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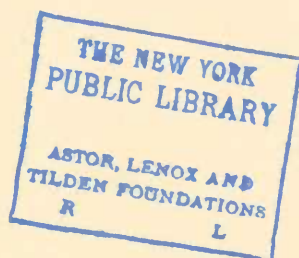
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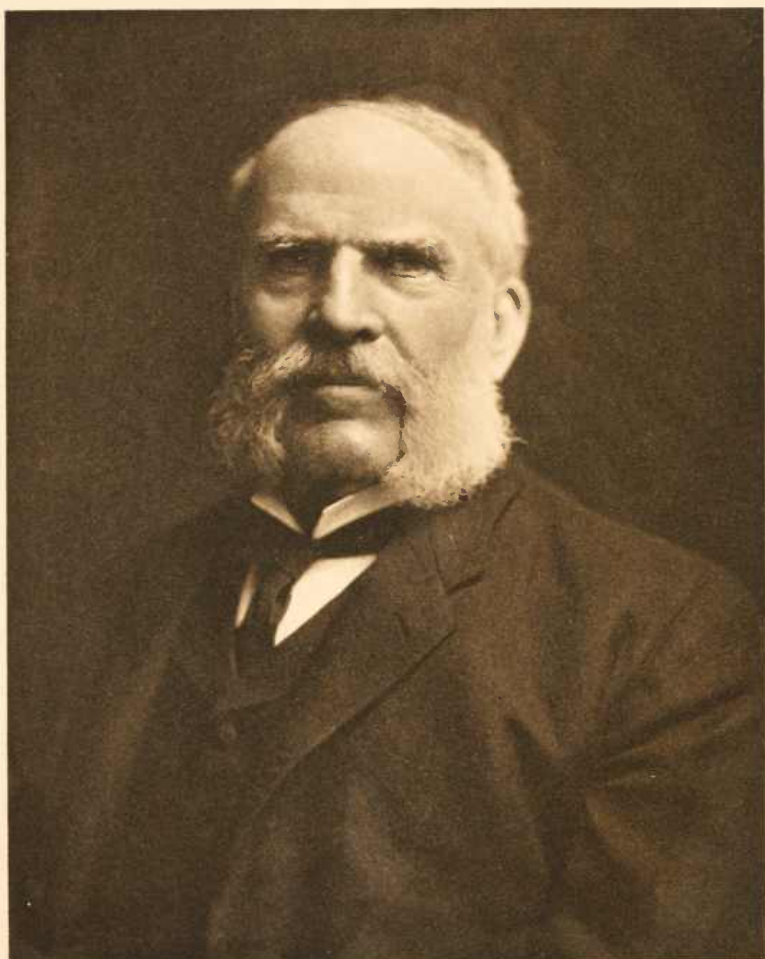
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Affectionately your father  
Thomas W. Munroe

# My Life at Oxmoor

LIFE ON A FARM IN KENTUCKY  
BEFORE THE WAR

BY

THOMAS W. BULLITT

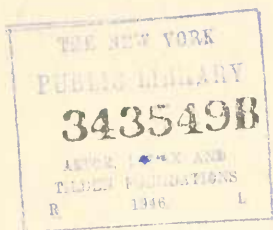
*PRIVATELY PRINTED*

1911

LOUISVILLE, KENTUCKY

JOHN P. MORTON & COMPANY

Incorporated



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BY

WM. MARSHALL BULLITT







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## PREFATORY NOTE



**M**Y father, Thomas W. Bullitt, spent his summer vacation in 1906 at Charlottesville, Virginia, with his son, Dr. James B. Bullitt, who urged him while there to write out some account of his life as a boy on the Oxmoor farm where he was born, and which has remained in the family continuously since 1785.

He had no books or papers for reference, but between August 16 and September 15, 1906, he wrote from memory alone the following sketch of Oxmoor and the life there before the war. From day to day he would write whatever occurred to him, without any regular arrangement or revision. The manuscript is wholly in his own handwriting, and consists of odd sheets of note paper, pages from scratch pads, old letter heads, etc.

