tract consists of 18.5 acres and lies adjacent to Poplar Neck. This patent becomes historically important, as Mitchell’s Addition and Poplar Neck would later become merged into one parcel.

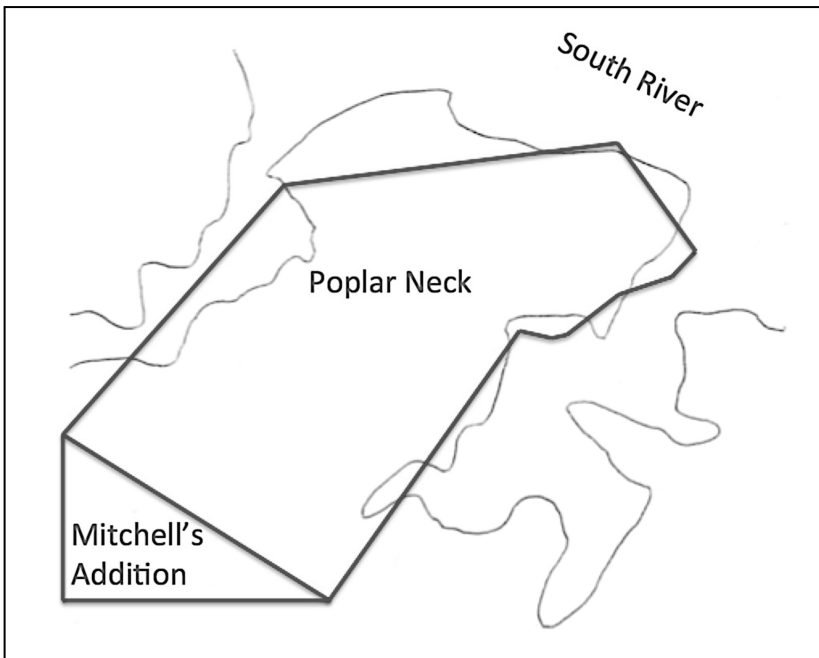


Figure 3-1 Re-creation of approximate Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition land survey overlaid on 2016 land map

While there were several deed transfers toward the end of the family’s 32-year ownership of Poplar Neck, the Mitchell Family name left a lasting mark, signifying their early and extended occupation of this tract of land. In Richard Beard’s original land patent, the creek to the southeast of Poplar Neck was not named, but simply referred to as “a creek.”¹⁴ A few early documents identify the creek bordering Poplar Neck to

the southeast as “Mott’s Branch” or “Mott’s Creek.” It was however Elizabeth Mott’s marriage into the Mitchell family and the family’s successive land ownership that led to the waterway originally referred to as “the creek,” being known as “Mitchells Creek.” The creek carried this identification for nearly two centuries and even into the early 1900’s in some documented plats. Today, this same creek is known as Almshouse Creek.

Chapter 3 References:

1. Maryland Land Records Liber L5 Folio 589 SR7347
2. Maryland Calendar of Wills, Vol. 1, p. 30
3. Maryland Marriage Evidences 1634-1718, Barnes, p. 234
4. 100’s of Families from the Eastern Shore, from Charlemagne to the Early 1900’s, Virginia Eastern Shore Public Library, Miles, p. 745
5. The Practice of Domestic Medicine During the Colonial Years, Eichner, p. 1
6. Maryland Calendar of Wills, Vol. 1, p. 30
7. Maryland Land Records Liber WT2 Folio 453-454
8. Maryland Marriage Evidences 1634-1718, Barnes, p. 234
9. Maryland Calendar of Wills, Vol. 1 p. 161
10. Maryland Land Records Liber WT2 Folios 34-36
11. Maryland Land Records Liber WT2 Folios 473-475
12. Maryland Land Records Liber WT2 Folios 453-456
13. Maryland Land Records Liber 5 Folio 211, SR7378
14. Maryland Land Records Liber L5 Folio 588 SR7347

Chapter 4: London Town: A Neighbor to the Southeast

Poplar Neck and London Town share many of the same characteristics: Both peninsulas reside in Anne Arundel County and are of similar size and shape; both peninsulas extend into the waters of the South River approximately three miles from the Chesapeake Bay and the waters of Mitchells Creek separate both peninsulas.

While the settlement of each peninsula began at nearly the same time, they each took very different paths as they progressed through time. London Town took early steps to support the development of a populated town and began building its reputation as a port of trade. Alternatively, Poplar Neck resisted the division of its land and became both a geographically desirable neighbor and a witness to London Town's rise as a colonial trading town.

Colonel William Burgess, brother in law to Richard Beard, originally surveyed a tract of land known as "The Burgh" on February 9, 1650. ¹The Burgh adjoined a separately surveyed tract of land known as "Scorton," which was originally surveyed by George Westhill and later sold to William Burgess on March 10, 1673. ²

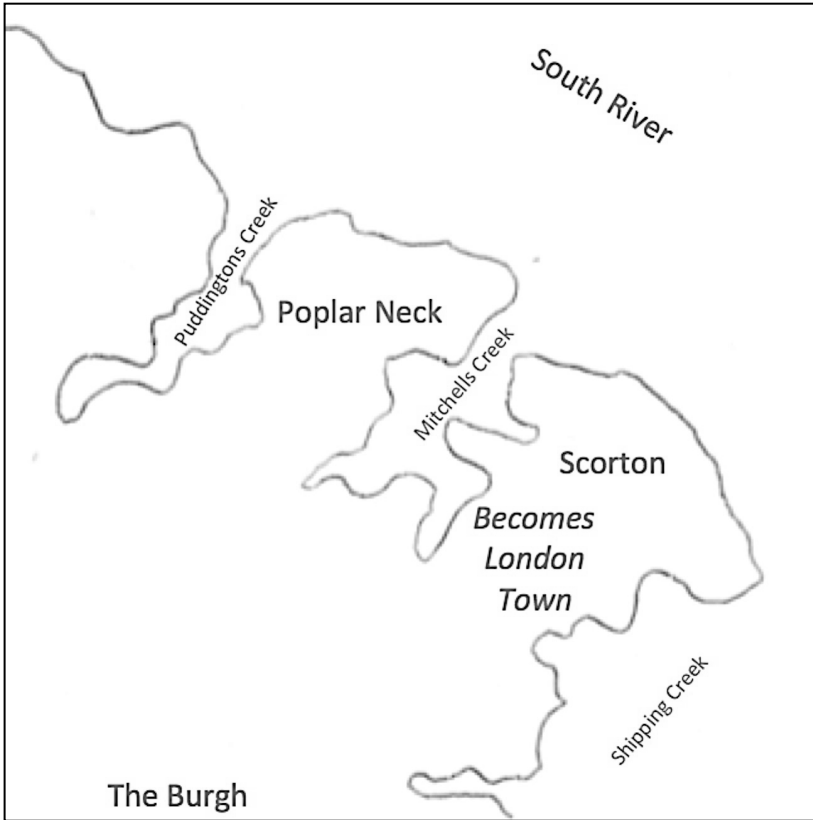


Figure 4-1: Re-creation of original land tracts and waterways

Combined with the Province's passage of *An Act for Advancement of Trade* in 1683 and the division of a portion of Burgess' plantation at the tip of the peninsula, London Town was authorized as a port of trade. The area was divided into 100 town lots of approximately 1 acre in size and a grid of 14 streets to navigate the town.³ To further enhance the infrastructure, Burgess built a wharf on his property to enable a fleet of ships trading between Bristol, England and Maryland.⁴

The establishment of a ferry crossing at the end of the London Town peninsula across the South River connected a major route of transportation between Williamsburg, VA and Philadelphia, PA. Over the course of time, this route and ferry would transport many travelers, including elite individuals such as George Washington,⁵ further building commerce within the town.

London Town took advantage of natural benefits to support the emerging transatlantic trade. “The best natural harbor on the South River was at Shipping Creek on the southeastern side of the peninsula that would become London Town.”⁶ Shipping Creek, which is now called Glebe Bay, could support the navigation of ships up to three hundred tons,⁷ enabling the exportation of tobacco, which was the primary cash crop of the region.

The name of the creek as Shipping Creek is confirmed in several deed transfers including a conveyance from Stephen and Martha West in August, 1743.

...It being numbered and bounded as lot number forty four called John Holland Lott and bounded on the North East by Lott No. twenty seven on the North East by Lott number forty three on the south by **Shipping Creek** and on the south west by Back Street.⁸

This was a time when three-masted, multi-ton ships routinely came to the area from England loaded with merchandise to support the growing number of settlers in the region. After their long journey across the Atlantic and arrival in the port town, the tradesmen of London Town serviced the ship. Boatwrights made any necessary repairs, while hogshead of tobacco were loaded on the ship for export to England. A hogshead is a large wooden barrel holding dried tobacco. The container provided convenient packaging for export to England on the large ships and its round shape provided a means for farmers to transport their crops to the ports by rolling them.

Historical Perspective: Between 1705 and 1762, tobacco ships made more than 585 voyages to Anne Arundel County, with 231 of them having a destination of the South River and London Town.⁹

This trade drew a growing population of individuals to London Town and created many different types of jobs to support the

commerce. These include merchants, carpenters, innkeepers, taverns, boatwrights and many others.

Poplar Neck's proximity to London Town makes it one of the most convenient farms to the port town and drives its early value. This will be displayed by the prominence of the individuals holding deed to Poplar Neck during this era.

Chapter 4 References:

1. Maryland Land Records Liber Q Folio 403 SR 7345
2. First Families of Anne Arundel County, Maryland 1649 – 1658
Donna Valley Russell, 1999, p. 15
3. Reconstructing London Town: An Exercise in Deduction, Moylan,
pp. 3-4
4. Londontown on South River, Anne Arundel County Maryland,
Maryland Historical Magazine, Vol. XIX, No 2. P. 135
5. Annals of Annapolis, Ridgely, 1841, p. 220
6. Reconstructing London Town: An Exercise in Deduction, Moylan,
p. 2
7. Reconstructing London Town: An Exercise in Deduction, Moylan,
p. 2
8. Maryland Land Records Liber RB 1 Folio 306
9. Trade in Colonial Anne Arundel County: The Tobacco Port of
London Town, Kerns-Nocerito, Maryland Historical Magazine, p.
326

Chapter 5: 18th Century Poplar Neck

Poplar Neck Ownership 1706-1711: Seth Biggs (with Sarah Webb as heir)

Seth Biggs was born in Bristol, England in 1653 and immigrated to the Province of Maryland in 1680. ¹ Biggs was married to Mary and there is no record of the couple having any children. He is described as a merchant by trade, both in Bristol and in Anne Arundel County. Biggs had a business partnership with a gentleman named William Holland, ² who would later become a part of the successive ownership of Poplar Neck.

In addition to his merchant career, Biggs was also a Justice of the Provincial Court from 1702 to 1706 and was appointed to the Council in 1708. ³

Biggs' purchase of the two 100 acre tracts of Poplar Neck in January and August of 1706 preceded his death by two years. Biggs died intestate on July 31, 1708 and two years later his widow Mary became remarried to the honorable Dr. William Lock. ⁴

Given Biggs died intestate, his estate was ultimately inherited by his sister, Sarah Webb of Bristol, England as his "only sister and heir at law." ⁵ There is evidence to suggest Sarah Webb took Mary Biggs and her new husband, William Lock, to court in an attempt to secure her inheritance of Seth Biggs' estate. ⁶ Sarah Webb ultimately prevailed and retained the services of a gentleman named John Hodges to liquidate the estate on her

behalf and to her benefit: “he the said John Hodges or his heirs should and might with all Convenient speed sell and dispose of the inheritance and fee simple of the said premises.”⁷ On January 13, 1711, Poplar Neck was sold to William Holland, the former business partner to Seth Biggs.⁸

This transaction contains one of the early documented descriptions of the creek to the southeast of Poplar Neck as “Mitchells Creek.” This description is included in the Provincial Court Land Records and is dated January 13, 1711. This description also references a creek to the northwest of Poplar Neck, known as Puddingtons Creek. This creek was most likely named after George Puddington, who patented a nearby tract of land he named Puddington Harbor.

