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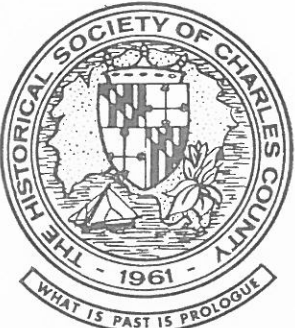
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# The RECORD

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## BURLEAN HALL—Summary Of Research (Part I)

By Charles Jenkins Walthall

The three-part telescopic house called Burlean Hall, located about one mile south of Faulkner, Maryland, sits high atop a hill overlooking Zekiah Swamp and Allen's Fresh. This area was first settled by Algonquin-speaking Indians and a Werowance or chieftain's village was located nearby on the east bank of the Wicomico River. Another Indian village and later Zekiah Indian Fort were also located in Zekiah Swamp.

Zekiah Manor of 6,000 acres was patented to the second Lord Baltimore, Cecilius Calvert in 1667. From that date until the American Revolution all lands in this area were designated as part of the proprietary manor of Zekiah and assessed rents which were paid to the Lord Baltimore. His son Charles Calvert constructed a house on Zekiah Manor and in 1673 proposed moving from Mattapony to Zekiah for greater security.

Some historians allege that the first Charles County courthouse was located in the Zekiah area perhaps near Allen's Fresh. Zekiah Swamp is most remembered today as part of the escape route of John Wilkes Booth, President Lincoln's assassin.

Appropriately, the first European settlers on this land called it by an Indian name. Thus, in 1650 Benjamin Gill sold to Francis Posey and John Belaine 2,000 acres called *Rakopakobe*. This name may mean "the body of water where the racoons are" and may have been an Indian name for Allen's Fresh. This 2,000 acre tract seems to have been comprised of 1,000 acres Gill's land surveyed in 1649 for Benjamin Gill; 700 acres Arthur's Hope patented in 1649 to Francis Posey and John Belaine; and 300 acres Burlain's Hill surveyed 1654 and patented 1659

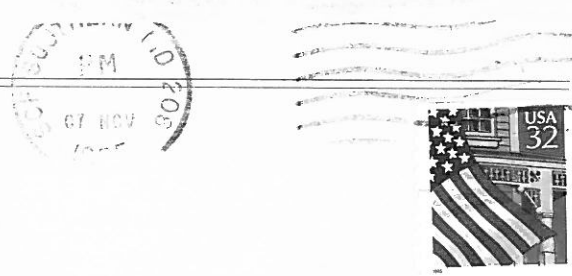
to Richard Trew, who assigned it to John Belaine the same year.

The south bound of Arthur's Hope was Posey's Creek, still indicated on current maps at Allen's Fresh, and the east bound was Burlaine's Fresh. The latter appears to have been the original name for Allen's Fresh, named after John Allen who in 1672 patented land and erected a grist mill there.

Francis Posey was presumably a Huguenot from England. He served as a member of the Maryland Legislative Assembly and House of Burgesses. He died in 1654 and his patents were sold or allowed to lapse. John Belaine bought Burlain's Hill back from Richard Trew and it passed to his son Nicholas, who gave part of it to his half brother John Posey, son of Francis. John Posey's 100 acre part of Burlean Hill became the nucleus of Laurel Grove/Timber Neck. Nicholas Belaine's 200 acres became the nucleus of Burlings Hills and Plains (owned by Dr. Gerard Wood, surgeon's mate to James Craik, a physician to Gen. Washington) and Fertility Hall farm (owned by the Bowling family), both of which are now part of the PEPCO Faulkner Ash Storage Site.

In 1658, James Walker was assigned 200 acres called Walker's Run, on which the house called Burlean Hall is situated. This tract lay between Burlain's Hill and Posey's Creek, hence must have been part of Arthur's Hope (and Rakopakobe?) which were by then disclaimed. In that same year Charles County was carved out of St. Mary's County and James Walker was appointed one of its first four commissioners.

Less than a year later Walker's Run was sold



to Edward Swan, who was appointed county constable and coroner. Swan was the first to build a house and actually live on the tract. It is highly unlikely, however, that that house is still standing as part of Burlean Hall, but the site may be the same.