It was written for his children and was never intended for publication, but after his death on March 3, 1910, I determined to print it, that each member of the family might have it.

I have printed the text of his manuscript exactly as he wrote it.

For the sake of historical accuracy and completeness I have added certain foot-notes giving, first, brief biographical sketches of some of the members of the family he mentions, and second, references to dates, records, etc., concerning matters of which he was writing. In a few instances

(pp. 1, 46, 50, 67, 73, 98, *infra*), where he had made foot-notes on the margin of his manuscript, I have indicated that fact by adding his initials.

All other foot-notes, maps, photographs, and facsimiles were inserted by me.

The Oxmoor house was occupied by the family from 1787 to 1863, when it was closed up and remained vacant until 1909, at which time, after forty-six years, I reopened it, furnished it, and now use it as a summer home.

I am greatly indebted to my mother for some of the old mahogany furniture, and to my cousin, Wm. C. Bullitt, of Philadelphia, for the gift of the books, duelling pistols, silver, etc., that belonged to our grandfather, great grandfather, great-great grandfather, and great-great-great grandfather, which has enabled me to restore them to their original home.

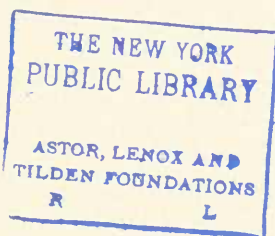
WM. MARSHALL BULLITT.

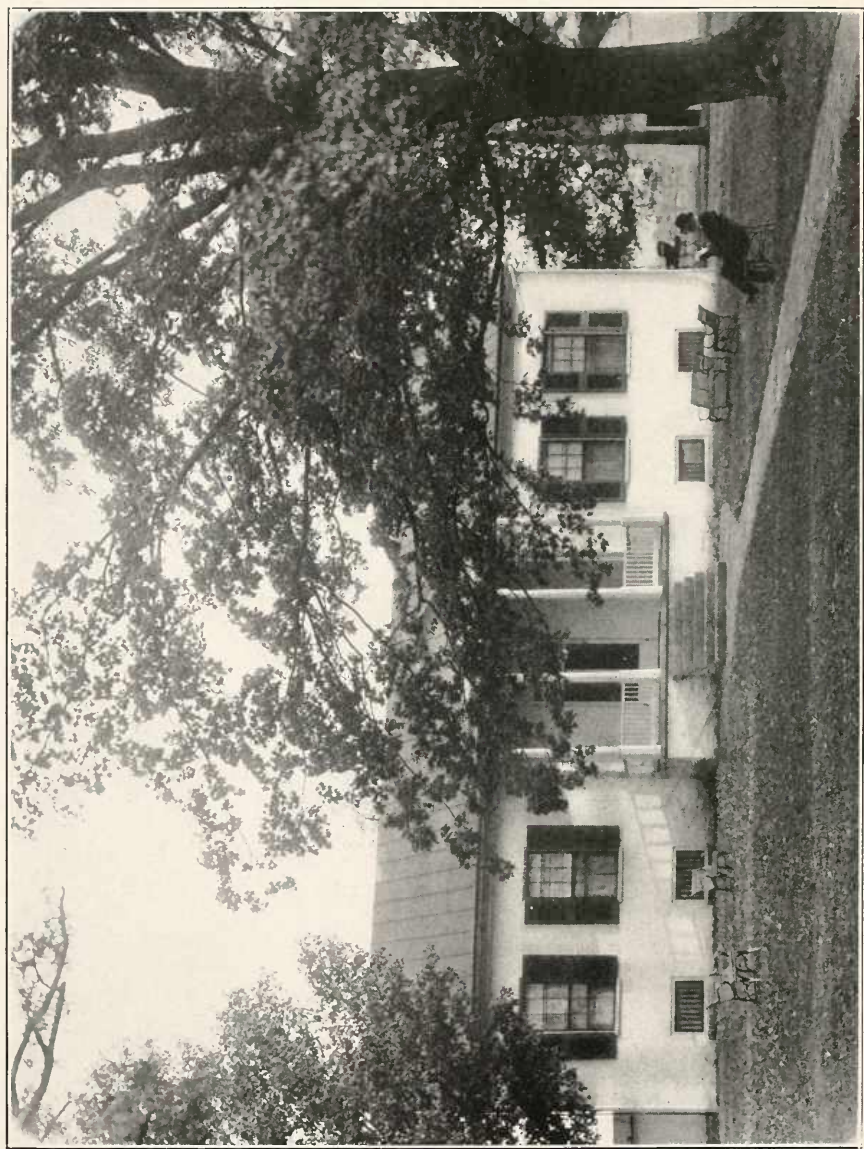
Oxmoor, May 17, 1911.