Land Description within Deed Transfer from John Hodges (Sarah Webb) to William Holland

...Tract or parcell of Land scituate Lying & being in Ann arundel County afd Called Poplar Neck Beginning at a bounded water oak standing by South River side and on the south side of the said River upon a point and runing from the said oake by a Line drawn south west one hundred eighty five perches to a bounded Cedar standing **by a Creek Called Mitchells Creek** and from the said Cedar by a Line drawn south eighty three degrees and a half westerly one hundred eighty three perches to a bounded white oake it being a bounded tree of a Tract of Land Called Puddington and from the said white oak with the Land of Puddington northwest by north sixty six perches to a bounded hiccory standing at the head of a **Creek Called Puddingtons Creek** thence with the naturall bounds of the said Creek by several Courses to a point at the mouth of the said Creek & upon south river side thence bounding on the said River by a streight Line to the first bounded tree⁹

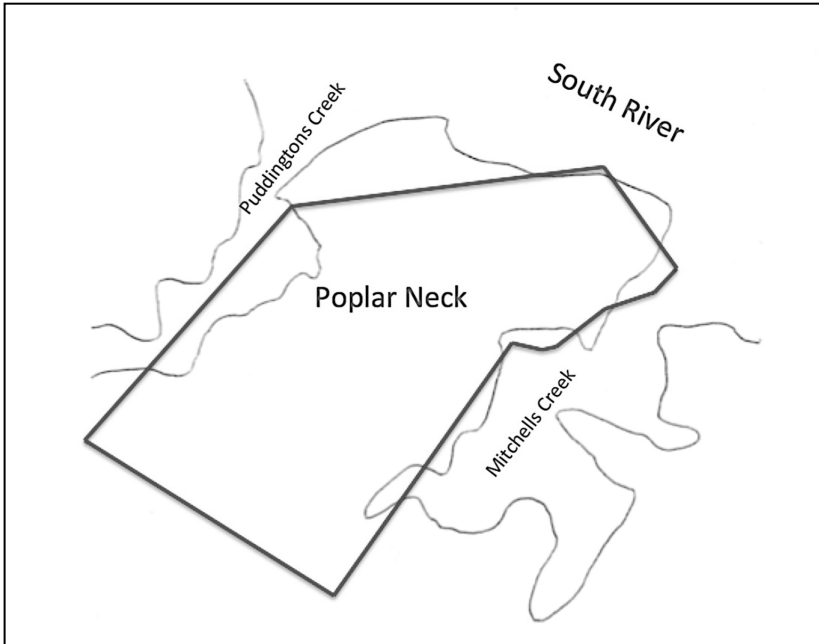


Figure 5-1: Re-creation of 1725 Poplar Neck land survey overlaid on 2016 map of the peninsula showing the names of the surrounding creeks

We will never be able to overlay with absolute certainty given four of the survey points were bounded by trees. Figure 5-1 shows an estimated overlay of the Poplar Neck boundaries using a documented 1725 survey over a current land map. The same scale was used for both the map and the survey, the bold line being the documented survey. This estimate is reasonably supported by more accurate and advanced plats, which appear in the land records across the 1800's and are included in later chapters. The land at the tip of the peninsula is not an intentional elimination from the survey, but more likely a function of primitive survey techniques of the time. The fact that the 1725 survey overlays water at the mouth of Mitchells Creek could be attributed to erosion over the centuries, man-made intervention or simply incorrect surveys based on primitive techniques and tools.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1711-1715: William Holland

It is believed William Holland was born in the year 1670 and was possibly a second generation resident of Anne Arundel County. He was married twice, first to Margaret and later to Elizabeth in 1724. Holland had five children, including sons: Francis, William and Thomas and daughters Margaret and Frances. Holland had a very diverse career, including roles as a Planter and Merchant. He also served in the Lower and Upper House of Anne Arundel County for many years and his military service includes the rank of Captain by 1691 and Colonel by 1701.¹⁰

Under the Assembly Proceedings of Maryland on May 13, 1696, the position of Sheriff for several counties is established, including Anne Arundel. The record from the proceedings reveals the list of qualified candidates by county for the position. In the case of Anne Arundel, two candidates were submitted for consideration: Captain William Holland and Mr. Samuel Young. In the approval, it was ordered:

A clause be inserted in the commissions of the Sheriffs of Anne Arundel County obliging them actually to live and reside in the port and town of Annapolis. Mr. Young being sent for and refusing the said condition of living in town but Mr. Holland accepting thereof is therefore appointed Sheriff of Anne Arundel County.¹¹

Holland continues his public service leadership after an event, which occurred in the early 1700's and continues to impact our access to early Anne Arundel County documents to this day. Thus far, there have been no plats associated with the original land patent and early deeds of Poplar Neck. This is not because they didn't originally exist, but due to a courthouse fire in 1704 which destroyed many of the original drawings. After the fire, a commission was established to hear and determine claims for existing land grants. Colonel William Holland was named as the Chief Commissioner and led the effort.¹² Land records, which were destroyed in the fire, were

re-created over a period of years, but the early drawings were never replaced. ¹³

On July 7, 1715, William Holland sold Poplar Neck to William Nicholson. ¹⁴

William Holland amassed significant wealth throughout his life, holding in excess of 3,000 acres at the time of his death in 1732. Though he had clear ownership, it is unclear if Holland ever personally resided on Poplar Neck.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1715-1721: William Nicholson (and heirs)

William Nicholson was born in 1665 in Berwick-Upon-Tweed, England. ¹⁵ Described through his will and other documents as a Merchant, ¹⁶ he migrated to Anne Arundel in approximately the year 1700. Upon his arrival, he purchased a 1,000 acre tract of land in Baltimore County, which ironically was also named Poplar Neck. ¹⁷

Nicholson would marry Elizabeth Burgess, ¹⁸ who was the granddaughter of William Burgess. A deed dated August 14, 1704 provides a tract of land as a gift from Elizabeth's father, Edward Burgess, to William Nicholson and his future wife. This gift is conditional upon a "marriage to be speedily had and solemnized," meaning it is conducted with a formal ceremony.

This indenture made the fourteenth Day of August in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and four between Edward Burgess of Anne Arundell County gent. of the one part and William Nicholson of the said county gent. of the other part Witnesseth that the said Edward for in consideration of a marriage to be speedily had and solemnized between the said William Nicholson and Elizabeth Burgess Daughter to the said named Edward party to these presents he the said Edward hath given granted bargained sold...tract or parcel of land being part of a tract called Puddington Harbour... ¹⁹

True to the words within the deed, a marriage was “speedily had” one day later on August 15, 1704. ²⁰ William was 39 years old at the time of the marriage, 17 years senior to Elizabeth. Explaining the need for a “speedily had” marriage was the birth of their first child William four months later on December 28, 1704. ²¹

Children born out of wedlock at the time had legal, social and religious ramifications for the family as well as the child. In this instance, it was Edward who seemed most interested in legitimizing his grandchild by offering the conveyance of land in exchange for the wedding. William and Elizabeth had a total of six children: William, Joseph, Benjamin, Samuel, Edward and Elizabeth. ²²

Historical Perspective: There was a significant imbalance between the male and female populations in colonial Maryland with men outnumbering women by large margins.

On July 7, 1715 William Nicholson purchased Poplar Neck (of Anne Arundel County) from William Holland. ²³ Eight months later on March 13, 1716, his wife Elizabeth died at the young age of 33. ²⁴

William Nicholson died in 1719, three years after the death of his wife. In his will, which was probated on October 19, 1719, ²⁵ he instructs his Executors to sell Poplar Neck (Anne Arundel County) and the proceeds to be used in the general distribution of his estate:

Friends James Monat, Stephen Warman, James Nicholson and Jno. Beale, exs. Of estate in Maryland, or any two of them are empowered to make over in fee to purchases the following tracts viz: part of “Covell’s Troubles,” “Rockey Point,” pt. of “Covells Cove,” “Turkey Island,” pt. of “Mitchell’s Chance,” “Puddington,” pt. of “Puddington Harbor,” Elk Thickett,” “Williams addition” and **“Poplar Neck,” all in A. A. Co., to be sold with personalty**

thereon for benefit of personal estate.²⁶ *Author note: (Jno. was an abbreviation used for the name John)*

Much like William Holland before him, William Nicholson amassed significant wealth by the time of his death. He owned approximately 15 different tracts of land representing thousands of acres and multiple lots in London Town. Poplar Neck in Anne Arundel was just a small part of his overall land ownership.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1721-1733: Samuel Peele (and heirs)

Samuel Peele purchased Poplar Neck from the heirs of William Nicholson on October 13, 1721.²⁷ This transfer marks the beginning of what will become the longest period of time a single family will hold possession of Poplar Neck since its original survey in 1650. The Peele family will possess Poplar Neck for a total of 44 years across three members of the family and during London Town's most prosperous period of trade, from 1730 through 1750.²⁸

Samuel Peel, the son of a silk merchant in London, England was born on April 5, 1674.²⁹ On October 30, 1716, Samuel Peele purchased a lot located in London Town and³⁰ became the "first known appearance of Peele in the Anne Arundel County land records."³¹

Over the next several years, Peele continued to acquire additional lots within London Town and additional tracts of land within Anne Arundel County. Peele, a prominent merchant within London Town, coordinated large-scale importation of manufactured goods from England.³² As a result of his successful trade and merchant business, Peele established considerable wealth.³³

After Samuel Peele acquired Poplar Neck in 1721, he requested a resurvey of the tract in 1725.³⁴ The resurvey was intended to capture vacant property, which was meant to be a

part of the original survey, but not accurately incorporated. Peele's desire was accomplished as the resurvey yielded a new tally of 250 acres for Poplar Neck. This represents 50 more acres than the original survey. The 250 acre total would stand though the early 1800's at which time the aggregate acreage would become corrected back to the original total of 200 through an updated survey. Whether the new survey of 250 acres was influenced or simply a result of poor survey techniques will remain with those who lived at the time.

It is generally accepted that early colonial surveys contained many inaccuracies. "Monuments were perishable, surveys careless and boundaries often in doubt."³⁵ This is evidenced by overlays of colonial surveys on current maps as well as by the number of times land owners within the chain of ownership requested a resurvey of the same property to claim vacant lands intended to be included in the original surveys.

The 1725 resurvey by Samuel Peele becomes one of the earliest or perhaps even the first surviving survey of Poplar Neck after the courthouse fire of 1704 destroyed the previous drawings.

In the case of figure 5-2, the South River would be located at the bottom of this survey, Mitchells Creek on the left side and Puddingtons Creek on the right side. The trees bounding four points of the property also become visually evident, including: The beginning tree, cedar, white oak and hickory.

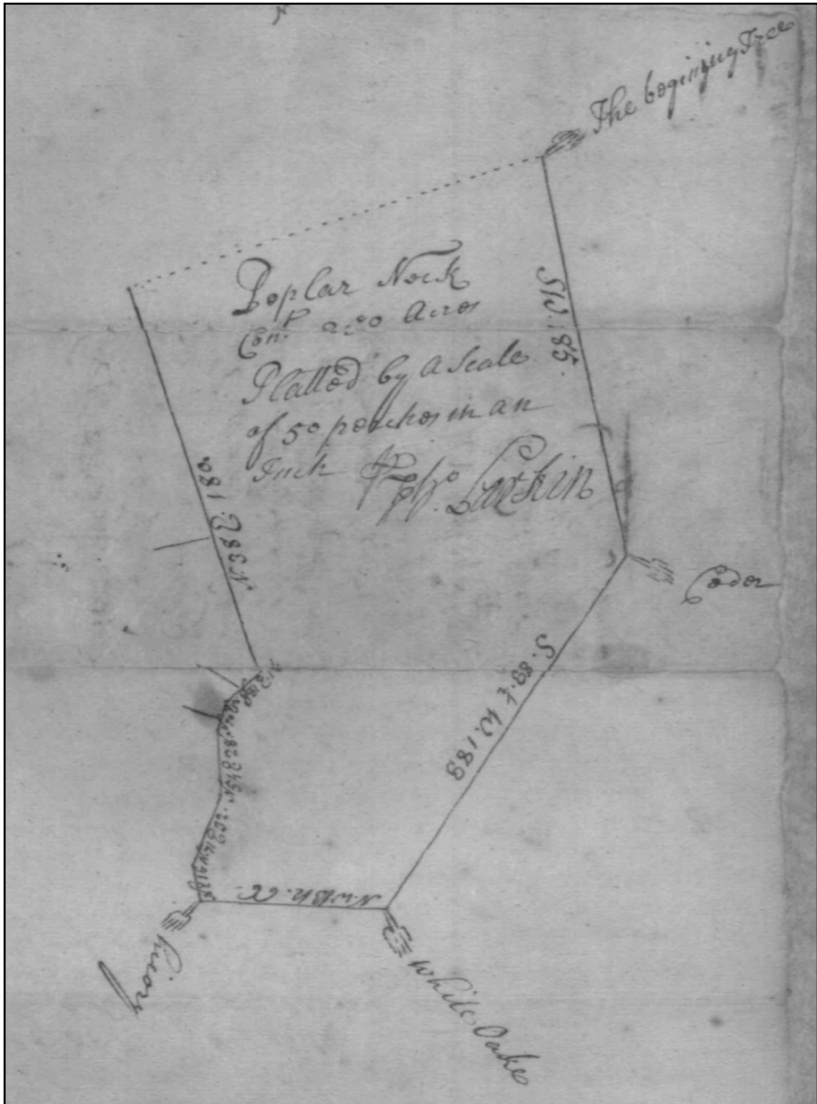


Figure 5-2: Image of original 1725 plat of Poplar Neck, Maryland State Archives S1189-1273 p. 3

On May 19, 1724, Samuel Peele purchased a separate tract of land from David Macklefresh comprising 18 ½ acres, known as “Mitchell’s Addition.”³⁶ (See figure 3.1) From this point forward, Poplar Neck and Mitchell’s Addition will transfer together as a packaged tract of land.

Samuel Peele died intestate in 1733. Since there is no record of Peele having been married, nor is there any record of Peele

having any children,³⁷ Peele's bothers would become heir to his estate. Samuel Peele had four brothers: William, Roger, John and Robert. Roger Peele died in 1723, ten years prior to Samuel. Robert died in the same year as Samuel, with no wife or children.³⁸

As the surviving brothers, William and John would inherit the estate with William becoming the administrator. To further validate Samuel Peele's wealth and success, his "inventory" at the time of this death was valued at 3,593 pounds, 30 shillings, and 14 pence.³⁹ The conversion of this value to today's U.S. dollars is complicated by many factors. For context, see figure 5-3.

Given Peele was a merchant by profession, the inventory of assets at the time of his death reads exactly as you might expect from a general store of the time. These items include fabric, horse saddles, linens, cutlery and a litany of other general merchandise. Figure 5-3 displays an example of one page of the inventory list and the associated values of the individual items. The values are listed as pounds, shillings and pence, which were the currency utilized in colonial Maryland before the Declaration of Independence.

<i>Saddles &c^a</i>		0:11:11
2 W ^o Side Saddles and furniture	---	5:10:0
2 Mens Saddles	---	4:5:0
2 Dozen Stirrup Leathers	---	1:12:0
13 Ordinary Snaffle Bridles	---	1:0:7
15 Broad Bained Ditto 9/8	---	2:0:0
8 curb Bridles	---	2:5:0
4 Spaire furniture for W ^o Saddles	---	1:0:0
2 Dozen & 10 Spaire Snaffle Bitts	---	1:4:0
23 Rope halters	---	0:11:6
5 1/2 Doz ⁿ Mens & W ^o Whips	---	7:10:0
3 W ^o Spaire Baines for Saddles	---	0:8:0
3 1/4 yards Hair (Coath & 2/-	---	3:8:0
1 Doz ⁿ Mens Swords 11 Belts 8/-	---	11:16:0
1 Mens Coath Hanging Trimes with Silver Moth eaten	---	0:19:6
<i>Cuttlary Ware</i>		
1 Dozen Large and Small Scissors 3/-	---	0:19:0
3 Doz ⁿ 9 Ivory knives and forks d 16/Doz	---	3:0:0
2 Doz ⁿ Bone knives & forks 4/-	---	0:9:0
3 Doz ⁿ 11 Maple knives and forks 4/6	---	0:17:9
2 Doz ⁿ 3 Tomy haffled Ditto 7/6	---	0:16:10
4 Dozen and 11 Bone Butchers knives 3/6	---	0:15:2
2 Dozen Clasp knives 3/6	---	0:7:0
3 Needling Needles 2/-	---	0:5:3

Figure 5-3: Portion of Samuel Peel's inventory after his death in 1733.
Prerogative Court Liber 18 Folio 159

Poplar Neck Ownership 1733-1748: William Peele with Roger Peele, Jr. as heir in waiting 1748-1765

When Roger Peele's three son's learned of Samuel's death, they took William Peele (as the Administrator of Samuel's estate) to court seeking their father's share of Samuel's estate.

