

During the period that the authors of the **Atlas** were engaged in their work, the Maryland Historical Society was active in assembling a number of Maryland maps for an exhibit that was mounted in the Society's museum from September through December 1982. Although the exhibit can no longer be seen, the Society has published an excellent catalog entitled **The Mapping of Maryland 1590-1914: An Overview** (\$6.50 plus tax and postage). The 36 maps that constituted the exhibit are listed in careful detail in the catalog and there is a small illustration of each. A short introductory essay is provided by Richard J. Cox, the Archivist of Baltimore City. While this catalog cannot begin to compare in scope or appeal with the Papenfuse **Atlas**, it is a useful adjunct publication and will be wanted by anyone who is seriously interested in the cartography of Maryland.

Those with especially strong interests will also want to read an excellent essay by Professor William P. Cumming on "Early Maps of the Chesapeake Bay Area: Their Relation to Settlement and Society" that is included in the 1982 book **Early Maryland in a Wider World** (Wayne State University Press, Detroit). This book contains a series of informative essays edited by the noted British scholar Dr. David B. Quinn. (Dr. Quinn has spent several semesters in the past few years at St. Mary's College.) The Cumming essay is rather more detailed in its information on the early maps, especially those of the 16th century, and thus provides useful background information for the maps that are presented more graphically in the Papenfuse **Atlas**. **Early Maryland in a Wider World** is available at local libraries.

Paul L. Berry  
Port Republic, Calvert County

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The Historical Society of Charles County  
Post Office Box 261  
Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677

## CORRECTION

The name of Mr. Frederick A. Zihlman was omitted from the list of Directors of the Historical Society printed in the February issue of THE RECORD. Mr. Zihlman was elected on November 6, 1982. The Editor regrets this earlier omission.

## EDITOR'S NOTE

Articles of historic interest on Southern Maryland are requested for possible publication in future issues of **The Record**. Please send your typewritten manuscripts and other communications to: Editor, **The Record**, P. O. Box 261, Port Tobacco, Maryland 20677.



# The RECORD

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William E. Garvey, Jr., President

Charles G. LaHood, Jr., Editor

## SAINT THOMAS MANOR

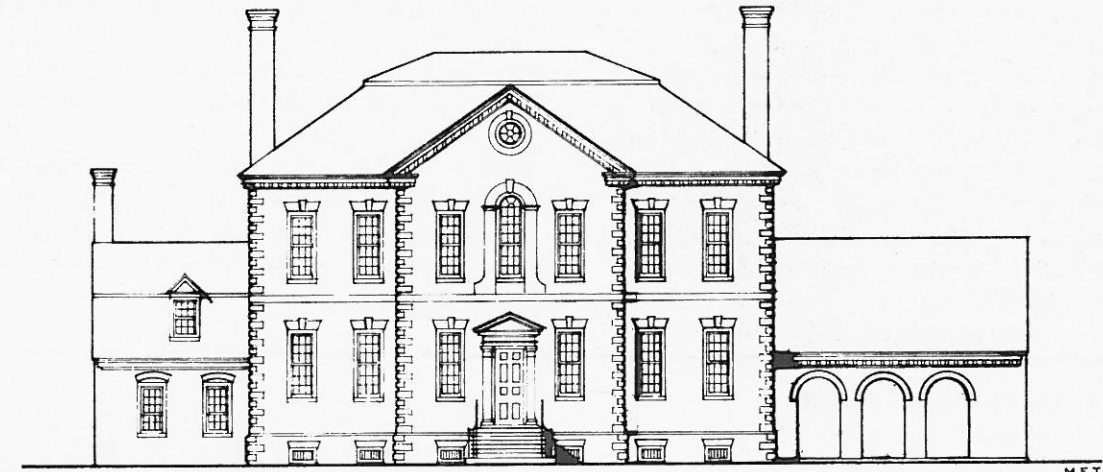
by Michael F. Trostel, A.I.A.

Saint Thomas Manor at Chapel Point in Charles County is the earliest surviving of the great Georgian mansions of Maryland. It may also have been the first. A date stone inscribed with 1741 is set under the center window on the second floor.

Saint Thomas was built as the residence of the Superior of the Maryland Mission of the Society of Jesus. The manor, located on the Port Tobacco River where it flows into the Potomac, had first been established by Father White in 1641. In 1649 it was acquired by Thomas Copley and held in trust for the Jesuit Order. In 1662 the deed to the 4,000 acre tract was transferred to the Order.