# MY LIFE AT OXMOOR









Thos. W. Bullitt reading in front of the Oxmoor Residence. October, 1909.

# MY LIFE AT OXMOOR.<sup>1</sup>



CHARLOTTESVILLE, VA., *August 16, 1906.*

I AM writing pursuant to the persistent requests of my children for several years past, for the purpose of preserving some record of the early life at Oxmoor. My sister, Mrs. Dixon, my brother, Henry Massie Bullitt, and myself are the only members of the family remaining, and as the others have done nothing of the sort, I am willing to leave this memorial of life in one of the loveliest old homes in Kentucky.

In many respects the life of to-day differs from that of my early years—the War of 1861-1865 having wrought profound changes in the social and political life of the country, especially in the South.

It is not, however, my purpose here to deal philosophically with the subject. That would require a book, and perhaps be controverted at many points. I prefer to give simply my own observations and recollections—perhaps including information and tradition in respect to some matters.

<sup>1</sup>Written at the residence of Mrs. Bryan in Charlottesville, where with my wife and daughter, Mirah, I am visiting Mrs. Bryan and my son and daughter-in-law, James B. and Evelyn Bryan Bullitt.—T. W. B.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### OXMOOR—THE PLACE.

My grandfather, Alexander Scott Bullitt, in the year 1785 married Priscilla Christian, the daughter of Colonel Wm. Christian and his wife Annie Henry, who was a sister of Patrick Henry. I have elsewhere traced the family history, and will not here go further back.<sup>1 2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alexander Scott Bullitt (1762-1816) was the son of Judge Cuthbert Bullitt of the General Court of Virginia (1740-1791), who was the son of Benjamin Bullitt (1700-1766), who was the son of Joseph Bullitt (1660-1702), a young Huguenot of Languedoc, France, who after the revocation of the Edict of Nantes emigrated to America, in 1685, and settled near Port Tobacco, Md.

<sup>2</sup>Captain Thomas Bullitt (1730-1778—uncle of Alex Scott Bullitt) was the founder of Louisville, having laid off the town and surveyed it in 1773. He was an ensign in the French and Indian War in the Virginia Regiment in 1754, under Colonel Joshua Fry, and continued under General Washington (when he succeeded to the command after Fry's death); became a lieutenant on October 30, 1754; was under Washington in building the line of frontier forts across the country; obtained a patent for three hundred acres of land where Hot Springs, Va., now is, and built the first hotel there (a portion of which remained standing as a part of the Homestead Hotel until the fire of July 2, 1901), devising the Hot Springs property to his brother; commanded a company in 1754 under Washington at Great Meadows; was at Braddock's defeat in 1755; became a captain and saved a part of the army from destruction at Grant's defeat in 1758, where his conduct won the special commendation of Washington, who under date of September 25, 1758, in his report to Governor Fauquier of Grant's defeat said, "Capt. Bullet's behaviour is matter of great admiration." On the same day, in a letter to Mrs. G. W. Fairfax, General Washington wrote:

"Your old acquaintance Capt. Bullet, who is the only officer of mine that came off untouched, has acquired immortal honour in this engagement by his gallant behaviour and long continuance in the field of action."