40

A subsequent entry in the Maryland Land Records on May 7, 1737 gifts Poplar Neck to Roger Peele, Jr. upon the death of

William Peele. This was perhaps an effort by William to satisfy Roger Peele, while also enabling him to maintain possession of Poplar Neck for the remainder of his life. This entry identifies the resident of Poplar Neck as William Peele's "overseer." This individual would have been responsible for the production of crops on Poplar Neck and the management of the labor while William Peele remained a resident of London Town.

...likewise by these presents give and grant unto my said loving kinsman Roger Peele aforesaid and his male heirs forever after my decease all that tract or tracts of land commonly known by the name of the home quarter whereon my Overseer now dwells lying in the county aforesaid (Anne Arundel) consisting of part of Poplar Neck Puddingtons Harbour and Mitchells Chance or Mitchells Addition...⁴¹

After a continued court battle, which went so far as to require multiple proofs of evidence linking his relation to his father, Roger Peele, Jr. and his brothers were paid their (cash) share of Samuel Peele's estate in 1743.⁴²

The love for his nephew, which was described in the deed transfer, is seemingly lost after this court battle. In William Peele's will, which was probated on January 26, 1748, he leaves one shilling each to Roger Peele and his brothers, while leaving the following tidy sums to others:⁴³

- 500 pounds to his niece
- 100 pounds to the son of a cousin
- 100 pounds to a godson
- 10 pounds to another godson

After William Peele's death, the executors of his will attempt to sell Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition as evidenced by the newspaper announcement in Figure 5-4. This is in direct conflict with the deed, which was recorded on May 7, 1737 in the Maryland land records transferring Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition to Roger Peele, Jr. after the decease of William Peele.

To be SOLD by PUBLIC VENDUE,

On Tuesday the 13th of November next, at the House of William Brown, in London-Town, the following Tracts of LAND, belonging to the Estate of William Peele, deceased,

ONE TRACT called *Sympson's Stones*, containing by Patent 153 Acres, lying near a Place called *Huntington*.

ONE TRACT called *Bachelor's Choice*, containing 100 Acres, lying on the South Side of the main Falls of *Patuxet*, and contiguous to a Tract of Land, survey'd for *Jane Gray*, called *Maiden's Bower*.

ONE TRACT called *Poplar Neck*, containing by Patent 250 Acres.

ONE TRACT called *Mitchell's Addition*, containing 18½ Acres.

PART of a TRACT called *Paddington's Harbour*, containing 100 Acres.

••• These 3 last Tracts lie contiguous to one another, and near *London-Town*.

Also, The late *Mr. Peele's Dwelling-House*, Store, and other Improvements, in *London-Town*, with several unimproved Lots lying contiguous.

All Persons who have any Demands against the said Estate, are desired to bring them in. And any inclining to Purchase the above Lands, may be informed of the Title and Terms of Sale, by applying to

JAMES MOUNT,	}	Executors.
JAMES DICK,		
JAMES NICHOLSON,		

Figure 5-4: Image of original announcement by the executors of William Peele's Estate to sell Poplar Neck, Maryland Gazette, October 11, 1759, p. 4. Maryland State Archives SC 2731

Roger Peele, Jr. once again found himself in a court challenge to stop the sale of Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition. He was ultimately successful, enabling him to then sell the land for his benefit.

It was about this same time when the bustling port of London Town began its slow decline. The passage of the *Tobacco Inspection Act of 1747* intended to address the quality and associated value of Maryland tobacco. To accomplish this, the Government established authorized tobacco inspection locations. Likely due to politics at the time, London Town was not included as an authorized inspection location. As the export of tobacco and associated import of merchandise from England transitioned nearer to the authorized inspection locations, the individuals supporting this trade moved as well. With the simple stroke of a legislative pen, London Town's prominence as a port town and hub of commerce activity was written into history.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1765-1781: Charles Stewart

The deed transfer from Roger Peele to Charles Stewart on May 27, 1765 identifies Stewart's profession as a farmer.⁴⁴ Charles was married to Ann Stockett and the couple had six children: Mordecai, Charles, Mary, Eleanor, Susannah and Sarah. Based on the description in his will, Stewart held the deed to Poplar Neck, but his "dwelling house and plantation" were elsewhere.

⁴⁵

Charles Stewart died testate (with a valid will) in 1781 and conveyed Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition to his eldest son, Mordecai Stewart.⁴⁶ At the time of his death and through his will, Charles Stewart distributed 7 milk cows, 12 sheep and 3 horses to his other children in addition to the remainder of his land and assets.

Historical Perspective: The total population in Maryland during the first Census of the United States in 1790 was 319,728.⁴⁷ Today the population is nearly six million.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1781-1801: Mordecai Stewart (and heirs)

After Mordecai Stewart's inheritance of Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition in 1781,⁴⁸ he attempted to sell the property three years later. Figure 5-5 shows a newspaper advertisement in the Maryland Gazette from November 25, 1784. In the second portion of the ad, Mordecai Stewart lists Poplar Neck for sale. Given the number of acres listed, he is including Mitchell's Addition as well, though he only makes reference to Poplar Neck.

It is interesting to contrast how land was advertised for sale in 1784 versus how it may be advertised today. Portions of the ad contain similar characteristics of a modern day ad including the notation of its proximity to Annapolis and access to transportation routes. The ad also reveals the value of basic sustenance offered by the property by noting "plenty of wood to support the place" and "a variety of fruit trees." Also interesting to note is the artistic description of "two never failing springs on both sides the land," which presumably refers to Mitchells and Puddingtons Creeks.

T O B E S O L D,

A TRACT of land lying in Montgomery county, containing 100 acres, within four miles of the court-house, and the same distance from the upper falls of Patowmack, joining Mr. Allen Bowie's, Mr. James Smith's, and Mr. S. W. Magruder's lands, plenty of springs, meadow land and wood, a framed dwelling house 20 by 16, kitchen 12 by 16 shingled, a young apple orchard, peach ditto; the land may be viewed at any time, and terms made known by applying to Jacob Hedly, who is a tenant on the land, or the subscriber.

Likewise a tract of land called Poplar Neck, containing 268½ acres, within five miles of Annapolis, one of South river ferry, plenty of wood to support the place, and never failing springs on both sides the land, a variety of fruit trees. Any one inclinable to purchase or swap may view the land, and the terms made known, by applying to the subscriber who lives on the said land.

4 W
MORDECAI STEWART.

Figure 5-5: Image of original announcement to sell Poplar Neck from the Maryland Gazette, November 25, 1784 p. 4

Based on later records from the Chancery Court, it is confirmed Mordecai Stewart did not sell Poplar Neck in 1784, but instead held the property until his death on January 1, 1801, where he died intestate.⁴⁹ There are no records to indicate if Stewart received any offers based on his 1784 advertisement or simply didn't receive an offer with his asking price.

Mordecai and his wife had ten children: Mary, Ann, Sarah, Richard, Charles, Rachel, Mordecai, Elizabeth, Susan and Eleanor.⁵⁰

Chapter 5 References:

1. A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature 1635-1789 by Edward C. Papenfuse, et. al. p. 133
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Chapter 6: 19th Century Poplar Neck

Poplar Neck Ownership 1801-1820: Heirs of Mordecai Stewart while inheritance is settled in Chancery Court

Dying intestate creates numerous challenges and given there was no specific intent left by Mordecai Stewart through a will, the next twenty years became very litigious for Poplar Neck. Combined with the change in inheritance procedures from those originally borrowed from England, the inheritance of Poplar Neck and repayment of Mordecai Stewart's debt became a subject for the Chancery Court.

On September 30, 1807, as a result of petitions challenging the estate distribution of Mordecai Stewart, the Chancery Court assigns "five sensible and discreet men" to assess the property. ¹ They were tasked by the court to determine if Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition could be divided without "injury and loss" to all parties. They were also assigned to impartially determine the value of the land.

The report to the Chancery Court on April 16, 1808 from the five "sensible and discreet men" reads as follows:

...we met on the land mentioned in said Commission on the tenth day of November last and then (illegible) took unto consideration every circumstance relative to said land and were of opinion and aid so adjudge and determine that the said land could not be divided without loss to all the

parties interested for the following reasons to wit 1st that the said land is estimated to contain not more than on or about two hundred and sixty five acres, 2nd that said land is not worth fifteen pounds per acre. And we did further adjudge and determine the real value of the said land with the improvements clear of the widows dower she having consented to the sale of said land and to receive such a portion of the money arising from the sale thereof as she may be entitled to by law as will more fully appear by the agreement to be seventeen dollars per acre. ²

Within this particular Chancery Court case file, there is a large gap of time between 1808 and the Judges final decision in 1820. Perhaps a portion of this gap could be attributed to the distractions of the War of 1812 or perhaps a portion of the original file, which contained further challenge, has been lost.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1820-1820: John Robinson

As a part of the Judge's final decision on February 12, 1820 he determines:

John B Robinson and Sarah his wife who elect to take the said land at the valuation returned by the commifsioners (commissioners) by consent of the parties be entitled to take and hold the said land on the payment of the valuation... ³

John Robinson died soon thereafter and Nicholas Brewer, Jr. was assigned by the Chancery Court as a trustee to sell Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition at public auction. The court made this determination, as John Robinson's personal estate was insufficient to satisfy his debts "and praying that his real estate might be sold for that purpose." ⁴ The Chancery Court required Brewer to advertise the public sale in a newspaper of his choosing, but one that would attract potential buyers to the public sale. Figure 6-1 displays an image of the original newspaper advertisement and provides significantly better insight into Poplar Neck's characteristics in 1820 than the

relatively bland descriptions contained in the deeds. From this announcement, we gain several new insights:

- John Robinson and his wife Sarah (Mordecai Stewart's daughter) resided on Poplar Neck. This is in contrast to several of the former owners who held the deed to Poplar Neck but resided on other tracts of land.
- While a reasonable assumption of any farm of the time, we see the explicit statement regarding the farming of tobacco and grain on Poplar Neck.
- For the first time, we receive a description of the dwellings, barns and outhouses existing on the property.
- We see the second instance of a newspaper advertisement extoling the virtues of Poplar Neck's orchard, this time with more swagger. The announcement claims "an apple orchard surpassing any in the county in its size and quality of fruit, the former owner being distinguished for the excellence and quality of the cider he made from it every year."
- It is also evident from the advertisement that John Robinson and his wife Sarah lived on Poplar Neck for much longer than the court papers and land records would indicate. Perhaps by family agreement outside of the courts, John and Sarah's long-term residency of Poplar Neck is revealed within the description of the apple cider (John Robinson) made *every year*.

VALUABLE LAND FOR SALE.

BY virtue of a decree of the Court of Chancery, the subscriber will set up at public sale, on Wednesday, the 8th day of March next, at twelve o'clock, A. M. if fair, if not, the first fair day there after, on the premises, the Farm of JOHN BAPTIST ROBINSON, on which he resided, composed of two tracts of Land, called, "*POPLAR NECK*" and "*MITCHELL'S ADDITION*," lying on the south side of South River, next above the lower ferry, and containing about two hundred acres. This land has a kind soil, and is well adapted to the cultivation of Tobacco and Grain, lies very level, and is very improveable. The improvements are, a small dwelling house, a frame for a new one, which has been some time put up, a barn and other out houses, and an apple orchard, surpassing any in the county in its size and the quality of its fruit, the former owner being distinguished for the excellence and quality of the cider he made from it every year. The terms of sale are: That the purchaser shall give bond,

with good security, for the payment of the purchase money, with interest, within twelve months from the day of sale, and when the whole purchase money is paid, the land will be conveyed to the purchaser, in fee simple.

NICHOLAS BREWER, Jr.

Trustee.

The creditors of John B. Robinson are hereby notified to exhibit their claims with their vouchers, in the Chancery office, within six months from the 8th day of March next.

NICHOLS BREWER, Jr. Trustee.

Feb. 15.

55—2awts.

Figure 6-1: Image of original public sale newspaper announcement from 1820. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509

The advertisement contains a description regarding the time of the auction and instructions in the event of adverse weather: "On Wednesday the 8th day of March next at twelve o'clock AM if fair, if not, the first fair day there after." Bear in mind

potential buyers would travel to the site by foot, horse or carriage on dirt roadways and therefore adverse weather, even rain, could have a significant impact on attendance.

In his report back to the Chancery Court on August 3, 1820, Nicholas Brewer, Jr. notes the weather was unfavorable for a public auction on March 8, 1820. As a result he moved the auction to the 11th, “it being the next most favorable day.”⁵ Brewer reports a successful sale of Poplar Neck and Mitchell’s Addition to “Elizabeth Linthicum, she being the highest bidder for the sum of thirty five dollars and thirty cents per acre amounting to the sum of seven thousand and sixty dollars”⁶

This is more than double the value determined by the “five sensible and discreet” men 12 years earlier and at a time in which all trade had long since moved away from London Town. Based on the amount per acre and the total value of the sale, a new survey was clearly conducted bringing the total acreage back to 200.

