

## CHAPTER FIFTY-FOUR

SAMUEL PEARSALL  
of England and Virginia

*This chapter has been in part deleted. See Note, page 1041.*

### SECTION 1.

SAMUEL PEARSALL, son of Thomas Pearsall of England and Virginia, Chapter 27, Section 1; died 1643; resided in Isle of Wight County, Virginia, and Kent Island, Talbot County, Maryland. Married——. Children:—

1. John Pursel. Chapter 54, Section 2.
2. Arthur Pursall. Chapter 54, Section 18.
3. Tobias Purcell. Chapter 54, Section 19.

Feb. 16, 1649-50. Court and testamentary business 1649-50. Mark Pheypo administrator of Samuel Pursle late of Virginia, decd., demandeth of John Halloway, 20'—bear due this 5 years and upwards to the estate of the decd., by bill and demanded damages of non-payment and damages of suit, warned to court, 4th Feb. Pell-Justice. [Court Proceedings of Virginia, page 95.]

Samuel Pearsall came to Maryland in 1635 with Margaret Brent and her brothers. The records relating to him have been set out so fully in Chapter 27 that they will not need to be repeated at this place. Being the youngest he remained with his father, when in 1639 his brothers emigrated to Long Island in New Netherland. And about this time, through the founding of the Swedish Colony upon the Delaware peninsula, there was a marked revival in the volume of trade handled through the Kent Island station. The Pearsalls, together with the Brents, kept their hold upon the trade of the Kent Island station.

The use of tobacco had increased enormously in Sweden from 1637 until 1643, and it was now a profitable business to smuggle tobacco into this kingdom. The ordinance of the government was not lived up to and tobacco, in large quantities, was secretly brought into the country by sea and land, so large numbers of Swedish vessels began to frequent the Delaware waters. There were also quite a few vessels of other nations who were engaged in the Swedish tobacco trade. The most convenient trading places being located on Kent Island and in Talbot County, Maryland. Tobacco was brought into Sweden by way of Norway and the Danish provinces south of Sweden. By sea most of the smuggled tobacco was brought in on the Crown's ships from Riga, Narva and Nyskants. These ships were not so well guarded or searched as other ships, and hence the opportunity of smuggling was greater on them than on the merchant vessels.

Tobacco was supplied to the merchants by smugglers to such an extent that the Swedish company could not find buyers for its large stores. In the beginning of 1643 matters were becoming impossible and something had to be done. The heaviest buyers from the company complained that they could not sell their

tobacco, since tobacco was brought in illegally and sold by everybody. In March, 1643, it was proposed to control the inland trade, and also all importation of the article, by allowing only certain persons in Stockholm and other cities to sell the tobacco, denying all others the privilege. Some time later it was ordered that the tobacco trade of the entire kingdom be given into the hands of a company, which should buy its tobacco from the New Sweden Company, and sell it through their representatives in all cities and places in Sweden, Finland and other provinces of the kingdom, and the New Sweden Company was obliged to sell its tobacco only to the Tobacco Company. Notwithstanding which, the smuggling continued and tobacco was imported illegally into Sweden, not only on certain merchant vessels, but also on the ships of the Crown, thereby over-filling the markets of the country with the article. In some cases the governors and magistrates played under cover with the transgressors, and it was impossible for the company to bring the offenders to punishment even though they had been caught openly violating the law. Hence for a time there was a remarkable increase in the amount of business done by Samuel Pearsall and his associates, in supplying with tobacco the Swedish traders who came to the Delaware. [The Swedish Settlements on the Delaware, page 290.]

In the early part of 1643, Samuel Pearsall died in Virginia and his estate in Maryland was administered by Mark Pheypo. Subsequently, upon a division of the estate, the sons of Samuel Pearsall divided his lands and business so that John succeeded to the Kent Island business, Arthur to the Isle of Wight, Virginia, location, and Tobias to the St. Mary's, Maryland, or Gloucester, Virginia, location. In the meantime the business was continued by the estate.

During the war of the Commonwealth in England, the Pearsalls and Brents were actively supporting the King. Claiborne and his associates joined the Parliamentary Party. He took this opportunity, in 1644, to regain possession of Kent Island. When Claiborne repossessed himself of the Isle of Kent, Mark Pheypo and John Genalles were made the commissioners from Governor Calvert to deliver the latter's writ to Giles Brent of the Manor of Kent Fort, and bring an answer if they may. The Brents had so many troubles of their own at this time that they could do nothing else than ignore the command to recover possession of Kent Island. [Bozman's History of Maryland, page 286. Maryland Archives Province Court Proceedings, vol. 1, pgs. 281-435-458-459.]

Giles Brent had about this time joined forces in a business way with Claiborne and the New England party although he was a royalist. Hence this marks the close of his connection with the trading station on Kent Island. The Brent interests being thereafter held by his sister, Margaret Brent, under a lease from Giles Brent her brother. Claiborne also obtained possession of St. Mary's, the seat of government, and forced Governor Calvert to flee for safety into Virginia. He kept control of the province of Maryland for almost two years. Towards the close of the year 1646, Calvert collected his scattered forces, and with the assistance of the loyal Virginians, succeeded in recovering his province. (See Chapter 27, Section 2.)