On September 28, 1758, Washington again wrote Governor Fauquier that the whole body of troops gave way in confusion "except the Virginians, commanded by Capt. Bullet, who were a means of preventing all of our people from sharing one common fate." (Ford's *Life and Writings of Washington* (1889), Vol. 2, pp. 99, 102, 104.)

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA.

To *Hermoder J. Bullitt Esquire,* Greeting:

**K**NOW you, that from the special trust and confidence which is reposed in your fidelity, courage, activity, and good conduct, our GOVERNOR, with the advice of the Council of State, doth appoint you the said *Hermoder J. Bullitt*

*Major in the room of Joseph Madsen Esq., formerly in the Militia,* to take rank as such agreeable to the of the County of *James* *William*

number of this Commission. IN testimony whereof, these our Letters are made patent.

WITNESS, his Excellency PATRICK HENRY, Esquire, our said Governor, at

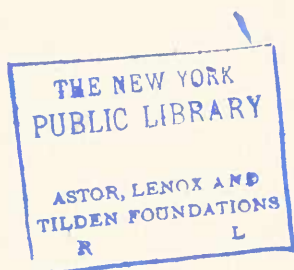
Richmond, this *eleventh* day of *May* 1785.

(REGISTERED.)

*No. 2 Meriwether.*

*1<sup>st</sup> 1791.*

*J. Henry*





## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Alexander Scott Bullitt purchased a tract of one thousand acres of ground about nine miles from Louisville on Beargrass Creek, and settled on it with his young wife, aged fifteen at her marriage.<sup>1</sup>

Captain Bullitt's method of stopping the rout at Grant's defeat is thus described in an unpublished memoir by Thos. W. Bullitt, who derived it from his father, who in turn had gotten it from his father:

"Captain Bullitt having been left with a small detachment (doubtless his Virginia Company) to guard the baggage, when the routed forces retreated past him pursued by the Indians and French, drew up his little band in front of the baggage and awaited the onset of the enemy. He gave his men orders to trail their guns and not to lift a gun or fire a shot until he commanded it; and he was obeyed.

"The Indians, seeing them in this apparently desperate condition, thought they were an easy prey, and drawing their scalping knives and raising the war-whoop dashed toward them. The line never wavered; but, waiting until the Indians were but a few paces off, Captain Bullitt gave the order to fire, when instantly every gun was brought up, steadily aimed, and fired. Almost every shot is supposed to have taken effect, and the execution was such that the attacking force fell back and Bullitt retreated, covering also the retreat of the entire force, which otherwise would have been lost."

Subsequently a difference arose between General (then Colonel) Washington and Captain Bullitt, which is thus described in an unpublished memoir of Alex S. Bullitt:

"He was present at the head of his company at the battle of the Meadows, Braddock's defeat, and Grant's defeat, and at all times supported the reputation of a brave officer; but a difference which took place between him and General Washington (at that time Colonel Washington) not only retarded his promotion in that war, but was of infinite disadvantage to him all the remaining part of his life. The accident which gave rise to the difference was as follows: Two detachments from Colonel Washington's regiment (one commanded by himself) were out upon the frontiers endeavoring to surprise a detachment of French troops from Fort Duquesne (now Fort Pitt), but instead of falling in with the

---

<sup>1</sup>On June 7, 1774, John Floyd, Assistant Surveyor of Fincastle County, Va., surveyed a tract of one thousand acres for John Ware, in consideration of military services performed by him in the war between Great Britain and France; it was patented in the name of Richard Terrell and Richard Morris (September 1, 1782; Book 1, p. 179, Kentucky Land Office), and with some additional property, making about fifteen hundred acres in all, was acquired by Alex Scott Bullitt, who settled there in 1784 or 1785 (see Deed Book 1, p. 310; Deed Book 2, p. 277, Jefferson County Court Clerk's Office).