Historical Perspective: In 1823, the Anne Arundel County Government purchased the William Brown house and surrounding 10 acres of land in London Town to use as an Almshouse.⁷ This is how the creek adjacent to Poplar Neck and London Town eventually became renamed from Mitchells Creek to Almshouse Creek.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1820-1826: Elizabeth Linthicum

Based on a promissory note signed by Elizabeth Linthicum to Nicholas Brewer, Jr. at the time of auction, Linthicum had 12 months to pay the full amount of \$7,060 plus interest. As evidenced by a subsequent Chancery Court Proceeding, Linthicum never paid the amount owed for Poplar Neck.⁸ As such, the Chancery Court appointed Nicholas Brewer (father to Nicholas Brewer, Jr.) as trustee to resell Poplar Neck “to repay the residue of the said purchase money.”⁹

On September 28, 1826, Nicholas Brewer posted an advertisement in the Maryland Gazette, listing Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition for sale. The announcement was tweaked slightly from that of figure 6-1 to describe its current resident as Elizabeth Linthicum and amending the description of the house on the property to reflect the newly built structure.

Valuable Land
FOR SALE.

By virtue of a decree of the court of chancery, the subscriber will set up at public sale, on Thursday the 5th of October next at 12 o'clock, A. M if fair, if not, the first fair day thereafter, on the premises, the farm on which Mrs Elizabeth Linthicum now resides, composed of two tracts of land, called "Poplar Neck," and "Mitchell's Addition," lying on the south side of South River, next above the lower ferry, and containing about two hundred acres. This land has a kind soil, and is well adapted to the cultivation of Tobacco and Grain, lies level and is very improveable The improvements are a new convenient dwelling house, tobacco house, and other out houses, and an apple orchard, surpassing any in the county in its size and quality of its fruit, the former owner being distinguished for the excellence and quality of the cider he made from it every year

The terms of sale will be accommodating, and will be made known on the day of sale.

Nicholas Brewer, Trustee.

Figure 6-2: Image of original public sale newspaper announcement, Maryland Gazette, September, 1826, Maryland State Archives SC 3426

On November 2, 1826, Nicholas Brewer (as trustee) sold Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition to Nicholas Brewer, Jr. at public auction for the sum of sixteen dollars and fifty cents per acre.¹⁰ This is less than half the gaveled auction price involving Elizabeth Linthicum six years earlier and a price directly in line with the value ascribed by the five "sensible and discreet men" several years earlier.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1826-1840: Nicholas Brewer, Junior

Nicholas Brewer, Jr. was born in Annapolis, MD on November 23, 1795. Brewer Jr. studied at St. John's College in Annapolis and like his father, pursued a career in law. On October 18, 1837, he was appointed to the Third Judicial Circuit Court as an Associate Judge.

On December 19, 1840, Nicholas Brewer, Jr. sold Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition representing 200 acres "more or less" to James Larimore¹³ for \$3,000 or \$15 dollars per acre.¹⁴

In 1851, Brewer, Jr. was elected to the Second Judicial Court, a position he held for the next thirteen years until his death on October 16, 1864.¹¹

After his death, Reverdy Johnson, who was a classmate of Judge Brewer at St. John's College wrote:

At the bar, Judge Brewer was noted for his skill and accuracy as a special pleader, and for the thorough preparation of his cases for trial. It was frequently remarked by his contemporaries that during a practice of many years they had never seen him taken by surprise at the trial table. As an equity pleader, it was conceded by his professional brethren that he had few superiors. As a judge no man could have possessed more entirely the confidence of those who resorted to the courts in which he presided. While no man, having the right, felt he had aught to fear from the stern integrity of the man, to evil-

doers he was verily a terror. At nisi prius his rulings were prompt, clear and positive. But it was in equity that his ability as a judge was most conspicuous, and to the force and authority of his orders and decrees in equity the Maryland Reports bear ample testimony.¹²

Poplar Neck Ownership 1840-1852: James Larimore, Jr.

James Larimore, Jr. was born in 1809 and married Eleanor Stevens on November 13, 1833¹⁵ The couple had 4 children: Richard, Susan, Ellen and Catharine. The 1850 U.S. Census identifies Larimore's occupation as a farmer.

Soon after acquiring Poplar Neck, Larimore had the tract of land resurveyed. Figure 6-3 displays the most advanced plat to date for Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition and for the first time accurately reflects the borders of the property. This marks a significant advancement in land survey techniques from the last survey represented in figure 5-2. This is also the first plat in this lineage documenting the names of the creeks (Mitchells and Puddingtons) as well as the South River.

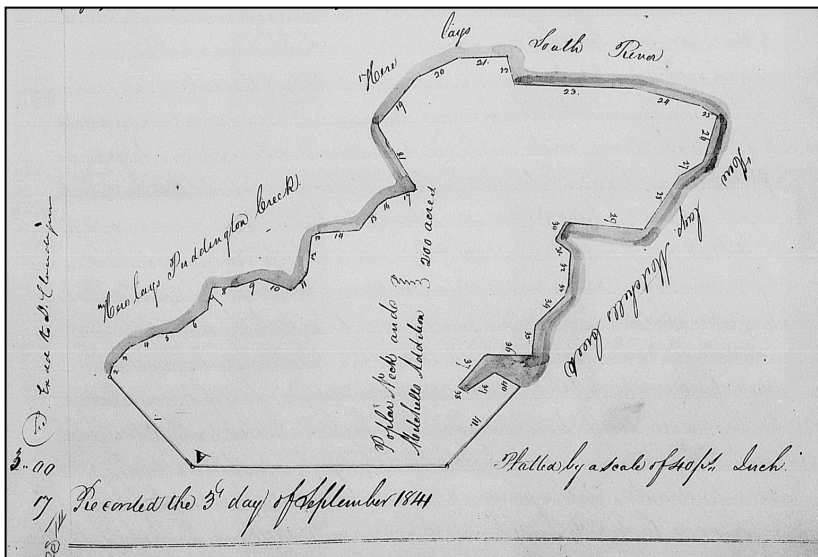


Figure 6-3: Image of original 1841 plat of Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition recorded in Maryland Land Records Liber WSG 25 Folio 630

In 1840, James Larimore, Jr. and his father James Larimore, Sr. took a loan from Dennis Claude, Jr. as a mortgage for Poplar Neck and another tract of land, named "Trouble." A single repayment of \$6,000 was due on December 23, 1850 with annual interest only payments due through the term of the loan. After "several years interest being due and unpaid," ¹⁶ Dennis Claude, Jr. filed a claim with the Chancery Court.

In a voluminous case file spanning several years, the court appointed Alexander Randall and Thomas Pratt as Trustees of the court to sell Poplar Neck. Randall and Pratt were assigned to sell Poplar Neck for the purpose of repaying the debt owed by the Larimore's. In a memo to the court, Randall and Pratt report the following:

The said trustees in accordance with an agreement of sale signed by the Complainant, the Solicitor of the Defendants and the purchaser herewith filed, have sold the mortgaged premises in the proceedings mentioned to Doctor Joseph Carr of Anne Arundel County at the price and upon the terms in the said agreement stated to wit for the sum of three thousand dollars. ¹⁷

Poplar Neck Ownership 1852-1857: Dr. Joseph Carr M.D.

Joseph Carr graduated from the University of Maryland School of Medicine in 1827 as a medical doctor. ¹⁸ The 1850 U.S. census confirms he was born in Maryland and resided in Anne Arundel County at the time of the census. Dr. Carr is buried at Mount Zion United Methodist Church cemetery in Lothian, MD and his tombstone identifies his date of birth as August 31, 1803 and his date of death as December 25, 1857. ¹⁹

Dr. Joseph Carr was a practicing physician, when he purchased Poplar Neck on July 24, 1852 from the trustees, Alexander Randall and Thomas Pratt. ²⁰ Dr. Carr held possession of Poplar Neck for the last five years of his life and his will, dated December 9, 1857, confirms his residency of Poplar Neck.

Secondly, I will and bequeath to my nephew Philip Wesley Witwright, *the farm upon which I now reside*, containing about two hundred acres of land to him and his heirs forever.”²¹

His will also confirms the location of his house on the property as he separates 5 acres of Poplar Neck for the benefit of Ellen Ann Dorsey.

Sixthly, I will and bequeath unto Ellen Ann Dorsey...the house and five acres of land more or less attached thereto lying on the north side of the farm on which I now reside, near the creek that divides my farm from that of Stephen L. Lee’s together with all the appurtenances thereto belonging to and beginning from the same and a holly tree near the corn field fence and easterly from the house with said fence, northwesterly to the creek and thence with a boundary on the creek, to a black walnut tree standing near the creek upon the bank a little north of a flat place and marsh and thence in a straight line to beginning, to have and hold the same for and during the term of her natural life and after her death, to her two children James Henry Dorsey and Frances Ann Dorsey before named in this will forever.²²

It is difficult to pinpoint the exact location of the house on Poplar Neck using the description in the deed, however given the reference to the creek dividing Carr and Lee’s farms, we do know the house was along Puddingtons Creek.

Historical Perspective: It is believed Stephen L. Lee had a warehouse on his property bordering this creek, which was responsible for the name change from Puddingtons Creek to Warehouse Creek.²³

Figure 6-4 shows a later map of Poplar Neck with a U-shaped road in the Northwest quadrant of Poplar Neck. Based on the description in Dr. Carr’s will, the portion of the road leading to Puddingtons Creek (now Warehouse Creek) was likely the general location of his house.



Figure 6-4: Segment of Figure 6-11 indicating the likely location of Dr. Carr's house shown with the oval shape.

Upon Dr. Joseph Carr's death on December 25, 1857, the 5 acres and house were conveyed to Ellen Ann Dorsey and the remaining 195 acres of Polar Neck was conveyed to Philip Wesley Witwright.

Discussions of slavery associated with Poplar Neck have thus far been removed from this text, although in this situation, it is worth noting Ellen Ann Dorsey was a slave to Dr. Joseph Carr. On March 17, 1857, just prior to his death, Dr. Carr "liberated, manumitted and set free" Eleanor Ann Dorsey.²⁴ In addition to leaving Ellen Ann Dorsey the house and five acres of land, Dr. Carr also willed her son James Henry Dorsey the following:

Three thousand dollars, current money, when he arrives at the age of twenty one, and that he shall also pay to James

Henry Dorsey, or his guardian, the sum of two hundred dollars, current money, yearly after my death during his minority for his education and support and also that the said nephew Philip Wesley Witwright shall pay to Frances Ann Dorsey (sister of James Henry Dorsey and daughter of Ellen Ann Dorsey) one thousand dollars, current money, with interest from and after my death, the interest to be paid to her guardian, yearly, for her support, the principal to be paid when she shall have arrived at the age of twenty years.²⁵

Dr. Carr further willed Ellen Ann Dorsey “one milk cow, one horse, four hogs, bedstead and furniture for her and her children”²⁶ and announced his desire for his “brother Samuel Carr to act as guardian to James Henry and Frances Ann Dorsey during their minority.”²⁷

Dr. Carr did have other slaves, none of which received similar treatment in his will. Given the combination of these facts, with the notable request for Dr. Carr’s brother to act as guardian to the children, one could make the reasonable determination that James Henry and Frances Ann Dorsey were the children of Dr. Joseph Carr.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1857-1860: Philip Wesley Witwright

Philip Wesley Witwright was born on October 26, 1820. Based on the 1860 census, Witwright listed his residence in the first election district of Anne Arundel County and the neighboring property belonged to Stephen F. Lee. This would indicate P.W. Witwright used Poplar Neck as a residence during these years. This fact was confirmed by a later Circuit Court ruling containing a mortgage Witwright provided, where he described:

A parcel of land lying on the west side of South River which as devised to the said Witwright by Doctor Joseph Carr consisting of about one hundred and ninety five acres whereas the said Witwright *recently resided.*²⁸

Both the 1850 U.S. census and civil war draft registration identify Witwright's occupation as a farmer.

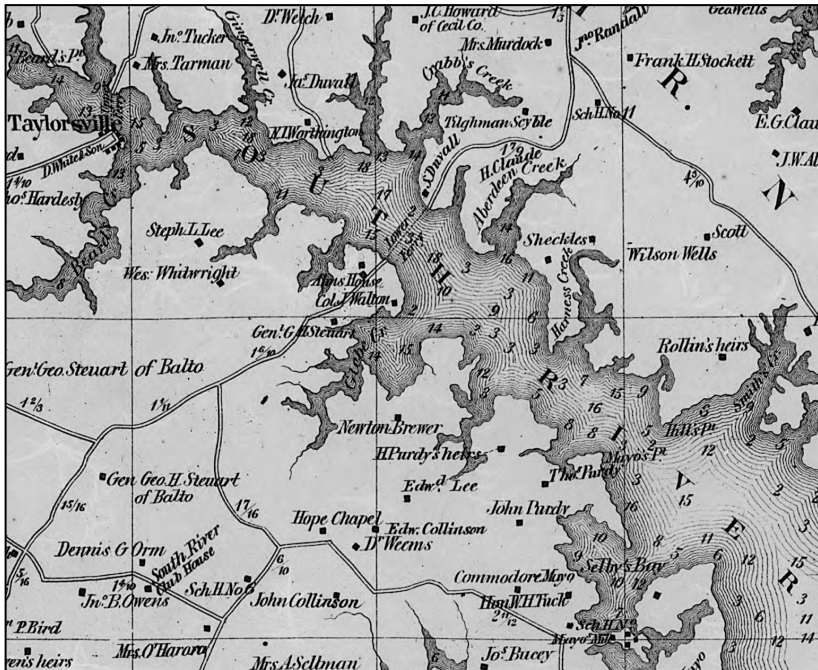


Figure 6-5: 1860 Martenet Map of Anne Arundel County identifying Witwright's land ownership of Poplar Neck

In March of 1860, Philip Witwright posted a newspaper announcement in the *Baltimore Sun*, listing Poplar Neck for sale as described in figure 6-6.

