

A history of Eastport continues and explores the connection that Maryland's 9th Governor and First Lady had to Eastport.

Submitted by Ellen Moyer

In the early days of the colony near Annapolis, the Quaker Hill family had a plantation at "Hills Point" outside Annapolis. Henry Hill, the family patriarch, was a merchant and owner of four ships. Dr. Richard Hill, surgeon and botanist was born on the site in 1698. His brother, Joseph Hill, was born there in 1705. Joseph seemed to have worked with his father importing wine and rum and sugar. Joseph acquired a great deal of land near Annapolis and in Baltimore County. When he died in 1761, his two children deceased; he left the bulk of his property, including Horn's Neck (Eastport) to his granddaughter, Henrietta Margaret Hill. Henrietta, born in 1751, was 10 years old at the time.

The peninsula generally housed livestock for families in the town and does not seem to have been planted in tobacco. Citizens of Annapolis town at some point petitioned Joseph to cease and desist his raucous behavior. He reportedly rowed across Spa Creek to Horn Point where he would race his horses and shoot his guns. Some may say that as early as 250 years ago the differentiation between the proper gentry (Ward 1) and the more plebeian laid back personality of Eastporters was established.

Henrietta Hill married Benjamin Ogle in 1770 at the age of 29. Ben was the son of Maryland's long time Colonial Governor Sam Ogle and Anne Tasker. Belair mansion in Bowie was his estate. Sam Ogle and Ben Tasker are credited with introducing thoroughbred horse racing, English style, to the Colonies. Ben Ogle would become Maryland's 9th Governor (1798-1801) and Henrietta the First Lady. They lived and entertained at their home on King George Street (now the USNA Alumni house.) but Ben lived on his farm in Eastport.

Ben Ogle raced thoroughbreds and kept some of his horses in Eastport. The field where the Harbor House Housing Authority is today was once called "bone crusher" field for the horse bones that used to surface there. When Ben Ogle died he asked to be buried without ceremony on his farm. No one knows where he is buried. Studying the map of old dwellings with Al Luckenbach, archeologist, there appears to be a blacksmith shop in the area on the hill where the Annapolis Yacht Club sits. You may still see an occasional bumper sticker "Where's Ben?" that was made when Eastporters took ground scanning radar equipment and went in search of Ben's grave on the Yacht Club property. Unfortunately, over time the ground had been disturbed frequently and we still do not know the whereabouts of Ben's grave. Old timers have told about finding a grave stone in a big field when they were hunting, before the days of housing construction in and around HACA.