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Beargrass was a classic stream in the early days of Kentucky—the road from Danville, Lexington, and the Bluegrass to Louisville, or rather to the Falls of the Ohio, passing along its general course; Floyd's and several other forts being located thereon. (Memo.—They may be seen on the map with Filson's History, which I have not with me here.)<sup>1</sup>

Oxmoor, as now existing, fronts, as to one field, on the Louisville and Shelbyville Turnpike. But this was

French, they met themselves (the day being remarkably dark and foggy); each party mistook the other for the enemy, and a very warm fire was immediately commenced on both sides. Captain Bullitt was one of the first who discovered the mistake, and running between the two parties, waving his hat and calling to them, put a stop to the firing. It was thought and said by several of the officers, and among others by Captain Bullitt, that Colonel Washington did not discover his usual activity and presence of mind upon this occasion. This censure thrown by Captain Bullitt upon his superior officer gave rise to a resentment in the mind of General Washington which never subsided."

Substantially the same account is given in Collins' *Kentucky*, p. 360.

He was in the expedition against Fort Duquesne and was one of the signers to the Address of the Officers of the Virginia Regiment to Colonel George Washington on his retirement as commander of the Virginia troops, December 27, 1758; he became surveyor in 1760, and in 1763 was a signer of the Articles of Association of the Mississippi Company, which Washington organized, the original of which, in Washington's handwriting, is now in the Congressional Library; he had a special commission as surveyor from the College of William and Mary; assisted Washington in 1771 in distributing the land gratuities to the soldiers of the 1754 campaign, receiving six thousand acres himself.

In 1773 he headed a surveying expedition to Kentucky and made a celebrated trip alone to the Shawnees at Chillicothe; he landed at the mouth of Beargrass Creek on July 8th, and in August, 1773, surveyed and laid out the town of Louisville and also Bullitt's Lick on Salt River.

He was one of the earliest to take part in the Revolution; commanded a company of regulars, and was Lieutenant-Colonel at the battle of Great Bridge

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<sup>1</sup>Durrett's "*John Filson*," p. 28; Filson's "*Kentucke*" (French translation), p. 235, English reprint (1793); Old Chancery Suit No. 531. The other forts being Spring, Floyds, Low Dutch, Sturgis, Linns, Boon, etc.



not its original boundary. My father purchased that field (known as the Evinger field) in order to reach the turnpike.<sup>1</sup> The old road ran farther back, I think along the north or front line of the original or Oxmoor tract. In my boyhood there were manifest traces of a road along that front. Whether it was the original road used by the early settlers I do not know. That I should not have learned or have remembered, shows the carelessness of youth. Alexander S. Bullitt erected, as his first house, a

in Virginia in 1775; was Adjutant-General of the Virginia forces; in March, 1776, the Continental Congress appointed him Deputy Adjutant-General of the Southern Department of the Continental Army, with rank of Lieutenant-Colonel; he served in South Carolina in 1776, and resigned because he did not receive a promotion he thought he was entitled to. He died at his home in Fauquier County, Va., in February, 1778, at the comparatively early age of forty-eight years. His will, dated September 17, 1775, was probated February 23, 1778 (Will Book I, p. 321, Fauquier County), and he left most of his estate to his brother, Judge Cuthbert Bullitt.