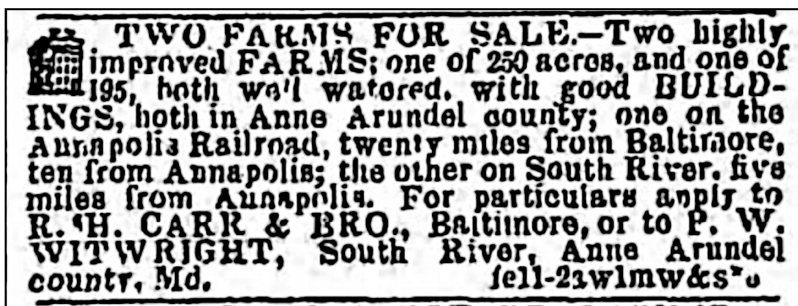


Figure 6-6: Original Image of March 3, 1860 Advertisement for Poplar Neck in the *Baltimore Sun*

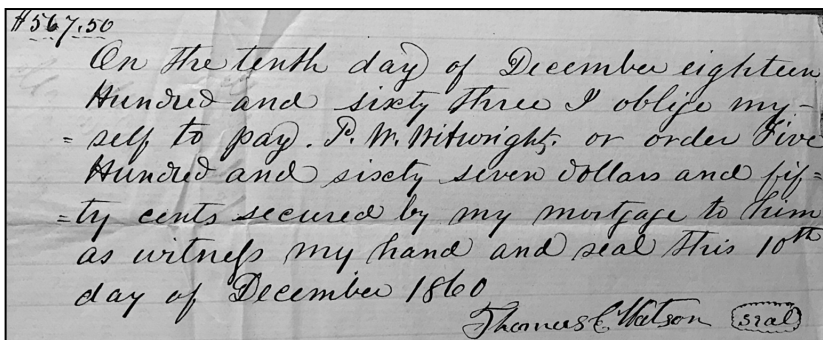
Later that same year, on December 10, 1860, Philip Wesley Witwright sold Poplar Neck to Thomas Watson.²⁹

Poplar Neck Ownership 1860-1868: Thomas Watson (and heirs)

The life of Thomas E. Watson is not well documented and even in a later Circuit Court case, only the year of his death was noted, not the day and month despite an allocation of space for it.

It is believed he was born on or about 1818 and was married to Ann. The couple had 8 children including Harriet, Franklin, Charles, Margaret, Alice, Richard, Thomas and Malcome. ³⁰ The 1860 U.S. census identifies Thomas Watson's occupation as a farmer.

Philip Wesley Witwright became the mortgagee to Thomas Watson during the conveyance of Poplar Neck. A mortgage document was drafted during the sale as well as individual payment slips, somewhat similar to those of a current day mortgage. Figure 6-7 and 6-8 display two of the annual mortgage payment obligations.



#567.50
On the tenth day of December eighteen
Hundred and sixty three I oblige my-
self to pay P. W. Witwright or order Five
Hundred and sixty seven dollars and fif-
ty cents secured by my mortgage to him
as witness my hand and seal This 10th
day of December 1860
Thomas E. Watson (Seal)

Figure 6-7: Image of original December 10, 1860 note obligating Thomas E. Watson to pay Philip Wesley Witwright on December 10, 1863. Circuit Court Equity Papers, Maryland State Archives C70-45 Case 05 392

#662.50
On the tenth day of December eighteen
Hundred and sixty four. I oblige myself
to pay P. M. Witwright, or order Five
Hundred and sixty two Dollars and
fifty cents secured by my Mortgage
to him as witness my hand and seal
This tenth day of December 1860
Thomas Watson (seal)

Figure 6-8: Image of original December 10, 1860 note obligating Thomas E. Watson to pay Philip Wesley Witwright one year after that of figure 6-7 on December 10, 1864. Circuit Court Equity Papers, Maryland State Archives C70-45 Case 05 392

Thomas Watson died testate in 1862 with no widow, leaving his property equally to his children.³¹

Thomas Watson died before the mortgage was fully repaid, and repayment of the mortgage was not made upon his death. As a result, Philip Wesley Witwright brought suit in Circuit Court against Harriet Watson, who was named as the executor of Thomas Watson's estate.

During the proceedings, it was determined there were not enough funds within Thomas Watson's estate to repay the mortgage. As a result, Edward Gantt was appointed trustee by the Circuit Court to sell the land at public auction for the purpose of repayment of the outstanding obligations. Gantt advertised the public auction in several different newspapers including the *Maryland Gazette* and the *Baltimore American*. Gantt also posted notices of the auction throughout the town. During the first scheduled public auction, Gantt reports "owing to the unfavorable weather and the small number of persons in attendance, he thought it best to postpone the said sale."³² The auction was rescheduled for Saturday, December 9, 1865 at 12:00 in the Annapolis Court House.

We continue to get our best insights on Poplar Neck from descriptions within the advertisements marketing its sale. The notice in figure 6-9 announcing the December 9, 1865 auction is no exception. This is an image of the original notice, which

is approximately 14” tall by 8” wide and was hung in public locations attracting buyers to the auction. The Circuit Court file at the Maryland Archives contains the original document, which was posted in public areas. Within the notice, it offers the following description of Poplar Neck:

The farm is situated on the West side of South River, opposite the ferry landing about 3 miles from Annapolis, and is improved by a good Dwelling and all necessary out-houses,---Stable, Corn House, Ice House, 3 good Barns, &c. The whole enclosed with good fencing. The soil is excellent, and adapted to the growth of Corn, Wheat and the best quality of Tobacco. It has a good landing for boats, affording the best facility for market. The neighborhood is healthy, and this farm being located between two creeks of the River, affords every advantage of fine fishing and ducking; and is one of the most desirable farms in the county.³³

TRUSTEE'S SALE

BY virtue of a decree of the Circuit Court for Anne Arundel county, passed on the 20th day of September 1865, in a cause wherein Philip W. Wright was complainant, and Harriet E. Watson, T. Franklin Watson and others were defendants, the subscriber, as Trustee, will sell at public sale, on

SATURDAY, THE 9TH OF DECEMBER NEXT,

at the Court House, in the City of Annapolis, at 12 o'clock, M., all that tract of land lying on South River, in Anne Arundel County, of which Thomas E. Watson died seized and possessed, containing

195 ACRES,

more or less, it being the same farm formerly owned by Dr. Jos. Carr, dec'd.

This Farm is situated on the West side of South River, opposite the ferry landing, about 3 miles from Annapolis, and is improved by a good Dwelling and all necessary out-houses,---Stable, Corn House, Ice House, 3 good Barns, &c. The whole enclosed with good fencing. The soil is excellent, and adapted to the growth of Corn, Wheat and the best quality of Tobacco. It has a good landing for boats, affording the best facility for market. The neighborhood is healthy, and this farm being located between two creeks of the River, affords every advantage of fine fishing and ducking; and is one of the most desirable farms in the county.

The terms of sale, as prescribed by the decree are:---One-third of the purchase money to be paid in cash on the day of sale, or the final ratification thereof by the court, and the residue in equal installments of one and two years, the purchaser giving bond with security to be approved by the Trustee; the whole to bear interest from the day of sale.

E. C. GANTT,
Trustee.

Nov. 23, 1865.

Figure 6-9: Image of original notice announcing the public auction of Poplar Neck on December 9, 1865. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392

At the rescheduled public auction, Gantt reported the attendance was “quite good” on this day, and given “the highest bid received was twenty five dollars per acre and not thinking this a fair price for the land,” he withdrew the sale.³⁴

After he withdrew the public sale based on the perceived low offer price, Gantt “since endeavored to sell the same at private sale and on the tenth day of February, he sold the said real

estate back to Philip W. Witwright at thirty four dollars and eighty three cents” per acre.³⁵

Poplar Neck Ownership 1868-1870: Philip Wesley Witwright

On March 18, 1868, a deed was recorded in the Maryland land records with Philip Wesley Witwright’s repurchase of the 195 acre Poplar Neck for \$6,791.85 from Edward Gantt (trustee).³⁶

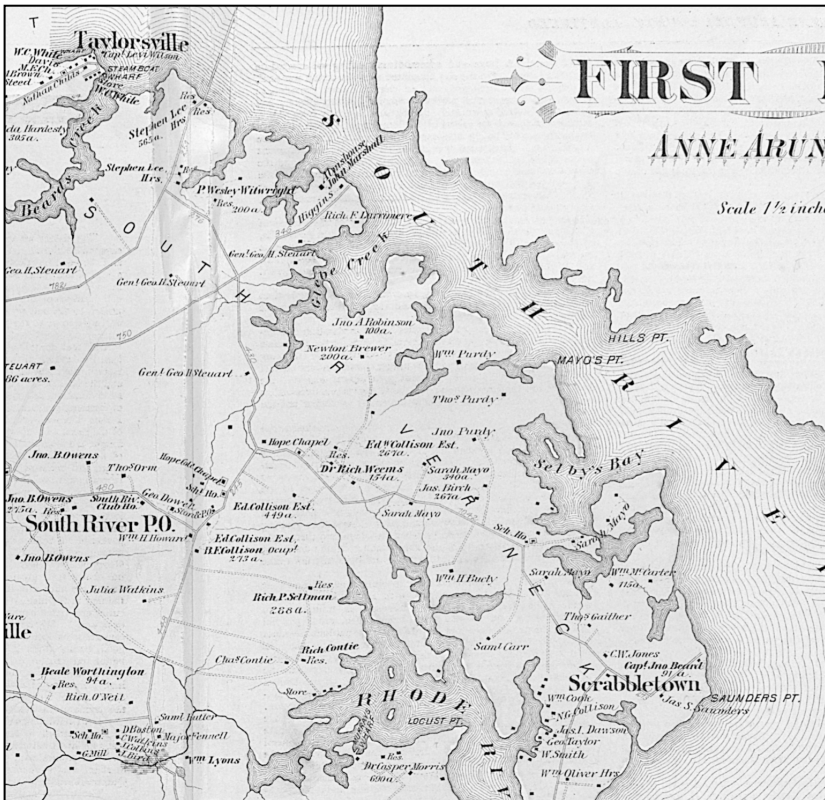


Figure 6-10: 1878 (partial) First Election District Map of Anne Arundel County showing Poplar Neck and noting Philip Wesley Witwright’s land ownership. Atlas of 15 Miles Around Baltimore Including Anne Arundel County, G.M Hopkins, 1878. Courtesy of Library of Congress

Poplar Neck Ownership 1870-1884: Eleanor Witwright (and heirs)

A deed was recorded in the Maryland Land Records dated April 12, 1870 conveying the deed from Philip Wesley Witwright to his wife Eleanor.³⁷

Within this deed, it describes how Philip Wesley Witwright:

...received large sums of money, the same being the proceeds of the sale of real estate as also personal estate both of which were the sole and separate property of the said Eleanor...which sums amount in all to five thousand two hundred and twenty five dollars and sixty one cents and whereas it was the agreement and understanding between the said Witwright and his wife at the time of receiving the said several sums of money that the property hereinafter mentioned should be conveyed by said Philip Witwright to his said wife Eleanor...And whereas all of the aforesaid sums of money were advanced by the said Eleanor Witwright upon the faith of the aforesaid agreement and promise on the part of said Philip Witwright that the lands and premises hereafter mentioned and described should be granted and conveyed to her for her sole and separate use and benefit.³⁸

Poplar Neck Ownership 1884-1885: Ellen Sellman & Josephine White

After the death of Philip Wesley Witwright and Eleanor Witwright, daughters Ellen Witwright (who married Richard Sellman) and Josephine Witwright (who married Wilbur C. White) inherit Poplar Neck and Mitchell's Addition.

Surviving many land transfers, public auctions, Chancery Court challenges and inheritance procedures, Poplar Neck successfully retained its identity as a single tract of land. Aside from one temporary division of Poplar Neck by the Mitchell brothers and Dr. Carr's separation of five acres for Ellen

Dorsey, Poplar Neck has remained a single tract of land for more than two centuries.

Given its waterfront location and its proximity to larger and growing cities, such as Washington D.C., the value of Poplar Neck's parts would progressively become worth more than the value of the tract of land as a whole. The peninsula ultimately succumbed to permanent division in 1884 when Ellen Sellman and Josephine White made the formal division of Poplar Neck into equal parts.³⁹ This event began a trend of subdivision, which became accelerated in the early 1900's, ultimately leading to the creation of Pine Whiff Beach and other surrounding communities. From this point forward, we follow Josephine Witwright White's portion of Poplar Neck as it is her portion which ultimately leads to the development of Pine Whiff Beach.

Poplar Neck Ownership 1885-1911: Josephine White and Wilbur White

Josephine Witwright was born in the year 1854. She married Wilbur C. White on May 3, 1875 in Anne Arundel County, Maryland.⁴⁰ The couple had five daughters Lula, Bessie, Lillie, Nellie and Josephine.⁴¹

In the 1880 U.S. census, Josephine's occupation is listed as a Housekeeper and by various census years, Wilbur lists his occupation as either a Merchant or Storekeeper.