Edward Swan sold it in 1669 to William Ward, who later sold part of Walker's Run and the rest became escheat (i.e. reverted back to the state), when he died without heirs. In 1714 Edward Philpott bought part of Walker's Run, and in 1715 was granted the other escheat part, thereby re-uniting the two parts.

In the margin of the deed to another tract in 1748, John Philpott describes a house on the land patented in 1715 to his father Edward. That description closely fits the dimensions of Burlean Hall's center section and appears to be the same house. Since the note mentions a ten year old tobacco house, implying the dwelling was older still, hence built prior to 1738, I would assign the house a date of circa 1730 or earlier.

A conservative architectural historian, Paul Touart, has dated it as circa 1770-1790 with the remote possibility of 1750. His estimate was based solely on an examination of the house, which has been remodelled several times. Touart's date of 1750 certainly accommodates the 1748 description and 1730 is not that much more remote.

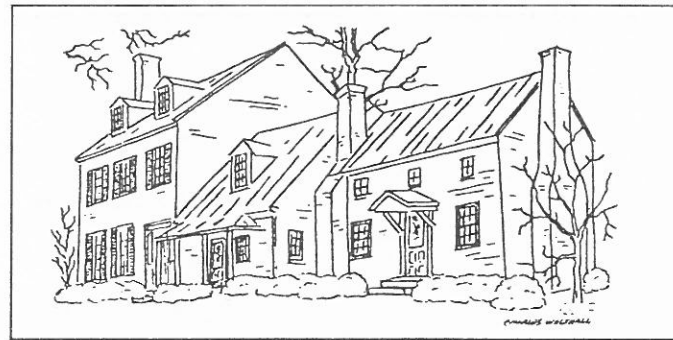
From Edward Philpott the house on Walker's Run passed down three generations to his son Charles, to Charles' son John, and then to John's sons David and John.

John, Jr. sold his half in 1777 to his brother David and moved to Virginia. In 1778 David sold the north half to his cousin, Benjamin Philpott, which passed to his wife and became known as Mrs. Philpott's Plantation.

In 1778 David Philpott also moved to Virginia, having sold the south half to Clare Slye, who left it to her daughter, Jane. Jane Slye married Charles Carroll, the grandson of Daniel Carroll of Duddington, whose manor comprised 1,800 acres of the District of Columbia including most of Capitol Hill.

Charles Carroll settled in Hagerstown at Belle Vue and later moved to Dumbarton House in Georgetown. He is alleged to have aided his close friend Dolly Madison flee the burning White House. He later moved to the western frontier of New York state and was a co-founder of the city of Rochester.

The Carrolls sold the tract, which included Walker's Run, in 1789 to Belain Posey, who was a descendant of the land's first owner, Francis Posey. Belain served as a captain during the American Revolution and later attained the rank of colonel in the Maryland militia.



BURLEAN HALL

Col. Posey married Margaret Corry, a Catholic, hence all subsequent issue of this line were raised Catholic. The Poseys resided in a house built circa 1780 known in the 19th century as Laurel Grove but since 1970 as Timber Neck. That house is located on John Posey's part of Burlain's Hill.

Col. Posey's estate was divided in 1802 and Margaret received the southern portion, Lot 2, the Widow's Dower, which included the land purchased from Jane Slye and Charles Carroll. Margaret moved into Burlean Hall, named the farm Mount Pleasant (from her initials, M.P.) and presumably added the kitchen wing and remodelled the house at that time. Tradition alleges that Margaret Posey, dressed in mourning attire, haunts the house—still mistress-in-charge.

Margaret survived her son Laurence who lived in Laurel Grove. When she died in 1841 the entire estate went by law to Laurence Posey's heirs and was divided into two lots. Lot 2, 299 acres, which included the Widow's Dower and Mrs. Philpott's Plantation, was thereafter called

\* \* \*

The above is a summary of research presented in "BURLEAN HALL, also known as Mount Pleasant, Kilravock Hall, Philpott-Posey House; a Documented History and Annotated Chain of Title." That 150 page paper, completed by Charles Jenkins Walthall in May of 1995, is on file at the Southern Maryland Research Center at the Charles County Community College in La Plata, Maryland.