Ford's *Life and Writings of Washington*, Vol. I, pp. 292, 300, 359, 377, Vol. II, pp. 10, 99, 102, 104; Irving's *Life of Washington*, Vol. I, p. 285; Marshall's *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 30-36; Collins' *Kentucky*, pp. 18, 360-1, 453-454; R. Collins' *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 248, 513, Vol. II, pp. 18, 20, 55, 94, 301, 358-360, 422, 443, 448, 465; Butler's *Kentucky*, p. 20 et seq.; McAllister's *Historical Sketches of Hot Springs*, pp. 4-8, 48; Waddell's *Annals of Augusta County*, p. 104; Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, p. 263; Perkins' *Western Annals*, pp. 84, 109, 119; Lewis' *Orderly Book*, pp. ix, 15, 19, 21, 24, 27; Toner's *Journal of Colonel George Washington*, etc. (1893), pp. 183-187, 212, 216, 218; Hulbert's *Washington and the West*, pp. 9, 153; Virginia County Records, Vol. II, pp. 37, 42, 108, 115, 120, 121; Draper MSS., 6 ZZ 109; Craig's *The Olden Time*, Vol. I, p. 180; 7 Henning's *Statutes at Large*, pp. 492, 493; Durrett's *Centenary of Louisville*, pp. 23-28; Durrett's *Centenary of Kentucky*, pp. 31-33; McElroy's *Kentucky in the Nation's History*, p. 28; Nicolay & Hay's *Lincoln*, Vol. I, p. 15; Bancroft's *History of the United States*, Vol. 2, p. 494; Hanna's *The Wilderness Trail*, Vol. II, pp. 69, 158; Albach's *Western Annals*, pp. 153, 214, 327; Wither's *Chronicles of Border Warfare*, pp. 71, 145.

<sup>1</sup>John Evinger to Wm. C. Bullitt, by deeds recorded in Deed Books DD, p. 29, TT, p. 275, TT, p. 310 (1830-1836).

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

log cabin just at the top of the hill above the "Spring." The "rocks" forming the chimney now constitute the small "mound" covered with grass. This fact I learned definitely from my father and mother.

Later (but I can not give the date<sup>1</sup>), Alex S. Bullitt built the rear or frame part of what has since been universally known as the Oxmoor House—the residence of the family. At a later date my father built the brick "front," consisting of a broad hall with parlor on the left and dining room on the right as you enter and a basement of three rooms under the same.

At Oxmoor all of my grandfather's children were born. They were my Uncle Cuthbert, Aunt Howard, Aunt Key, and my father, Wm. C. Bullitt. I will not lengthen this paper by referring to them here. You will find it stated elsewhere.

My grandfather, by his last will, devised Oxmoor to my father. My father, conceiving that the devise made to my Uncle Cuthbert, together with previous advances made to him, did not make his brother equal with himself, conveyed, by way of gift, two hundred acres off the upper or eastern end of the farm to Uncle Cuthbert. This is now known as the "Winchester" place. My father was reticent about such matters, and I never heard him refer to it; but my mother told me of it, and the records show this conveyance.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>1787, as per memoirs of John C. Bullitt and of Mrs. Dixon; the receipted bills bearing date 1790.

<sup>2</sup>Alex Scott Bullitt's will, dated August 24, 1815, probated May 13, 1816, recorded in Will Book 2, p. 37; deed Wm. C. Bullitt to Cuthbert Bullitt, dated May 14, 1816, for three hundred acres, recorded in Deed Book P, p. 6, in consideration of "love and affection."

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

At a later date my father, in order to make Oxmoor again a one-thousand acre tract, purchased at the back part of the place a considerable tract of land from the Colonel Anderson Estate. This, with the "Evinger" field, made the Oxmoor estate by survey about one thousand and twenty-eight acres, as shown by my father's will.<sup>1</sup>

Oxmoor is one of the finest tracts in the State. With the exception of a part of the "Anderson" tract and the front part of the Evinger field it is underlaid by limestone, and is distinctly a "bluegrass" farm. Because the rock lies deeper, my father esteemed it superior to the Bluegrass in the central part of the State; it would stand droughts better.

My father told me that his father adopted the name "Oxmoor" from the celebrated Oxmoor of Tristram Shandy, saying that he expected to spend his life in "clearing" it and to be then but little nearer the end of his work than at the beginning. I have found by reference to the old deeds on record in the Jefferson County Clerk's office that there was a large tract of country about here known as "The Oxmoor." What were its boundaries or how it got the name I do not know. Oxmoor as a name, however, became appropriated exclusively to the Oxmoor Farm on which we lived.