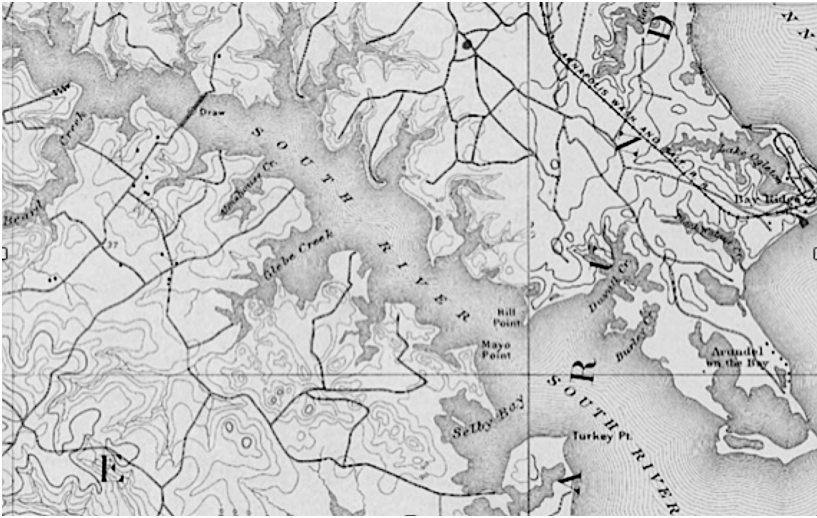


Figure 6-11: Topographic Map of Annapolis in 1894. One of the early maps reflecting the name change from Mitchells to Almshouse Creek

Historical Perspective: By 1890, the population of Maryland climbed to 1,042,390, which is more than triple its 1790 population.⁴²

The White family lived a quiet and relatively undocumented life during their ownership of land formerly known as Poplar Neck. In 1911, Josephine and Wilbur White sold the parcel of land to Joseph and Belle Wilmer.⁴³

Chapter 6 References:

1. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
2. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
3. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
4. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
5. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
6. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-7528 Case 7509
7. Courtesy of Historic London Town and Gardens
8. Maryland Chancery Court Papers S512-6453 Case 6390
9. Maryland Land Records Liber WSG 25 Folio 627
10. Noted within Maryland Land Records Liber WSG 25 Folio 627
11. The Bench and Bar of Maryland: A History 1634 to 1901, Volume 2, Sams and Riley, 1901, p. 416
12. The Bench and Bar of Maryland: A History 1634 to 1901, Volume 2, Sams and Riley, 1901, pp. 416-417
13. Maryland Land Records Liber 25 Folio 627

14. Dollar figure referenced within Maryland Land Records Liber NHG 2 Folio 6
15. Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Marriage Records 1810-1845 p. 99
16. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-8-6877 Case 6835
17. Maryland Chancery Court Papers, S 512-8-6877 Case 6835
18. Historical Sketch of the University of Maryland School of Medicine 1807-1890, Cordell, 1891 p. 167
19. findagrave.com
20. Maryland Land Records Liber NHG 10 Folio 77
21. Will recorded in Orphan Court in Liber BEG 1 Folio 320
22. Will recorded in Orphan Court in Liber BEG 1 Folio 320
23. Maryland State Archives, Application for Historical Trust, Lee Farmhouse, p. 7
24. Maryland State Archives, Anne Arundel County Manumission Record, 1844-1866, Volume 832, p. 114
25. Will recorded in Orphan Court in Liber BEG 1 Folio 320
26. Will recorded in Orphan Court in Liber BEG 1 Folio 320
27. Will recorded in Orphan Court in Liber BEG 1 Folio 320
28. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
29. Maryland Land Records Liber NHG 10 Folio 77
30. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
31. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
32. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
33. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
34. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
35. Circuit Court Equity Papers, MSA C70-45 Case 05 392
36. Maryland Land Records Liber SH2 Folio 232
37. Maryland Land Records Liber SH 4 Folio 406
38. Maryland Land Records Liber SH 4 Folio 406
39. Maryland Land Records Liber SH24 Folio 381
40. Maryland State Archives Anne Arundel County Marriage Record 1874-1886, p. 12
41. 1900 United States Census
42. Gazetteer of Maryland, Gannett, 1904, p. 7
43. Maryland Land Records Liber GW 90 Folio 152

Chapter 7: South River Property

Poplar Neck Ownership 1911-1925: Joseph & Belle Wilmer

Joseph Ringgold Wilmer was born on November 21, 1853 in Maryland. He graduated from the United States Naval Academy with an Engineering degree in 1874 and served as a career Naval Officer. ¹ He married Isabelle “Belle” Louise Hoehling on September 28, 1886 in the District of Columbia ² and the couple had two daughters, Ann and Natalie.

On December 11, 1911, Joseph and Belle Wilmer purchased 99 acres of land from Josephine and Wilbur White. ³ This is the first deed since the original land patent secured by Richard and Rachel Beard, which makes no mention of Poplar Neck. This is also the first deed in the lineage which was not written by hand.

There was a five-year period preceding the founding of Pine Whiff Beach in which a smaller subdivision was established. In 1921, Joseph and Belle Wilmer surveyed seven waterfront lots of approximately 1 acre in size along Almshouse Creek. This subdivision was named “South River Property.” Figure 7-1 is an image of the original 1921 plat. Several of these lots have since been further subdivided into smaller parcels to capture as many valuable waterfront lots as the property could reasonably support. The road labeled as “20 Foot Road” has since been named “Fairlea Drive.”

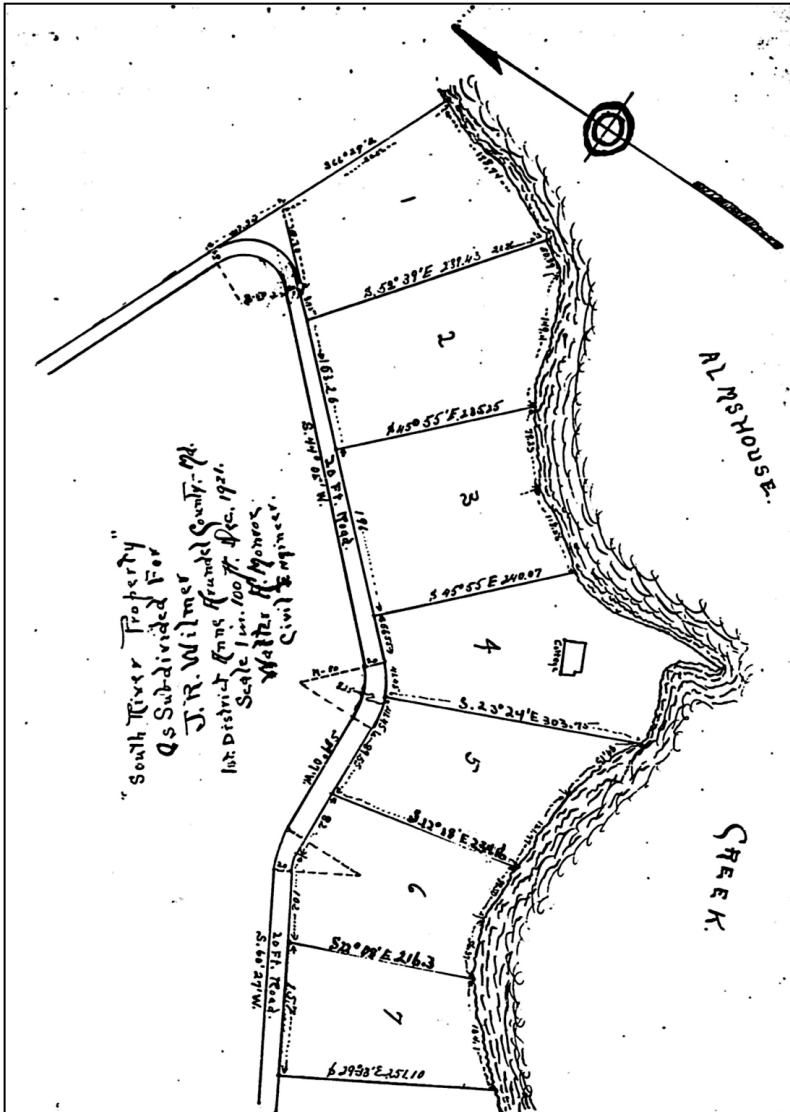


Figure 7-1: Image of original 1921 plat and subdivision of South River Property. Maryland Land Records Liber WNW 68 Folio 102

For perspective, a portion of the land on Lot 4 was later set aside to create Community Beach One. The cottage drawn on Lot 4 is the first documented structure on any of the surveys to date.

Chapter 7 References:

1. List of Officers of the Navy of the United States and of the Marine Corps from 1775 to 1900, p. 597

2. District of Columbia Marriages, 1830-1921
3. Maryland Land Records Liber GW 90 Folio 152

Chapter 8: Pine Whiff Beach

Frank Bernard was born on January 1, 1883 in Italy and immigrated to the United States in 1905. ¹ He married Helena Beatrice Martin on December 28, 1908 and the couple had one daughter named Madeline, who was born on October 6, 1909. The 1920 Census confirms Frank Bernard became a naturalized citizen of the United States in 1917.

The family's primary residence was on Quincy Street in Washington DC, listing addresses of 421 and 437 over a period of years.

Bernard lists his occupation as a Musician for the U.S. Soldiers Home, ² which was established by Congress as “the first official sanctuary for the relief and support of invalid, disabled and homeless veterans.” ³

REGISTRATION CARD

SERIAL NUMBER	1921	ORDER NUMBER	A2499
1	Frank Bernard		
2 PERMANENT HOME ADDRESS: 437 Quincy St N.W. Washington, D. C.			
3	Age in Years	4	Date of Birth
	35		January 1 1883
White		Negro	Oriental
Indian		Chinese	
5	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	6	7
U. S. CITIZEN		ALIEN	
10	Native Born	11	Naturalized
		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	
15 If not a citizen of the U. S., of what nation are you a citizen or subject?		16 PRESENT OCCUPATION	
		17 EMPLOYER'S NAME	
		18 PLACE OF EMPLOYMENT OR BUSINESS:	
		19 Name	
		20 Address	
		I solemnly swear that I have verified above answers and that they are true	
		T. M. G. O.	
		FOOTNOTES	

Figure 8-1: Frank Bernard's draft registration card confirming his date of birth, spouse, occupation and employer, National Archives and Records Administration

Historical Perspective: In a report of the Board of Commissioners of the Soldiers Home dated June 30, 1916, the salary of a musician in the band is identified as \$52.10 per month. ⁴



Figure 8-2: U.S. Soldiers Home: Frank Bernard's employer, photo courtesy of National Archives

Through the exploration of newspapers from the time period, it would seem to do a disservice to Bernard to simply characterize him as a member of the band. In many of the advertisements announcing public concerts by the U.S. Soldiers Band, Bernard's solo performances are highlighted as a draw for people to attend the concerts.

Frank and Helena Bernard purchased Lot 4 (see Figure 7-1) from Joseph and Belle Wilmer on September 20, 1923.⁵ Two years later, on September 12, 1925, Frank and Helena Bernard purchased 25 of the original 99 acres from Joseph and Belle Wilmer,⁶ which they would develop and further subdivide several months later creating the community to be known as "Pine Whiff Beach."

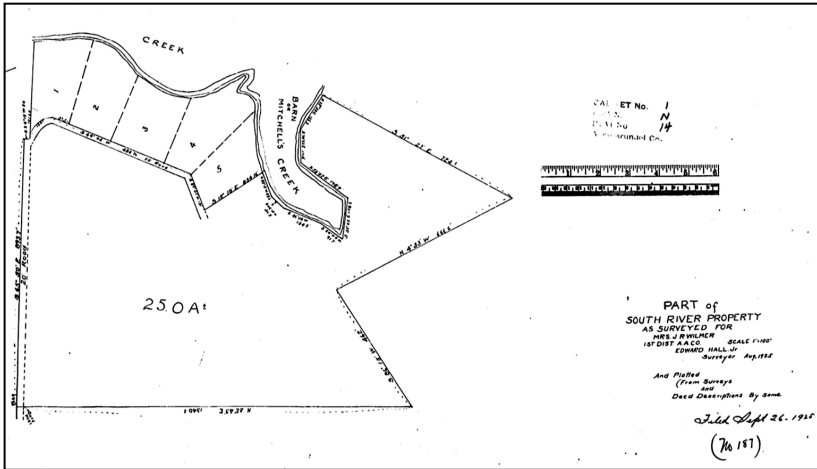


Figure 8-3: Image of original 1925 plat. Maryland Land Records plat book 5, p. 7, plat 187

Figure 8-3 includes a partial display of the lots divided within South River Property as well as the land, which is laid out for sale to Frank and Helena Bernard. Lots 1 through 5 had previously been sold under the South River Property subdivision and are identified by the last name of the then current owners in figure 8-4. The plat in figure 8-3 is significant as it is the last known document to reflect the name “Mitchells Creek,” which occurs long after the name change to Almshouse Creek.

On a subsequent plat establishing the individual lots within Pine Whiff Beach, the following text is included dedicating the community of Pine Whiff Beach:

Owner’s Dedication

This declaration of dedication made this 30th day of March, 1926. Witnesseth that Frank Bernard, being the owner, has caused to be surveyed the tract of land shown upon this plat and set forth in the engineers certification hereon and by filing this plat and the execution of these presents he does subdivide the land into lots, blocks, highways, bathing beaches, etc. as shown hereon, to be known as Pine Whiff Beach and dedicates the said highways and bathing beaches to the use of the owners of the said lots for any lawful purpose whatever and further declare and establish perpetually the building restriction lines hereon

indicated as the line beyond which the erection of any building, porch thereof, or any structure of a permanent nature exceeding four (4) feet vertically is restricted.

In witness whereof the said Frank Bernard and Helena Bernard his wife do hereby set their hands and seals on the day and year first above written.⁷

And thus on March 30, 1926, Pine Whiff Beach was established.

Figure 8-4 displays the initial 1926 division and numbering of lots, dedication of community beaches and naming of roads.



Figure 8-4: Image of original 1926 Pine Whiff Beach plat and subdivision. Maryland Land Records Plat Book 1, p. 27, plat 224

Affordable and efficient transportation now offered individuals and families the freedom to travel. This freedom also opened the concept of weekend homes in beach communities. Many individuals in Bernard’s target market would be those seeking a weekend escape from larger and nearby cities, such as Washington D.C.

Four years later on June 3, 1930, the subdivision was reformatted, making the lots within Pine Whiff Beach smaller. Although the reason for the revision is not specifically stated,

the timing coincides with the onset of the Great Depression, which began in September 1929. The market for individuals willing to invest in a vacation home would certainly be impacted during this period in American history. This could be the reason the lots were made smaller and therefore more affordable and certainly impacted Bernard's ability to sell the lots in the early years after its subdivision.

Historical Perspective: During the Great Depression, unemployment skyrocketed to 24.7% by the year 1933 with over 12 million Americans out of work. By 1940, the unemployment rate improved, but remained at a high rate of 14.4%, continuing to stifle the American economy. ⁸



Figure 8-5: Image of original 1930 Pine Whiff Beach plat revision. Maryland Land Records Plat Book 7, p. 40, plat 401

Figure 8-6 displays a 1937 image of the Anne Arundel County Almshouse and namesake of Almshouse Creek. Built in the mid 1700's, this is an iconic building, recognizable to boaters along the South River and one of the few remaining structures representative of the colonial era near Pine Whiff Beach.