Until the end of the 18th century, the overall dimensions of finely constructed buildings were set by a combination of geometric shapes and proportions. Saint Thomas Manor is an example of this practice. The length of the house is twice the dimension from the watertable to the eave, or two squares. The top of an equilateral triangle, whose base is the length of the house at the ground, determined the height of the chimneys. In addition, an arc with a radius from the center of the house at the first floor to the corner of the cornice determined the location of the break of the hip-on-hip roof and the height of the top of the roof as well as the slopes of the lower roof and the pediment of the center pavillions.

The very high quality of the brickwork is the most outstanding architectural element of Saint Thomas Manor to-



The entrance and garden facades of the house each are seven bays wide, with the three center bays advancing to form a pavillion. In the 19th century a porch was added to the garden elevation and the center window on the second floor was lengthened for access to a roof deck. To one side of the house is a two bay service wing. To the other, on the side toward Church Point, is a wing with a three arched loggia behind which originally was a chapel. In December 1866 a disastrous fire destroyed the interior of the manor house and of St. Ignatius Church which had been built in 1798 adjoining the chapel. The buildings were repaired in 1867 and, while the floor plans did not change, today all the interior finishes are mid-Victorian. At the same time, the hip-on-hip roof of the manor was changed to a gable and a second floor added to the service wing.

\*The Author is a prominent architect in Baltimore, and is active in Historic Preservation.

day, ranking the house among the most important survivors of Maryland's 18th century architectural heritage. Except for the pediments of the pavillions, the 1866 fire did not damage the exterior masonry and its careful carftsmanship can still be recognized.

The manor is laid entirely in Flemish bond with a watertable and a beltcourse. There are brick quoins at the four corners of the house as well as at the corners of the pavillions. These quoins are the earliest known on a Maryland Building.

There are flat arches with keystones made of rubbed and gauged brick over the window. As was the usual practice, the rubbed and gauged brick are laid with a much finer mortar joint than the rest of the masonry.

The culmination of the superb masonrywork is found around the center windows on the second floor. The win-



dows have semicircular heads surrounded by rubbed and gauged brick with a keystone. Below carved stone imposts the rubbed brick continues as architraves on each side of the window. This finer masonry curves out to form consoles which sit on the beltcourse. The date stone on the entrance facade sits between the consoles, above the beltcourse and below the window sill.

Saint Thomas' tall, slender chimneys and the restrained design of the chimney caps are typical of Maryland's Georgian architecture. The caps consist of six courses of brick, including two covered with stucco, and are similar to others in the Tidewater region built during the half century preceding the American Revolution.

One must look across the Potomac to Virginia for brickwork comparable to Saint Thomas Manor's. Stratford Hall, begun by Thomas Lee about 1725, is the earliest surviving example of the superb Virginia masonrywork. The house that must be compared with Saint Thomas Manor, however, is Rosewell, on the York River, built by Mann Page from the latter half of the 1720's through to the 1730's. Its end elevations have advancing pavillions with tall, semicircular-headed windows to light the staircases. The brickwork around the arched window heads is rubbed and gauged. There are stone imposts and keystones and each window has a stone panel below its sill. Rosewell has been a ruin for 65 years, but the craftsmanship of its extremely fine brickwork is still evident.

When the house at Chapel Point was under construction, other members of the Jesuit Order in Maryland wrote to their officers in Rome complaining that "The Jesuits at St. Thomas Manor are raising a palace unbecoming a religious order." At that time there were no other houses in Maryland to compare with the architectural sophistication of its plan and elevations. But shortly after, two major houses were begun which exhibit design similarities to Saint Thomas. Governor Thomas Bladen began his official residence in Annapolis in 1742. When its construction was stopped in 1747, the unfinished shell was dubbed Blanden's Folly. (In 1786 the building was enlarged and completed by St. John's College

and today is known as McDowell Hall.) Belair, in Prince George's County, was built for former governor Samuel Ogle during the mid-1740's.

St. Thomas, Bladen's Folly and Belair each had pedimented center pavillions and a hip-on-hip roof. In plan, each had an entrance hall leading into a saloon on the garden side. Also, in each case, the staircase was not in the center of the house, but placed to one side of the entrance hall. These were very advanced design elements for the period in the colonies.

Originally each house was designed with a basement kitchen, suggesting that their plans were developed by someone recently from England. Later in the 18th century, as the owners modified their houses for Maryland living conditions, the kitchen in Belair was moved to a separate dependency and at Saint Thomas much of the cooking was done in the service wing.

