

A Relation of a Voyage to the Head of the Bay



GEORGE E. GIFFORD, JR. and MARION TINLING*

IN 1929 the late Dr. Hugh Hampton Young of Baltimore bought from Bernard Quaritch of London forty letters and documents which he subsequently presented to the Enoch Pratt Free Library.¹ The manuscripts, preserved in a cloth case, were originally the private papers of Cecilius and Charles Calvert, proprietors of the colony of Maryland. These unpublished documents had been sent by Charles, Third Lord Baltimore, to his solicitors in England for use in a boundary lawsuit against the Penns.

One of these papers, number seven in the collection, is a two-paged folio, written very closely in a secretarial hand. The paper is discolored with age, the writing on one side shows through the writing on the other, and the script itself is strange and difficult to decipher. The fly leaf is endorsed, "25 April, 1634. A Relation of a Voyage Made by Cyprian Thorowgood to the Heade of the Baye of Chesapeake" in the handwriting of Cecilius, Lord Baltimore. The document is not signed but has the appearance of being the original "Relation."²

Cyprian (Ciprian) Thorowgood (Thoroughgood) came

* Mr. Gifford, a member of Beta Omega Chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, is a naval physician, stationed at the U. S. Naval Hospital, Oakland, California. Mrs. Tinling is an editor for the National Historical Publications Commission. The authors acknowledge their debt to the heads of the Enoch Pratt Free Library for permission to photostat and transcribe this manuscript.

¹ Hugh Hampton Young, *Surgeon's Autobiography* (New York, 1940), pp. 444-445.

² *Descriptive Catalog of the Exhibition of Documents*, Enoch Pratt Free Library, Baltimore, copied from Bernard Quaritch's London Auction, Catalogue #427, 1929.

The Historian

with the first colonists to St. Mary's in March 1634. On May 22, 1637 he was granted 300 acres by Cecilius because he "hath done us and the colony good Service; especially with business of Pocomoke."³ Later Thorowgood "demandeth 100 acres for transporting himself into the Province."⁴

Thorowgood was an agent involved in the beaver trade. He is also listed as third of the early attorneys in Maryland.⁵ On August 7, 1638, he appeared as an attorney for Thomas Copley, Esq. who sued John Norton for damages of two thousand pounds of tobacco. Norton had agreed on a price for one thousand feet of "sawn board" but had refused to furnish it.

Thorowgood was also a civic-minded man. He took an active part in the trouble with Captain Claiborne.⁶ He was an assemblyman, and his name appears frequently in the early proceedings of the colony.⁷ In 1641, he was elected Sheriff of St. Mary's County.⁸

The voyage covering the period April 25 to May 15, 1634, was made for the purpose of opening up trade with the Susquehannock Indians. Father White, Jesuit leader of St. Mary's, recommended that a trading post be set up at the mouth of the Susquehanna and urged Thorowgood, who acted for the Jesuit priests of the colony in their profit-making venture, to journey there and begin trade.

Recently the "Relation" has been used by Semmes⁹ and

³ *Ibid.*; Richard D. Fisher, "The Case of Good Intent," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, III (June, 1908), 159; *Archives of Maryland*, I (Baltimore, 1883), 12, 14, 19, 28, 29, 116, 118, 120, 128, 145, 167, 172, 173.

⁴ "Land Notes, 1634-1655," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, VI (September, 1911), 267.

⁵ Elihu S. Riley, "The Bar of Early Maryland," *The Green Bag*, XII (November, 1900), 579; Maryland State Bar Association, *Report of the Second Annual Meeting* (1897), p. 579; C. W. Sams and E. S. Riley, *The Bench and Bar of Maryland*, I (n.p., 1901), 13, 105.

⁶ J. L. Bozman, *Sketch of the History of Maryland* (Baltimore, 1811), p. 327.

⁷ *Archives of Maryland*, I, *op. cit.*; IV (Baltimore, 1887), 24, 29, 34, 39, 40, 44, 45, 59, 88, 100-101, 121, 136, 137, 148, 150, 161, 163, 174, 176, 195, 198.

⁸ *Archives of Maryland*, III (Baltimore, 1885), 96, 97.

⁹ Raphael Semmes, *Captains and Mariners of Early Maryland* (Baltimore, 1937), pp. 7, 15, 74, 110, 111, 140, 311, 444, 445, 507, 508.

A Relation of a Voyage

Carmer¹⁰ in their studies of this area. The account is a well written, vivid, early one of Maryland that should be more widely known in its entirety.

"A Relation of a Voyage Made by Mr. Cyprian Thorowgood to the Head of the Baye.