Figure 8-6: 1937 photo of the County Almshouse. This is also known as the William Brown House and London Town Publik House. Photo courtesy of The Library of Congress

Twenty-three years after their original purchase, Bernard sold Lot 4 on August 20th, 1946 to Robert and Mary Brewer.⁹ This was the lot Bernard maintained for his own use. The sale of Lot 4 had no impact on the remaining unsold lots within Pine Whiff Beach as Bernard continued to market them for sale.

Growth of Pine Whiff Beach

After America's emergence from the Great Depression and after the end of World War II, the American economic engine built momentum. As a result, the acquisition of individual lots and subsequent building of housing on those lots steadily increased across the 1950's.

Historical Perspective: The Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the United States exploded from \$1.266 Trillion in 1940 to \$2.184 Trillion in 1950 to \$3.109 Trillion in 1960.¹⁰



Figure 8-7: 1952 aerial photograph of Pine Whiff Beach. Photo courtesy of Johns Hopkins Sheridan Libraries

Figure 8-7 and 8-8 display aerial photos of Pine Whiff Beach, showing the then current development of the community. The development in the 1959 photo represents approximately one third of the total number of homes now existing in Pine Whiff Beach. The photo also show the piers at Beach One and Two, in the exact form as they exist today. Based on the current condition of the pier pilings at Beach One and Two, it is nearly certain the pilings still in use today are the same as those in the 1959 aerial photo.



Figure 8-8: 1959 aerial photograph of Pine Whiff Beach. Photo courtesy of United States Geological Survey

With the increasing populations on the shores of Maryland waterways and the advancements in technology leading to larger boat engines and associated increases in speed, the State of Maryland passed the Maryland Boat Act of 1960. This Act became the baseline for management and enforcement of laws governing Maryland's waterways. Within this Act, a speed limit of 6 knots on Saturdays, Sundays and State Holidays was imposed on many different creeks, including Almshouse Creek. This legislation became effective on July 28, 1961.

The 1960's through the 1980's witnessed continued and steady growth of housing throughout Pine Whiff Beach as more individuals were drawn to the quaint community and waterfront retreat.

Increases in population densities led to the need for amended boating regulations on the South River and its tributaries. Thirty-one years after the passage of the Maryland Boat Act, legislation known as the South River Comprehensive Vessel Management Plan was passed and became effective on June 8, 1992. This legislation amended the speed limit on Almshouse Creek to 6 knots at all times.

Development of Pine Whiff Beach continued through the 1990's and into the 21st century, although at a slower pace given the availability of fewer undeveloped lots. Today, Pine Whiff Beach encompasses a total of nearly 100 homes with three community beaches and piers and only a few remaining undeveloped lots.



Figure 8-9: 2017 aerial photograph of Pine Whiff Beach. Photo courtesy of Google Maps

Chapter 8 References:

1. 1930 United States Census
2. U.S. World War I Registration Card: 1917
3. National Archives Spring 2015, Vol. 47, No. 1
4. Report of the Board of Commissioners of the Soldiers Home, Annual Reports, War Department Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1916, p. 25
5. Maryland Land Records Liber WNW 80 Folio 327
6. Maryland Land Records, Liber WNW 106 & WMB 7 Folio 460
7. Maryland Land Records Plat Book 1, p. 27, plat 224
8. Bureau of Labor Statistics, Labor Force, Employment, and Unemployment, 1929-1939: Estimating Methods p. 51
9. Maryland Land Records Liber JHH 376 Folio 201
10. Bureau of Economic Analysis

Epilogue

Location is a long held standard in determining the value of real estate and Poplar Neck has contributed its proof of that claim. The colonial settlers were attracted to Poplar Neck for its access to Maryland's first highway system: the waterways of the South River and Chesapeake Bay. These waterways provided access to trade from England and an outlet for the cash crop of tobacco.

As the port of London Town developed and prospered, Poplar Neck's proximity to the port only enhanced its value. In an era lacking efficient transportation and one relying on horses and foot traffic, proximity was essential and therefore valued. This was reflected by the stature of those who held ownership of Poplar Neck across the 18th century, including:

- Seth Biggs, who in addition to his Merchant career was a Judge of the Provincial Court
- William Holland, who served in many different roles, including: Merchant, Farmer, Colonel and Sheriff and amassed over 3,000 acres by the time of his death
- William Nicholson, who was a Merchant and like William Holland before him, accumulated significant wealth by the time of his death, owning over 15 different tracts of land
- Samuel Peele, who was perhaps the most wealthy of all individuals, operating a merchant and trade business from London Town

After the passage of the *Tobacco Inspection Act of 1747*, which did not include London Town as an authorized inspection location, the primary value of Poplar Neck in the 19th century shifted to one of a large estate suitable of sustaining itself through farming and other means. Several different families, including those serving in prominent positions within the community held possession of Poplar Neck during this time, including Judge Brewer and Dr. Carr.

The 20th century witnesses a slow transformation in value from farmland to subdivision and development. The progression of transportation allows individuals to live further from their places of work. As such, the newly formed Pine Whiff Beach takes on a complexion of primary residences as well as those seeking second homes in a water-privileged community. This effect slowly alters Poplar Neck's value proposition from the practicality offered by the bordering waters to the recreation and relaxation offered by the same waters.

Through time, history has lost much of its detailed memory of those who held deeds to Poplar Neck. We are left with governmental records, such as deed transfers, court cases, census data, draft registration cards, birth and death certificates as well as newspaper articles and advertisements to assemble even the vaguest detail about their lives. Not surprisingly, the most information was retained regarding those who held public office in one form or another. The most difficult detail to collect was from those who listed their occupation as a farmer and never held any form of public office and weren't involved in a court case.

As you read this book and certainly as I researched the history, it causes us to question how we will each be remembered in history. In several cases, within this book, the entire life of an individual was summarized in a single paragraph. We have very limited insight into their personalities, integrity, family life and many other aspects of their personal and professional lives.

Presuming the records are kept intact, the content of social media and other digital records will provide researchers with

significantly better insight into the details of our daily lives versus those who lived centuries before us.

Our personal legacies aside, it is the legacy of Poplar Neck and its subsequent communities that remain our collective obligation and are the most important point of this book. This peninsula provides all of us with a home and place of recreation. It existed long before each of us and will continue long after each of us, yet the generations it supports retain the obligation as its stewards. Poplar Neck has no voice of its own, only the voice of those who live on its shores. Each of the communities who now exist on Poplar Neck employs some form of community association. Membership and more importantly, participation in those organizations provide the primary form of governance, maintenance and protection of its future and it is incumbent upon all of us to participate in this ongoing effort.

Very few places in the United States can claim a history beginning as early as 1650. I'd imagine very few individuals, (myself included) who now reside on Poplar Neck knew it was the first surveyed tract of land in Anne Arundel County. History is something to be owned and shared by all of us and as I assembled this history, one of my primary goals was to ensure there was a pervasive understanding of Poplar Neck's rich heritage.

As we reflect on the history and close this book, recall some of the descriptions used by individuals throughout the years to describe Poplar Neck. Beginning with the description of "never failing springs on both sides the land" by Mordecai Stewart in 1784. Continuing with Nicholas Brewer, Jr's 1820 description of its "kind soil" and bold statement of "an apple orchard surpassing any in the county in its size and quality of fruit." Concluding with Edward Gantt's 1865 proclamation of Poplar Neck as "one of the most desirable farms in the county."

About the Author



Scott Sanner moved to Pine Whiff beach in 1997, one month after the marriage to his wife Alexis. The couple built a home on Lot 90 (figure 8-5) at the corner of Fairlea Drive and have two children, Kenzie and CJ. In 2010, the family moved to a portion of Lot 1 (figure 7-1), which has been subdivided into three different parcels subsequent to its original survey under South River Property.

Scott has spent his entire career in the information technology industry and currently serves as the General Manager of Healthcare for Iron Bow Technologies. In this role, Scott leads the business unit responsible for the sales and manufacturing of telehealth and information technology solutions to federal and commercial health systems.

Scott currently serves as the Treasurer for the Pine Whiff Beach Property Owner's Association, a position he has held since 2014.

Scott and Alexis enjoy boat rides exploring the waters of the Chesapeake region, "creek crawls" while admiring the waterfront architecture and travel to new and different regions within the U.S. and Caribbean.

Each spring, the crew of the *Finatic* (Scott, David, Johnny, CJ and Will) fish the Chesapeake Bay in their continued pursuit of the elusive 50" trophy Rockfish.

Crew of the *Finatic*



Scott with a 42" Spring Rockfish



David with a Summer Striper on Light Tackle



Will with a South River Fall Striper



Will with a 43" Spring Rockfish



Johnny with a 41" Spring Rockfish



CJ's First Rockfish Casting Lures

Appendix A: Chart of Poplar Neck Ownership

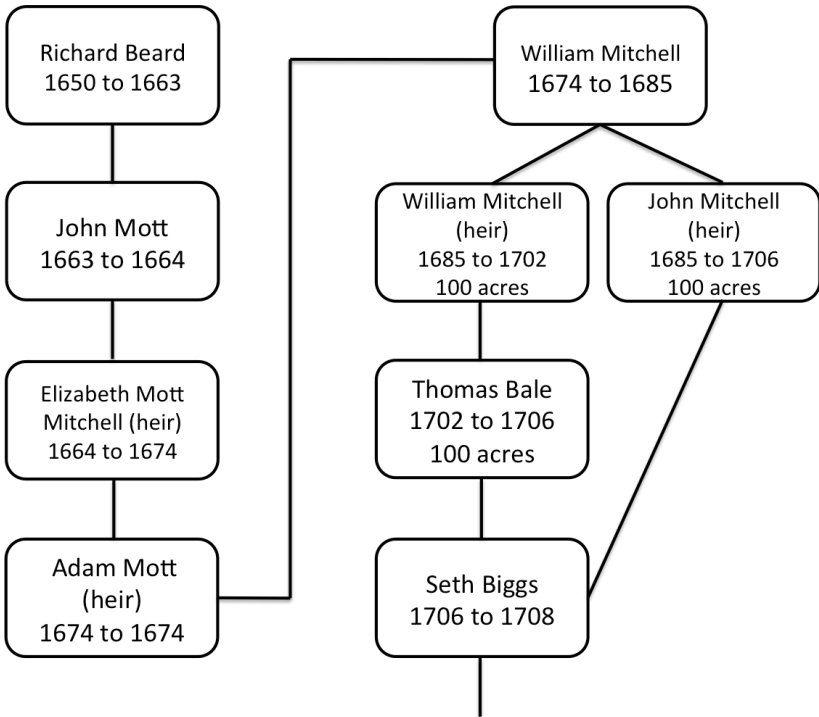


Chart of Poplar Neck Ownership

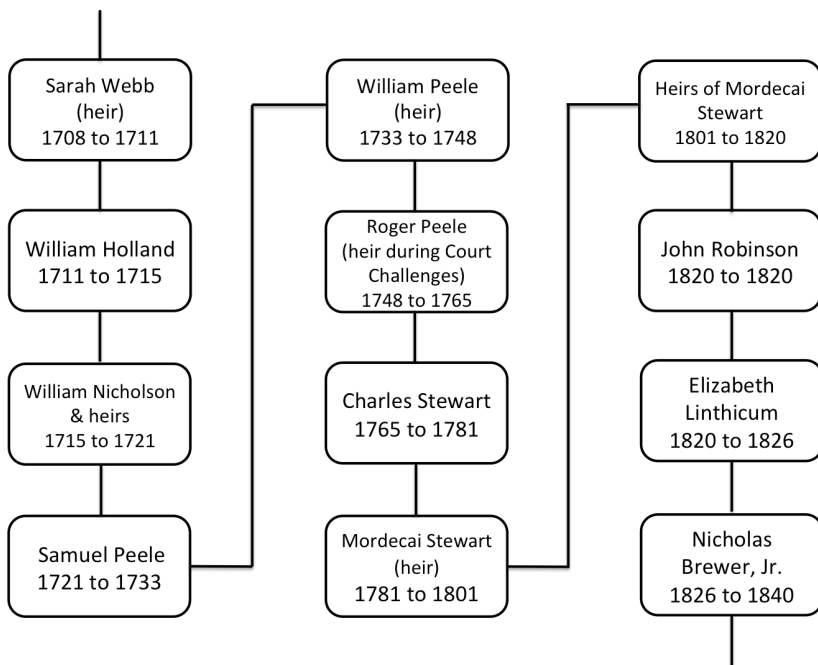
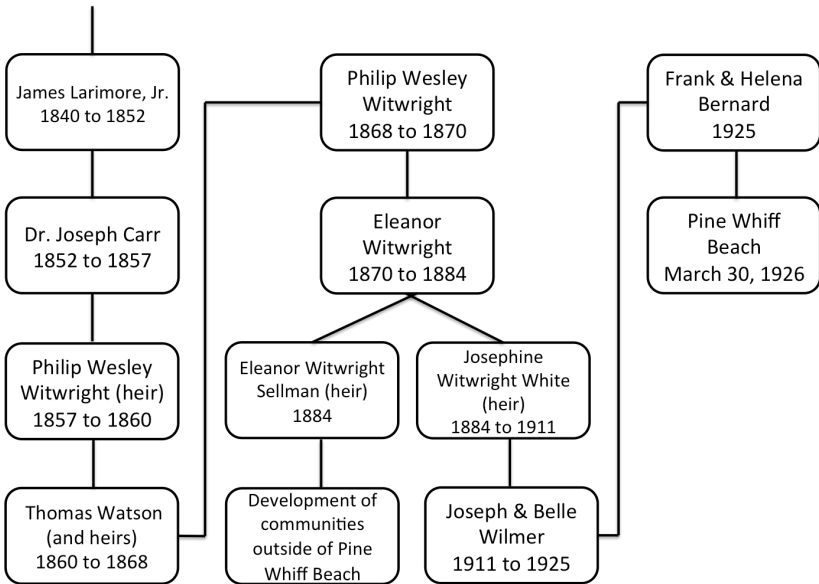


Chart of Poplar Neck Ownership



Appendix B: Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association By- Laws

The earliest by-laws maintained in the records of Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, Inc. are found in a document dated July, 1957. Given the “revised” label on the document, these are not the first by-laws, but the earliest on record. Several amendments have occurred over the years, modifying the terms based on the needs of the community. Below is a copy of the by-laws as they were written in 1957.