Both Saint Thomas and Blanden's Folley have quoins although at Bladen's Folly they are found only at the exterior corners of the house and not on the pavillions.

Another early, formal house which should be compared with Saint Thomas Manor is the Buck House in Upper Marlboro. Although only one-and-a-half stories high, it had center pavillions and brick quoins at the corners of the house. It is believed that the Buck House was built by James War-drop shortly after he purchased the property in 1741.

For more than 240 years, Saint Thomas Manor has stood on its high point of land overlooking the Potomac and Port Tobacco Rivers. Its high architectural quality has always been known to Charles Countians, but, inexplicably, Maryland's architectural historians have been in ignorance of Saint Thomas' history and importance. Over the past several years, the manor has begun to be recognized for its outstanding brickwork. With increased interest in our architectural heritage, it can be hoped that Saint Thomas Manor will take its place as one of the major 18th century landmarks in Maryland.

and large double porches. Meals were first class and included mineral water. Ample shade and green lawns invited one to promenade. And not a fly or mosquito anywhere!

Overlooking the point itself, the dancing pavilion was 150 ft. long and provided a most romantic setting on a moonlight night. Your grandparents will remember fondly the Grand Balls, some Fancy Dress and some Masquerade, that took place all summer long. Bowling, tennis, shooting gallery, fishing & crabbing, boating & sailing, salt water bathing, country driving, and merry-go-round rides, all kept you busy from sunup to sunset.

The trip to Southern Maryland was the best part of your vacation. From Baltimore or Washington (via Bowie) to Cox's Station by the Balt. & Potomac R.R., it was 2½ hours through lovely countryside. The refitted steamer George Law, the beautiful Harry Randall, or the swift running Sam'l J. Pentz left the 7th Street wharf in Washington and in 3½ short hours reached Chapel Point. On board, Professor August M. Schraeder led his orchestra (also on grounds & in hotel). Nothing like it on the Potomac!

The best part of those days was the price! A round-trip boat ticket from Washington to Chapel Point, including swimming, supper, lodging at the hotel, breakfast, and admission to the Grand Colonial Ball was a mere \$2.00. Or you might prefer the boatride to Glymont, a bicycle ride over "a level 14 mile road to Chapel Point", a swim and return boatride for 50¢. The summer resort was never a financial success and so came to a halt in the mid '50's . . . a beautiful era come to an end!

THE PROPOSED SPECIAL PROJECT OF THE  
CHARLES COUNTY GARDEN CLUB FOR THE  
1983 MARYLAND HOUSE AND GARDEN  
PILGRIMAGE TOUR

We propose to enhance through landscaping St. Thomas Manor, Chapel Point, a distinguished eighteenth century building on an important historic site.

Father Andrew White, official historian for the colonists on the Ark and the Dove, described this site in his seventeenth century writings. It is situated on a promontary overlooking the confluence of the Port Tobacco and Potomac Rivers. Undoubtedly it commands one the the finest views in Maryland.

The present manor house was built in 1741. According to Mr. Michael Trostel, architectural historian, St. Thomas manor house is "the earliest surviving of the great Georgian mansions of Maryland." From its concept this property, as part of the manorial system of the colony of Maryland, serves today a functional moral purpose as a church center for the community.

With the three hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of Maryland in view, we feel this to be a very timely project.

We propose a basic long-range plan of simple design for the grounds on the river side of the manor house. To accomplish this end, our immediate plan is to correct a non-functional neglected space which has poor drainage. We envision plant material in the traditional spirit with emphasis on seasonal beauty and low maintenance.

To help us accomplish this end we are fortunate to have the advice of Mrs. Victoria K. Angel, professional landscape consultant, who was employed at Mt. Vernon in the horticultural department for six years.

Our immediate goal is a small completed section that will unify the whole. Through this we wish to stimulate the awareness of the public to this project and to develop appreciation which will lead to future support.

THE MAPPING OF COLONIAL MARYLAND

The year 1982 was notable for a renewed interest in publishing the results of studies of Maryland cartography, a subject that has not been treated extensively in published sources for some time. Those interested in a broad review of early Maryland maps have been limited in the past to the works of Edward B. Mathews whose surveys **Bibliography and Cartography of Maryland** and **The Maps and Map-Makers of Maryland** were issued in 1897 and 1898 respectively in the **Report** series of the Maryland Geological Survey. Although there have been excellent studies of specific early maps that include Maryland, such as the maps made by John Smith and Augustine Herrman, a broad survey of Maryland mapping using modern research methods and more current information is long overdue.