"Upon the 24th of Aprill 1634 we sett saile from the mouth of Patuxan, (a river about seven miles from St. Maries, the place where our Colonie is seated) a-tradeing, in a small pinnace manned with seven men, with a nation at the head of the baye, called the Sasquasahannackes. Havinge a faire winde wee passed that day by two ilands in the baye neere to the Easterne shoare, the one called Clabornes Iland, the other Poples Iland, both which Captaine Clabourne hath stoced with hogges. The next to these is the Ile of Kent, where Captaine Claborne is seated, toward the south end thereof, these three are not above a league and halfe distant from each other, the two former are but small, but that of Kent¹¹ is about twentie miles long, haveing a necke of land (covering?) (coming out?)—Eastward 2 or 3 miles all along the necke where is not above 3 roode of water betwixt it and the maine land, and at either end haveing about 3 foote deep when the tyde is out; some seven leagues higher is a small Iland some 2 miles long, called Pooles Island, about a mile from the westerne shoare it hath a creeke in the side of it with a marsh crossing the Iland, where the water begins to be fresh. Some 25 (?) leagues higher the baye is not above a league over, and divides itselfe into two branches, the one bendinge Northeast and the other Northwest, the latter openinge itselfe to the Northeast and Southwest maketh a very large bay into which fall many small rivers, the northwest from the enteringe is the river which comes from the Sasquahahannooke's at the enteringe whereof is a little Iland some 2 mile about called Pallmer's Iland; whereof the Southeast end is very good land, and at the Northwest end there is high rocke, towards the water it is very steep, but on the other side it ascends by degrees. By this Iland boates

¹⁰ Carl Carmer, *Susquehanna* (New York, 1955), pp. 28, 33, 35.

¹¹ Erich Isaac, "Kent Island, Part I. The Period of Settlement," *Maryland Historical Magazine*, LII, no. 2 (June, 1957).

The Historian

use to ride being in trade with the Sasquasahannokes. Here we found a boat of Clabornes in trade with the Indians which had gotten 700 skins, and 40 men loaden with beaver were sent a little afore to the Dutch plantation, but so soone as they see us a comeing Clabornes men persuaded the Indians to take part with them against us, if we did happily offer to take their boat, but the Indians refused saying the English had never harmed them, neither would they fight soe neere home, whereupon they weighed their anchour and went away, and what skins the Indians had left, they brought to us, and went home to fetch what more they had at home, which made in all 230, this was on the seconde day of Maye. This nation is very valorous and stout people living in pallisadoed townes about 40 miles from this Iland, they are commonly 2 daies in going home in their canowes, but can come down in halfe a day, because of many falles which as (sic) in the river; when these men take any prisoners in warre, they bring to their towne, and there keepe them. Their great feast, at which times they bring them forth, and binde them to trees, makeing a hott fire about them at first, and still bigger by degrees, until they be dead; in the meanwhile they use to cut out peeces of their flesh, and boile it and eat it before them from whom they cut it; this relation I had from a Negroe, which lived among them for to learne the language, In the time of our tradeinge we had a little falling out with them which made us more carefully to stand upon our guard; haveing done our trade, and now being in returne homeward the winde took us where that we could not get downe wherefore we bent our Course to the Northeast river, where is a necke of high land below(?) some (?).¹² This river and the baye some two miles long and not a quarter broad, upon the Easterne side of it are 3 or 4 points of low marsh land, some two leagues (away) the river, there is a river East, the head whereof we verily believe joineth upon Delaware Baye.¹³ Thus keeping our Course some 12 leagues up the Northeast river we came to a reach bending northward, and then northward, and then againe northwest with marshes on each side, entering into this

¹² This is certainly the present Elk Neck, Cecil County, Maryland.

¹³ This is the present Elk River, which is now joined to Delaware Bay by the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

A Relation of a Voyage

reach and finding it very shallow we came to an anchour; the kept still his former breadth some quarter of a mile upward, the next morning fower of us went ashore and left the three other with our pinnace, Here wee see many deare, (yelkets?) and turkies but caught none,¹⁴ beinge indeed more intent to Discover the head of the river, or some Indian towne thereabout, wherefore we held our Course some 7 or 8 miles on the Southeast side of the river, where passing many low places and heads of springs at length we came to the head thereof, where it is not above 2 roodes over with a gravell bottome and a swift streame fallinge downe betwixt two high lande, and in wadinge over it was not above oure knees, being over the water we returned back on the northwest side thinking not to meet any lett in our way but in halfe way to our pinnace there was a beach running west somewhat bending on the South, which forced us 3 or 4 miles to the head of it, where we waded it under knees, to within an houre of sunsettinge we came unto our pinnace, in all this way we see noe signe of Indians, save certaine beaver traps, and one quartering house, where the Indians use to bee in time of hunting. The country we judged to have a very rich soile, with a gravell bottome in some places, and in others a deepe read clay, and towards the water very marshie; the next morning our men being ashore right over against our pinnace by scraping in the ground found it mixed with a glistering sand, whereof some little they brought to St. Maries; from the capes to the head of the baye, we guesse it to be neere upon 200 leagues; Soe it pleased God that on the 25th of Maye wee safely arrived in St. Maries."

¹⁴ Some of these places are today named after these animals; for example, Turkey Point, Elk River.