

# OLD KENT

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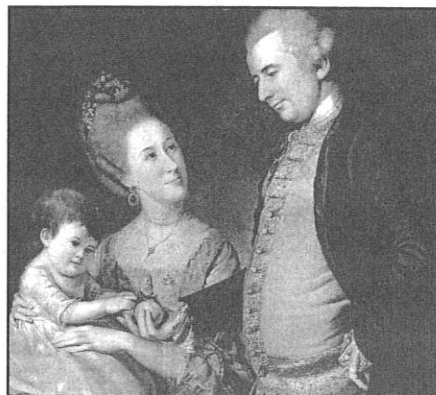
## The CADWALADER EPILOGUE

by Benjamin Kohl

[Continued from Summer 2002]

After John Cadwalader's early death, Betsy's three daughters [Anne, b. 1771, Elizabeth, b. 1774, and Maria, b. 1776] were brought up in the household of their paternal aunt and uncle, Rebecca and Philomon Dickinson. They all married well-placed men, but their subsequent lives were full of misery.

The eldest, Nan, the charming child in Charles Willson Peale's family conversation portrait, married the merchant Robert T. Kemble of New York City on June 11, 1796.



Peale Portrait

She received an inheritance of some \$49,000 which, owing to their extravagant tastes, was soon squandered. By 1810, the couple was living in poverty and had to sell at auction what remained of their share of the family furniture. Mrs. Kemble was soon widowed and spent the rest of her life running a rooming house in New York City where she also kept a small school until her death in 1850 [at age 54].

The second daughter, Elizabeth, married the Philadelphia businessman, Archibald McCall, on May 3, 1792. They also soon

lost their fortune and moved to near Wilmington, Delaware, where they lived in poverty until Elizabeth's early death in 1824 at age 50.

The third daughter, Maria, married the Maryland farmer and businessman, Samuel Ringgold, and the couple set up a large mansion called "Fountain Park" in Washington County, Maryland, where they lived in luxury. There in May 1804 they were visited by Cadwalader's illegitimate daughter, Sarah. Though the General had never acknowledged Sarah while alive, he had provided for her in his will, with a bequest of 200 pounds. But apparently this was not enough.

Sarah was then twenty-six and had married a certain Henry Penry, and with her husband visited her half-sister at Fountain Park. The young couple came armed with a letter from a Pittsburgh lawyer, laying claim to part of the Cadwalader estate. According to a letter from Ringgold to McCall in Philadelphia, "the object of their visit was to see me and know what we intended to do for them." When Maria refused to see her half sister, the couple left vowing to have satisfaction from uncle Lambert [Gen. Cadwalader's brother] in Trenton. Maria died in 1811, and left among her children, a son Cadwalader Ringgold who had a distinguished career as a naval officer.

Cadwalader's youngest daughter, Fanny, married in 1799 the British diplomat, David Montague, Lord Erskine, who in 1800 became the British minister to the United States. The couple eventually settled at ancestral estates at Restormal Castle, Cornwall, England, where she bore and reared eight children.

Cadwalader's widow, Williamina soon followed her daughter to England, and found the sea voyage so terrifying that she never returned home, and resided in England until her death in 1837.

The only surviving son, Thomas, eloped with Mary, daughter of one of Washington's close friends, Clement Biddle of Philadelphia. That couple had five sons whose descendants constitute today the Cadwaladers of Philadelphia and Baltimore.

But there is one last connection with George Washington, who you may recall was asked by President Adams to head the newly-formed United States army when in the summer of 1798 the undeclared war with France threatened to break out in open conflict. Sensing that Washington might need to enlarge his staff, young Thomas Cadwalader, then a student at the College of Pennsylvania, wrote to the great man in a letter that begins: "As I have not the Honor of being personally known to you, I should consider the Liberty I am about to take, as presumptuous if I were not encouraged by a Persuasion, that the great Friendship you were pleased to extend to my late Father, might induce you to consider his Son, not absolutely in the Light of a Stranger." And went on to express the "Ambition of obtaining some Station in your family,

when the Army of the United States shall be organized."

Washington replied graciously: "In answer to your favour of the 20th, I can assure you with much truth that I had a very sincere and Affectionate regard for Genl Cadwalader, your father, when alive, and that it would give me great pleasure to do anything in my power, consistently with the object in view, to serve his Son."

And he went on to say that if he, Washington, did become commander-in-chief again his faithful secretary, Tobias Lear, would serve as his aide-de-camp, and advised Thomas to seek a commission in the army or militia. (*Papers of George Washington*, Retirement series, 2:446,447).

Thomas Cadwalader later served as the brigadier general in charge of the Philadelphia garrison in the War of 1812. The younger Cadwalader pursued a career of patriot and soldier, and thus displayed those very qualities of love of country and military valor that had led George Washington to forge his friendship with the father, John Cadwalader, in the first place.

From Joseph A. Dickerson of Rock Hall:  
Gen. John Cadwalader  
Born: Jan. 10, 1741/42  
Married: Sept. 25, 1768  
Died: Feb. 11, 1786, ae. 44 yrs  
Buried: Shrewsbury Parish, above Kennedyville, Kent County, Md.

Elizabeth 'Betsy' Lloyd  
Born: Jan. 10, 1741/42 (same as Gen. Cadwalader)  
Died: Feb. 15, 1776

Williamina Bond  
Married: Jan. 30, 1779

Children of John & Williamina  
Thomas Cadwalader  
Born: Oct. 28, 1779

Frances 'Fanny'  
Born: June 25, 1781  
Died: March 1843

John, Jr.  
Born: May 1, 1784  
Died: July 10, 1785  
Buried: Shrewsbury Cemetery

## Genealogy Tools

The suggestion has come to notify all owners of Kent County family Bibles that we will photocopy genealogy information from those Bibles "while you wait." We particularly need Wilmer and Perry genealogy information, but hope all Bibles containing Kent County ancestry notes will be photocopied.

Come in without appointment Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. and help build our genealogy tool files.

## SAMPLER INQUIRY



HSKC board member Dr. Gloria Allen is seeking information for a database on needlework samplers and pictorial embroideries made by Maryland schoolgirls during the late 18th and early 19th centuries. If you own one or more examples of Maryland schoolgirl needlework, please contact her at 410-639-7208, or by mail at 6201 Swan Creek Road, Rock Hall, MD 21661. Or by e-mail: gsallen1@aol.com.

She is also interested in learning the location of two ca. 1800 Kent County samplers recorded by the Colonial Dames around 1920. These samplers are described as Polk, Martha Surborough [Kent County, MD] 9 yrs, 12" x 14", vase of roses and leaves. Owner, Mrs. Frederic Tyson, and Polk, Patty [Kent County, MD] 10 yrs, 16" x 16", large garland of pinks, roses, passion flowers, nasturtiums and green leaves; center, a white tomb with "GW" on it. Inscription — "Patty Polk did this and she hated every stitch she did in it. She loves to read much more." Owner, Mrs. Frederic Tyson.