This need was met in December 1982 by the publication of **The Hammond-Harwood House Atlas of Historical Maps of Maryland, 1608-1908**, compiled and written by Edward C. Papenfuse, the Maryland State Archivist, and Joseph M. Coale III, Executive Assistant to Governor Hughes. The book is published by the Johns Hopkins University Press but is sold by the Hammond Harwood House, 19 Maryland Avenue, Annapolis, Maryland 21401 (\$47.50 plus \$1.87 sales tax). In this book are presented the results of meticulous research in a most attractive form, well designed with illustrations that both support the scholarly text and please the eye of the reader. Among items of historical documentation, maps have perhaps the widest and most immediate appeal, but a full appreciation of their significance requires study and the comparison of one map with another, as well as a study of other documentary records of the area and period. The authors of the **Atlas** have prepared a work that contains 142 map illustrations, with 15 in full color, and with a text that is well-written and is supplied with sufficient scholarly references to support its authority. Considerable effort was made by the authors and their assistants to locate as many Maryland maps as possible and to study them as a basis for the **Atlas**. This effort is continuing, fortunately, and will result in a year or so in a comprehensive photocopy collection available for reference use in the Hall of Records in Annapolis.

Early maps of Maryland have particular appeal to those interestd in the history of Southern Maryland since the areas known and depicted with some accuracy were those associated with the tidewater region. **The Hammond-Harwood Atlas** is certainly recommended for such collectors. For those persons interested in copies of early maps for framing, the publishers also offer sets of four or six maps, enlarged and printed on special paper, for \$25.00 and \$35.00 respectively.

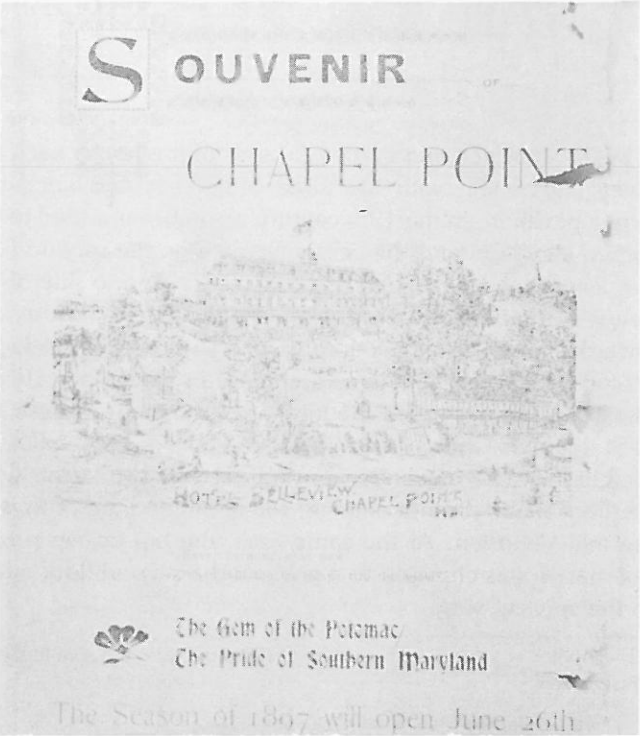
CHAPEL POINT PARK

by Fr. Edward P. O'Connel, S.J.<sup>2</sup>

Today, we have our fast moving autos, television and electronic games but the 1880's had river steamers, horse and buggies, and ballroom dancing overlooking the Potomac River. I wonder who is better off?

Late in the 19th century, spring water became a fad and beach resorts vied with each other proclaiming its curative powers. At Chapel Point, in Charles County in 1882, the Hotel Bellevue was built by the Howard Brothers and the Jesuits for \$10,000.00 as a summer resort. It was a fine building, 4 stories high, with a broad piazza (600 ft. wide), overlooking the picturesque Potomac and the Virginia shore 9 miles away. The management provided pure spring water . . . no bar in the hotel . . . no boisterous or disorderly persons allowed to loiter . . . none but refined guests admitted. "The bluff on which Chapel Point House stands catches every cool breeze."

The Hotel Bellevue was said to be the largest in Southern Maryland (capacity 200 guests) with cool rooms



<sup>2</sup>Fr. O'Connell is Pastor of St. Ignatius Church, Chapel Point.