BURLEAN Hall, (also known as Mount Pleasant, Kilravock Hall, Philpot-Posey House) a Document-  
ed History and Annotated Chain of Title  
by Charles Jenkins Walthall  
May 1995

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This document was made possible in part by a generous grant from the Charles County Heritage Commission. It is on file in the Southern Maryland Studies Center at the Charles County Community College in La Plata, Maryland.



Mount Pleasant Farm.

In 1845, Laurence Posey, Jr. sold for five dollars (i.e. gave) "one fourth part" of lot 2 (probably including the house) to his cousin Washington A. Posey, the grandson and executor of Margaret. It is unclear whether 202 acres, the remainder of Lot 2, or the entire 299 acres was sold at auction to William D. Merrick in the same year. Both acreages are mentioned in that transaction, but the 202 acres were more likely intended.

Merrick was the only U.S. Senator from Charles County and allegedly cast the deciding vote admitting Texas into the union. In addition to Mount Pleasant, he owned most of the lands from Burlain's Hill to Posey's Creek, where he held a 711 acre farm called Glasvar, comprised of tracts previously held by the Philpott family.

Senator Merrick assigned Mount Pleasant to John H. Burroughs in 1848. In 1851 Burroughs sued Joseph Stone for a debt owed him, forcing the sale of Mount Pleasant, which somehow had become Stone's possession. In 1852 it was auctioned and sold to the highest bidder, Washington A. Posey.

In February of 1854, W. A. Posey advertised for "a carpenter for the remainder of the year—Allen's Fresh," which is probably when the largest section was added and the house remodelled again. Washington Posey was one of the wealthier farmers in Charles County and also owned and operated the mill at Allen's Fresh.

In 1883 he gave a lavish all night party at Mount Pleasant, which was described as an "old fashioned Southern mansion" with brilliantly lighted and spacious halls and parlors filled with "evidence of the halcyon days of the good old times of long ago."

Posey's son, Adrian, married the "belle of the party" Mary Agnes Howard, a descendant of Gen. John Eager Howard and Francis Scott Key. The Poseys built and resided at the Maples in La Plata. Adrian's brother Dr. Cataldus H. Posey, and his family were the last Poseys to live at Mount Pleasant.

Adrian Posey owned and edited the *Maryland*

*Independent* newspaper from 1882. He was elected a state senator in 1890 and 1892 and Charles County State's Attorney 1896–1900. Senator Posey was founder and first president of Charles County's first bank, the Southern Maryland National Bank. He also led the controversial initiative to move the county seat from Port Tobacco to La Plata.

Adrian's widow, Mary Agnes Posey, left the house to her daughter, Inez. She was the wife of Julian Gillespie, the commercial attaché to the United States Embassy in Istanbul, Turkey. Mrs. Gillespie dreamed of restoring the house and coming back there to live but after her husband's death sold the property out of the family in 1942.

Earl and Jaqueline Hindle bought the house in 1950 and restored it. Dr. William Sill bought it in 1959 from the Hindles. Capitalizing on their efforts, he placed the house on the Maryland House and Garden Pilgrimage in 1960. Thereafter he lost interest in the house and it fell into neglect. In 1992 his will stipulated that his housekeeper "shall have the right to live in the main house on said property as long as she properly cares for and maintains the house and my two dogs, 'Sweetheart' and 'Trouble, Sr.', until their death." Thus the house literally went to the dogs!

Burlean Hall is currently under contract to a couple who plan to operate it as an exclusive country inn.

Almost everything previously said about Burlean Hall turns out to be myth. Long said to have been built in 1654 or 1665 by John and Benjamin Posey on Burlain's Hill, hence called Burlean Hall, it is now known that it was not located on Burlain's Hill at all, hence seems inappropriately named. Out of convenience, I have used the name Burlean Hall in the above discussion, but for the future I propose the less pretentious, but more accurate title of the Philpott-Posey house built circa 1730 on Walker's Run patented in 1658. But since Walker's Run was originally part of Arthur's Hope (1649) and Rakopakobe (1650), both patented to Francis Posey and John Belaine, Burlean Hall is not altogether inappropriate.