Two forks of Beargrass cross the front of the place—one across the pasture in front of the house, the other

<sup>1</sup>Richard C. Anderson's estate to W. C. Bullitt by deed dated August 5, 1828, recorded in Deed Book BB, p. 148, for 200 $\frac{3}{4}$  acres; Wm. C. Bullitt's will, dated November 18, 1875, probated on September 5, 1877, recorded in Will Book 9, p. 301.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

through the Evinger field at the foot of the graveyard. They unite in the (now) Arteburn (formerly Christian) place, a quarter of a mile or more below the graveyard.

I should have observed that Alex Scott Bullitt settled in Kentucky on Bull Skin, in Shelby County, in 1783. Concluding that he was too far from the "Falls of the Ohio," he settled on Oxmoor in 1785. I should further observe that Colonel Christian came to Kentucky in the spring of 1785. His daughter Priscilla married Alex S. Bullitt in the fall of that year.

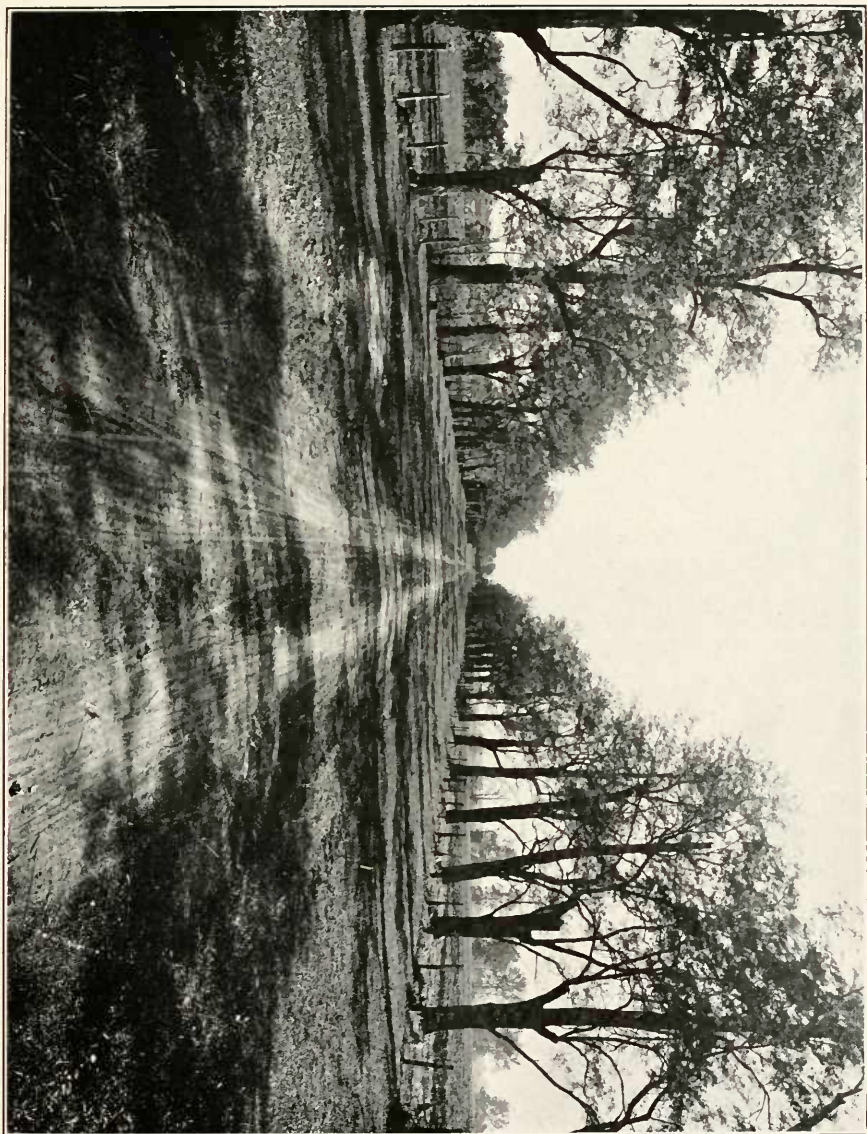
Colonel Christian settled on the tract just north of Oxmoor, opposite to and west of the Evinger field, so that the father and daughter lived very near to each other—say three-fourths of a mile.<sup>1</sup>