At this time Lord Baltimore was unable to do more than recover the possession of the island and restore domestic peace. He was evidently done with Giles Brent, so to insure the enforcement of the civil laws of Maryland and to guarantee the

inhabitants in the peaceful pursuit, as far as possible, of their usual daily advocations, he placed the civil and military government of Kent Island in the hands of a Commission in which Robert Vaughan, Thomas Bradnox, and Philip Conner represented the supporters of Cromwell, and William Cox, Edward Comins and Francis Brooke represented the supporters of the king. [Sharfe, History of Maryland, vol. 1, page 194, and records of Kent County, at Chestertown, Maryland.]

Mark Pheypo seems to have thought the controversy for the recovery of Kent Island was not worth so much fighting, so he removed the Pearsall business from St. Mary's to Gloucester County, Virginia, and the Kent Island factory to the mainland of the Delaware peninsula, just across the open water to the east of Kent Island. The record in the Land Office of Maryland reading: St. Michells Hundred—Pheypo's Forte—a Freehold Contayning 100 acres due to Marke Pheypoe for Transporting himself into this Province in Anno 1649. According to the Condicons bearing date at London 2 July &c., Anno 1649. Surveyed March 8th, 1658. Pattented the 14th March Anno Dom 1658. Held of his Lordships Mannor of Saint Marys. Under the yearly rent of two shillings Sterl of the full value &c. at ye Choyce of his Lopp &c., to be payd &c. at Saint Marys at our Lady day & Michas. [Rent Roll St. Marys, Charles, Calvert Counties and the Isle of Kent, folio II.]

It is probable that it was at this time that Capt. James Neale, the special representative of Lord Baltimore, became associated with the Talbot County branch of the tobacco business. This was a better location than the one on Kent Island, and the trade along the peninsula was maintained almost without interruption. They seem to have had the largest share of the Swedish tobacco trade, which thrived greatly during the period of the Civil War in England, as the colonies were very lax in collecting the imposts.

In the spring of 1649 the contract of the Swedish Tobacco Company expired, and in October the government of Sweden withdrew the privileges given to the Company and permitted a free importation and sale of tobacco by any person, whether Swede or foreigner, on the payment of duty. It soon became evident that unrestricted importation of tobacco into Sweden was not practical as tobacco was smuggled into the country in larger quantities than before the excise was materially reduced. It was therefore decided to restore the old order of things, and on the twenty-second of September, 1651, a patent for the tobacco trade was issued by the Queen, granting to the New Sweden Company the sole right to import and sell tobacco under any pretext whatever, and transgressors would be punished according to the Ordinance of 1647.

The new regulations did not improve matters. The mayors and magistrates of the cities interpreted the patent to suit their own interests. In some cases the agents of the Tobacco Company and others, sent to inquire into the condition of the trade and guard the interests of their employers, were attacked and ill treated. The company complained and, in 1652, another patent in five articles was published. But all efforts of the Crown and the company to regulate the trade and prevent smuggling were to no avail, and in April, 1653, the importation and trade of tobacco was again made free, the privileges granted the New Sweden Company being withdrawn. A duty was to be paid by the importer, when the herb was

loaded on a mounted Swedish ship, while a somewhat higher duty was imposed if imported on other vessels. But illegal importation continued.

It was as a fact no use trying to beat the Dutch-English merchants. They managed to control the market no matter what were the local regulations. Even though the Swedish colony obtained its supply across the free route made no particular difference, if it had to pay the royal taxes at home. It is impossible to follow up the interesting details of the Swedish tobacco trade; the reader will find it all in Amandeus Johnson's work on the Swedish Settlement in America. The details that there appear show how profitable was the business of the comparatively unimportant trading station on the Wye River, Talbot County, Maryland.

#### SECTION 2.

JOHN PURSEL, son of Samuel Pearsall of England and Virginia, Chapter 54, Section 1; resided in Talbot County, Maryland. He married long before July 15, 1606, Mary Stevens, sister of Symond Stevens of Talbott County. [Administration proceedings, Maryland at Annapolis, folio 13, page 376.] Children:—

1. John Pursel. Chapter 54, Section 3.
2. Thomas Pursel. Chapter 54, Section 7.

John Pursel on some of the records appears as John Peircesall.

Proceedings of the Assembly, 1678, whereas there hath been 825,979 pounds of tobacco expended layed out and dispersed by several of the inhabitants of this province in the late expedition against the Nanticoke Indians and others the necessary charges of the province therefore that the same may be satisfied and paid to those persons to which the same is due—be it enacted etc. To pay in Talbot County to John Pursell 300 pounds of tobacco, Kent County. And also to the same John Piercesall, 300 pounds of tobacco additional.

#### SECTION 3.

ARTHUR PURSALL, son of Samuel Pearsall, Chapter 54, Section 1; resided in Isle of Wight County, Virginia; married ——. Children:—

1. Arthur Pursall. See Y, this Section.
2. Thomas Pursall. See Z, this Section.
3. Isabella Pursall, married Arthur Whitehead. The records of Hempstead, Long Island, New York, show that Daniel Whitehead was one of the Virginia proprietors in 1644 of the patented town. He was a Dutch-English trader who had come from Virginia, and was an owner in the original town.

#### SECTION 4.

TOBIAS PURCELL, son of Samuel Pearsall, Chapter 54, Section 1; resided in Lancaster County, Va.; married ——. Children:—

1. Edward Purcell, resided Richmond County, Va.; married ——. Children:—  
\*1. John Purcell. \*2. Edward M. Purcell.