ARTICLES OF THE PINE WHIFF BEACH PROPERTY OWNERS ASSOCIATION (Revised July 1957)

We, the undersigned, hereby mutually agree to unite and associate ourselves together as an association and for such purpose we hereby make, execute, and adopt the following agreement:

Article 1

Name Of The Association

The name of this Association shall be “Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association.”

Article 2

Purpose of the Association

Section 1. Purpose: The purpose of this Association is for the mutual protection, improvement, maintenance and beatification of all property, private and community, in Pine Whiff Beach.

Section 2. Promote Friendship: To encourage among the property owners of the Pine Whiff Beach a closer personal acquaintance and a friendly spirit of cooperation.

Article 3

Membership Urged

All persons owning property in the subdivision known as Pine Whiff Beach in Anne Arundel County, Maryland, are eligible for membership if sponsored by a member of the Association. Their name must be posted three (3) weeks before being presented to the Association for a vote. Three (3) neighbors would reject the membership.

Article 4

Where Business is Conducted

Section 1. Place Business is Conducted: The principal place of business of this Association shall be in Pine Whiff Beach in the county of Anne Arundel, State of Maryland

Section 2. Who Calls Meetings: The meetings are subject to call by the President.

Article 5

Actions Are Determined By These By-laws

All actions of this Association shall be determined by the rules and regulations contained in these articles of agreement and to such other rules, regulations, and restriction as the Association may from time to time adopt.

Article 6

Duties Of The Officers

Section 1. Officers Of The Association: All business, rules, regulations and restrictions of this Association shall be administered by the President, Vice President, Secretary, Treasurer and a Board of Five Councilmen.

Section 2. Vice President: The Vice President shall assume the duties of the President in his absence.

Section 3. Secretary: The Secretary shall prepare and maintain records of all meetings of the Association and shall prepare correspondence and other papers necessary for the conduct of the business of the Association. At the time of the election it shall be the duty of the Secretary to deliver all minutes and pertinent papers to the Association and they in turn should be turned over to the newly elected Secretary. She shall prepare and have on hand at all times enough ballots for an election.

Section 4. Treasurer: The Treasurer shall be responsible for the collection of all monies made by any activities, accounts due the Association and such dues and assessments as the Association may direct and shall deposit same in the bank to the credit of the Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association. The Treasurer is authorized to issue checks in payment of the accounts of the Association, which have been authorized by the majority at a regular meeting of the Association. All disbursements shall be by check approved by the Association and countersigned by the President of the Association. It shall be the duty of the Treasurer to secure a signature card from the bank, and have it properly signed by himself and/or herself and the President. Furthermore, the Treasurer shall also deliver all records and pertinent papers to the Association and they in turn should be turned over to the newly elected Treasurer. A financial statement shall be posted on the bulletin boards at Beach 1 and 2 once a month. The Treasurer shall be required to furnish bond in the amount of \$1,000 (One Thousand Dollars). Premium on said bond to be paid by the Association.

Section 5. Board of Councilman: The duties of the Board of Councilmen shall be to survey the needs of the properties and citizens known as Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, to hear complaints, investigating same and reporting to the Association with recommendations. They will absorb the duties of the Beach and Road Commissioners. A meeting will be held one week prior to the meeting of the

Association. The Councilmen shall audit the books kept by the Treasurer prior to the June meeting for approval by the Association. Set audit will be posted on the bulletin boards at Beach 1 and 2. Any grounds of impeachment of any officer must be investigated by the Board of Councilmen.

Article 7

Date and Time of Meeting

There shall be a meeting of the Association at 11:00 a.m. on the first Sunday of each month from May to October, inclusive and at such other times during this period as the President may deem advisable. At least three days notice shall be given to all members of all special meetings.

Article 8

Election of Officers

Section 1: Officers Serve Without Pay: All officials of this Association shall be elected and they shall serve without remuneration.

Section 2: Nomination in May Election on June: Officers will be nominated at the May meeting and elected in June.

Section 3: Election by Ballot, Time, Two Votes Per Household: Election of officers will be held at a special meeting called for that purpose on the third Sunday of June. The election will be by written ballot and only “payed up” members are eligible to vote. There will be two votes per household. Officers will be inducted into office at this meeting. Three of the outgoing officers will count the ballots and they will be left for inspection of the Association.

Section 4: Term of Office: All officers shall serve for a term of one year after their installation or until a successor is duly elected and installed except that in the case an office is vacated due to resignation, disability, impeachment or death of an official, the Board of Councilman shall, within thirty (30) days from the date such office is vacated, appoint a successor for the

unexpired term. No officer can succeed himself for more than two consecutive terms. All resignations should be in writing.

Article 9

Official Business Conducted Only If a Quorum Is Present

Section 1: Official Business and Emergency Expenditures:

All elections, motions and resolutions of the Association shall be decided by a majority vote of those present and voting except that all resolutions regarding expenditure of funds of the Association shall be decided by a two-thirds majority of those present and voting, provided, however that emergency expenditures may be made by the Treasurer between meetings upon the approval of at least three members of the Board of Councilmen. No official business of this Association shall be conducted at any meeting unless there is a quorum present.

Section 2: Quorum – 11: A quorum shall consist of not less than eleven (11) members of the Association.

Article 10

Amount of Dues, Rental of Boat Slips, Names Posted At Beaches

Section 1: Association Dues, Amount, Date Due: In order to establish a fund for the maintenance of roads, rights of way, the pier, beach and such other purposes as the Association may direct, each property owner will pay to the Treasurer as dues the sum of fifteen dollars (\$15) per year. The Treasurer shall deliver upon the receipt of their yearly dues a copy of the by-laws to each member. Dues shall be payable on or before the first of June each year. Names of those paying their dues will be posted by June 15th on the bulletin board at each beach, along with other items of interest.

Section 2: Boat Dues: Boat slips will be rented to payed up members at the rate of five dollars (\$5) per year, payable on or before June 15th. Name and number plates will be affixed to the pier. Boats will be tied only in designated slip areas. Boat slip areas will be laid out by Councilmen. All funds raised from this rent will be for the upkeep of the pier.

Article 11

Property Shall Not Be For Commercial Use

In order to protect the value and desirability of our property and to keep Pine Whiff Beach a desirable place in which to live, the members of this Association hereby agree, jointly and severally, as follows:

Section 1: Exception: To conduct no business or commercial enterprise for profit on or in connection with our property, except where all proceeds are turned over to the Association.

Section 2: Beach and Cottage – Private Use Only: To keep the beach for the free and undisturbed use of ourselves and our friends, that the beach and access thereto shall at no time nor by an person or persons be operated for profit or gain, that no cottage or structure in the beach shall be operated as a commercial bath house in which bathing suits, towels, etc. shall be rented for the purpose of using our beach and pier, that no picnics or luncheons shall be held on the community property unless it is sponsored by the Association, that the beaches shall be kept clear of all boats, motors, boxes, canvas, etc. from May 15 to October 30. No boats shall be anchored or tied at or near the end of either pier except for the purpose of taking on or discharging passengers. The Beaches are those parcels of land designated on the plot plan of Pine Whiff Beach.

Article 12

Property Owners Protection

We further agree not to rent, sell or lease our property to any person or persons unless such person or persons agree in writing to abide by Sections 1 and 2 of Article 11 of this agreement in the same manner as though they were members of this Association.

Article 13

How Articles Are Amended

These Articles of Association may be amended by appointing a committee to study any suggested changes. After a study has been made these Articles may be amended at any meeting by a vote of two-thirds of those present and voting: PROVIDED that all proposed amendments shall have been submitted through the Secretary to all members of the Association at least fifteen (15) days prior to the meeting at which action thereon is proposed to be taken.

Article 14

Impeachment

All officers not conforming to these by-laws shall be removed from office by secret ballot of the Association, any grounds of impeachment must be brought before the Board of Councilman for their investigation and consideration. *By-laws are kept in the records of the Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, held by the Treasurer of the organization.*

Appendix C: Pine Whiff Beach Articles of Incorporation

On July 12, 1960, articles of incorporation were established for the Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, Inc. The original articles, which are a matter of public record, are included below:

FIRST: That we, the subscribers, Albert J. Goodman, whose post office address is 156 South Street, Annapolis, Maryland; Theodore G. Bloom, whose post office address is 156 South Street, Annapolis, Maryland; and Benjamin Michaelson, Jr., whose post office address is Severna Park, Anne Arundel County, Maryland; each being at least twenty-one years of age, do, under and by virtue of the general laws of the State of Maryland authorizing the formation, corporations, associate ourselves with the intention of forming a corporation by the execution and filing of these articles.

SECOND: That the name of the corporation (which is hereinafter called the “corporation”)

Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, Inc.

THIRD: The purpose for which the Corporation is formed are as follows:

To organize and operate a property owners improvement association exclusively for educational, charitable and community purposes, no part of the net earnings of which is to inure to the benefit of any member, shareholder or other individual.

For the general purposes aforesaid and limited to those purposes, the Corporation shall have the following powers and purposes:

- A. To forward and promote the general welfare and advancement of the residents and property owners in that section of Anne Arundel County known as Pine Whiff Beach.
- B. To encourage among the members closer personal acquaintance and a friendly spirit of mutual cooperation.
- C. To maintain and promote the general attractiveness and improve the conditions of and maintain and increase the value of property in that section or development.
- D. To promote and encourage the execution by the owners of property in said section or development of agreements and covenants for the accomplishment of said objects and purposes and to promote the enforcement of the agreements and covenants now in effect.
- E. To unite and utilize the combined influence and power of the residents and owners property in said section or development for the furtherance of such purposes and improvements as will conduce to the general welfare, interest and protection of said community.
- F. To operate carnivals, fairs and amusements; to solicit and disburse money for the furtherance of such purposes and improvements as will conduce to the general welfare, interest and protection of said community.
- G. To purchase, lease, hire or otherwise acquire, hold, own, develop and in any manner dispose of, encumber by way of mortgage or otherwise, real and personal property suitable or convenient for the business of the Corporation.

- H. To accept title to any roads, paths, waterfront, wharves or piers located in Pine Whiff Beach and to supervise and maintain them for the benefit of the residents and property owners of Pine Whiff Beach and/or any other persons acceptable to the Corporation.
- I. To borrow and raise money for any of the purposes of the Corporation and to issue bonds, debentures, notes or other obligations of any nature for money so borrowed or in payment of property purchased.

And in general to have and exercise all powers conferred by the general laws of the State of Maryland upon corporations without capital stock formed thereunder as fully and to the same extent as if each and all of said powers were enumerated and set forth at length herein.

The enumeration of certain powers herein is not intended to exclude, diminish or in anywise affect the right of the Corporation to have and exercise any other power or powers that those specifically mentioned or referred herein.

FOURTH: The post office address of the principal office of the Corporation in this state is Route 2, Pine Whiff Beach, Edgewater, Maryland. The resident agent of the Corporation is Albert J. Goodman, whose post office address is 156 South Street, Annapolis, Maryland. Said resident agent is a citizen of the State of Maryland and actually resides therein.

FIFTH: The Corporation is not authorized to issue any capital stock. It shall have the power to finance itself through the assessment of its members by public subscription and by the holding of benefit entertainments. The following shall be the first members of the Corporation:

- James G. Arcaro: Washington DC
- Peter Arcaro: Silver Spring, MD
- Carroll W. Ball: Pine Whiff Beach
- Selman N. Blaustein: Pine Whiff Beach
- James P. Burke: Pine Whiff Beach
- John Burke: Pine Whiff Beach

- Thomas W. Burke: Hillside, MD
- Agnes M. Bruyn: Pine Whiff Beach
- Charles H. Grove: Washington DC
- Robert M. Brewer: Pine Whiff Beach
- Captain S. B. Chapman: Pine Whiff Beach
- James G. Burnett: Pine Whiff Beach
- James G. Botts, Jr: Pine Whiff Beach
- Donald W. Cox: Pine Whiff Beach
- LeRoy E. Combs Jr: Pine Whiff Beach
- John W. Dennison: Pine Whiff Beach
- (illegible) Doolan: Pine Whiff Beach
- Dr. F. E. Dudley Jr: Pine Whiff Beach
- Mrs. John J. Fegan: Washington DC
- Angela Friedrich: Silver Spring, MD
- F. R. Horstman: Pine Whiff Beach
- Fleet S. Hughlett: Pine Whiff Beach
- Michael J. Lynch: Pine Whiff Beach
- Mario De Mariano: Arlington, VA
- Helena Meyer: Washington DC
- James H. Murray: Pine Whiff Beach
- Ralph L. Page: Pine Whiff Beach
- Kurt W. Riehl: Pine Whiff Beach
- Alfred Scogna: Pine Whiff Beach
- William Weingarten: Pine Whiff Beach
- Robert D. Williams: Pine Whiff Beach
- Joseph Yanniello: Washington DC

Members may resign or be removed, vacancies may be filled and additional members elected as provided in the bylaws, which may prescribe different classes of members and prescribe the powers and duties of each class.

SIXTH: The Corporation shall have a Board of Directors which shall consist of not less than five, nor more than nine, whose duties, powers and functions shall be defined and set forth in the bylaws of the Corporation and the following persons shall act as such directors until the first annual meeting or until their successors are duly chose and qualified: Joseph Yanniello, James G. Fegan, Michael J. Lynch, Alfred Scogna

and Robert D. Williams. *Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association, Inc. Articles of Incorporation, Kept in the records of Pine Whiff Beach Property Owners Association. Also available at the Maryland Department of Assessments and Taxation F201, folio 123, page 6*

