

HISTORY
OF
ALLEGANY COUNTY
MARYLAND

INCLUDING

ITS ABORIGINAL HISTORY; THE COLONIAL AND REVOLUTIONARY PERIOD; ITS SETTLEMENT BY THE WHITE RACE AND SUBSEQUENT GROWTH; A DESCRIPTION OF ITS VALUABLE MINING, INDUSTRIAL AND AGRICULTURAL INTERESTS; SKETCHES OF ITS CITIES, TOWNS AND DISTRICTS; MASTER SPIRITS; CHARACTER SKETCHES OF FOUNDERS; MILITARY AND PROFESSIONAL MEN, Etc.

BY

JAMES W. THOMAS, LL.D.

AND

JUDGE T. J. C. WILLIAMS

TO THIS IS ADDED A BIOGRAPHICAL AND GENEALOGICAL RECORD OF REPRESENTATIVE FAMILIES, PREPARED FROM DATA OBTAINED FROM ORIGINAL SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

Illustrated

VOLUME I

Baltimore

REGIONAL PUBLISHING COMPANY

1969

SAMUEL SELBY

Samuel Selby, the third, as he was known, came to the Allegany bar in 1791, from Frederick County, Maryland, and at once actively entered upon his professional career. He does not seem however to have remained here a great many years. Selbysport, once in Allegany but now in Garrett County, is said to have been named after his brother.

WILLIAM VAN BUSKIRK

William Van Buskirk came to Cumberland from the Valley of Virginia. He was here from a very early date, not however among the earlier admissions to this bar. He attained high professional rank. He, in connection with John V. L. McMahon, was counsel in the celebrated murder case of John Swearingen, tried in 1829. Mr. Van Buskirk represented Allegany County in the Maryland Legislature in 1841 and 1842, and he was Secretary of State during a portion of the term of Governor Frank Thomas. He died in 1845.

BRICE W. HOWARD

Brice W. Howard came to the Cumberland Bar at a very early date. He came here from Baltimore County, and belonged to the well known Howard family of this State. He entered very actively into the practice of his profession, and soon became one of the leading lawyers of his time. He died in 1834.

MATTHEW TOPHAM EVANS

Matthew T. Evans was born in Baltimore, Md., in 1792, the son of a wealthy merchant, who, after giving him a finished education, sent him for his health, to visit his uncle, Joshua Johnson, near Frostburg, Md. While sojourning in the mountains, he determined upon the law as his profession, and studied under Samuel M. Semmes, of the Cumberland bar, where he was admitted in 1843. He at once entered upon an active profes-

sional career, and, it is said, soon commanded practically all of the practice in the county west of Frostburg. Mr. Evans only lived seven years after he came to the bar.

WILLIAM PRICE

William Price came to Cumberland from Washington county, having studied law there under John Thompson Mason, the first. He soon attained high professional rank. He was the State Senator in 1825, later a candidate for Congress against Governor Frank Thomas, and was presidential elector on several occasions.

Under a resolution of the Maryland Legislature, in 1852, he, with Judge Frederick Stone, of Charles County, and Samuel Tyler, of Frederick County, were designated to revise, simplify and abridge the rules of practice in the courts of this State. In the division of this work Mr. Price was assigned the part looking to the simplifying and modernizing the antiquated forms of legal proceedings, resulting in a very elaborate and learned report on the subject, made by him to the General Assembly.

Mr. Price located in Cumberland in 1842, and after having built the beautiful Washington street home, later owned by Governor Lloyd Lowndes, he married Miss Marion Bruce, one of the two daughters of Upton Bruce. She became the mother of Bruce Price, the distinguished architect, who died in Paris a few years ago.

Mr. Price was the son of Josiah Price, a lawyer in Washington County and a Revolutionary hero. He was educated at Dickinson College, as was also his brother, Benjamin Price, of Baltimore City.

Mr. Price, in 1840, fought a duel with Governor Frank Thomas. The difficulty grew out of a speech which Mr. Price had made in Cumberland, and to which

Mr. Thomas took exception. The duel took place near Berkeley Springs. Only one shot was fired by each of the combatants, when friends present effected a reconciliation.

WILLIAM McMAHON

William McMahan was one of the pioneers in the development of Cumberland. He was a man of marked ability, high character and sterling worth. He came to Cumberland from Virginia. His family is said to have been of Irish descent.

Mr. McMahan was one of the commissioners for building the first court house after Allegany was erected into a county, and was prominent in nearly every public movement. He was the leading merchant of Cumberland, and one of the most active and progressive farmers of the community and was a man of large affairs.

His house, one of the earliest in the town, stood on the southwest corner of Green and Smallwood streets. His wife was Sarah Van Lear, of the noted Van Lear family of the Tammany estate in Washington County, Maryland, and it was to them and in that house that was born John Van Lear McMahan, one of the most brilliant jurists in the United States of his day and generation.

Mr. McMahan held practically every position of trust and confidence that the people of Cumberland and Allegany County could bestow upon him. He was the first Register of Wills of Allegany County. He was also Treasurer and Sheriff of the County and Clerk of the Circuit Court, and on eight different occasions represented his County in the General Assembly of Maryland. For many years he was President of the Board of Trustees of the Allegany County Academy, as well as of the Board of Trustees of the First Presbyterian Church of Cumberland. He died in 1838.

Besides his distinguished son, he left

two daughters, one of whom married Doctor Robert McKaig, father of the late General Wm. McMahan McKaig, and the other Joseph Sprigg, father of the late General Joseph Sprigg.

COL. WILLIAM LAMAR

Col. William Lamar was born in Frederick County, Maryland, in 1755, and was the son of Robert Lamar of that county.

At a very early age he entered the Maryland line, and served as a member of the Continental Army throughout the American Revolution. In the disastrous battle of Camden he was foremost in the fight, and was by the side of DeKalb when that brave officer fell. At the siege of Ninety Six, the immortal Kosciuszko was his fellow soldier, and served under him for awhile.

After the close of the war, Col. Lamar moved to Allegany County, and became one of the largest landowners and progressive farmers in the community. He built on the estate near Frostburg, known as the Vale farm.

He married Miss Margaret Worthington, of Frederick County, Maryland, and died in 1838, leaving a large family, and is represented today by the descendants of his daughter Louisa, who married Colonel Frisby Tilghman; William Lynch Lamar, who married Maria Briscoe; Mary, who married Hon. Michael C. Sprigg; Ann, who married George Tilghman, and Marine, who married Hamilton Worthington.

JOHN VAN LEAR McMAHON

Standing easily in the forefront of his profession, was the commanding figure of John Van Lear McMahan. He was born in Cumberland in the year 1800, and was the son of the Honorable William McMahan, planter and merchant, the first Register of Wills of Allegany County, and, at numerous times, a representative of his county in the Legislature