My father told me that many times he had known his father to go out to the "Big Gate" in the afternoon and spend several hours in order to waylay some traveler and compel him to come in and spend the night with him. Doubtless this early condition had much to do with establishing what became proverbial "Kentucky Hospitality."

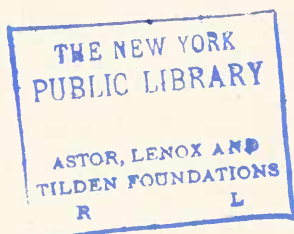
<sup>1</sup>By patent dated June 2, 1780, there were granted to William Christian two thousand acres that had been surveyed on June 7, 1774 (Book A, p. 341, Land Office, Richmond, Va.), on which Sturgis Station was built, very close to the present Oxmoor Graveyard. In 1780 it was a considerable fort, with some twenty to forty families there. Colonel Christian sent his negroes out ahead of him and remained with his father until his death in 1784, and arrived with his family in August, 1785, at Sturgis Station. (Draper MSS., 37 J 178, 5 ZZ 81; Fred Edward's deposition in McCorkle's Executor v. Christian's Executor.)

Colonel Christian, in a letter dated Sturgis Station, March 30, 1786, wrote: "Priscey and Mr. Bullitt live half a mile from us." (Draper MSS., 5 ZZ 82.)





Looking from the Front Gate toward the Oxmoor Residence.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### OXMOOR GRAVEYARD.

Though war had ceased (the Revolution ending in 1782), yet the Indians remained troublesome.<sup>1</sup> In the spring of 1786 (this I have from my father) a band of marauding Indians passed through the neighborhood of Oxmoor, taking a number of horses. They crossed the river (Ohio) above Louisville—I believe about Six Mile Island. A posse of gentlemen pursued them. A short distance from the river bank three of the party were overtaken—two men and a boy.

Colonel Christian, Colonel Bullitt, and Major O'Bannon were riding in advance of their party. They came therefore first upon the Indians. The two men immediately halted and turned to fight. The boy went on. The fight began at once. The firing was simultaneous on both sides. As a result the two Indians fell, one killed, the other mortally wounded. Colonel Christian also fell mortally wounded. A man named Kelly, coming up at

<sup>1</sup>On November 4, 1785, Colonel Christian wrote his sister (Draper MSS., 5 ZZ 81):

"We should be happy enough only the Indians are very troublesome, having been continually in our country this Fall and killed several people. We can't go out in the least safety and expect times will be much worse next Spring and Summer as the Indians have refused the Treaty. As we are very near the frontier we can't think of staying here much longer. We intend to move off to Danville and continue there until some better prospects here. If we had peace here and a trade, I should like Beargrass as it is the flower of all Kentucky."

A few days before he was killed he again wrote (Draper MSS., 5 ZZ 82):

"Indian affairs begin to be serious and my wife says she will go off from here. My situation is singular, having two frontier places to support. However, another stroke or two will at least move my wife and children and helpless negroes."

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

that instant and seeing that Colonel Christian had fallen, drew his tomahawk and started toward the Indians. One of the Indians, whose gun had not been fired, raised on his elbow and shot Kelly, killing him instantly. Out of six participants in the struggle but two survived—Bullitt and O'Bannon. My father referred to this as showing the deadly nature of the Indian conflicts. He had great respect for the Indians, remarking to me on several occasions that a North American Indian was never known to show the "white feather." This sentiment he had derived from his own father and from the older men of his period.

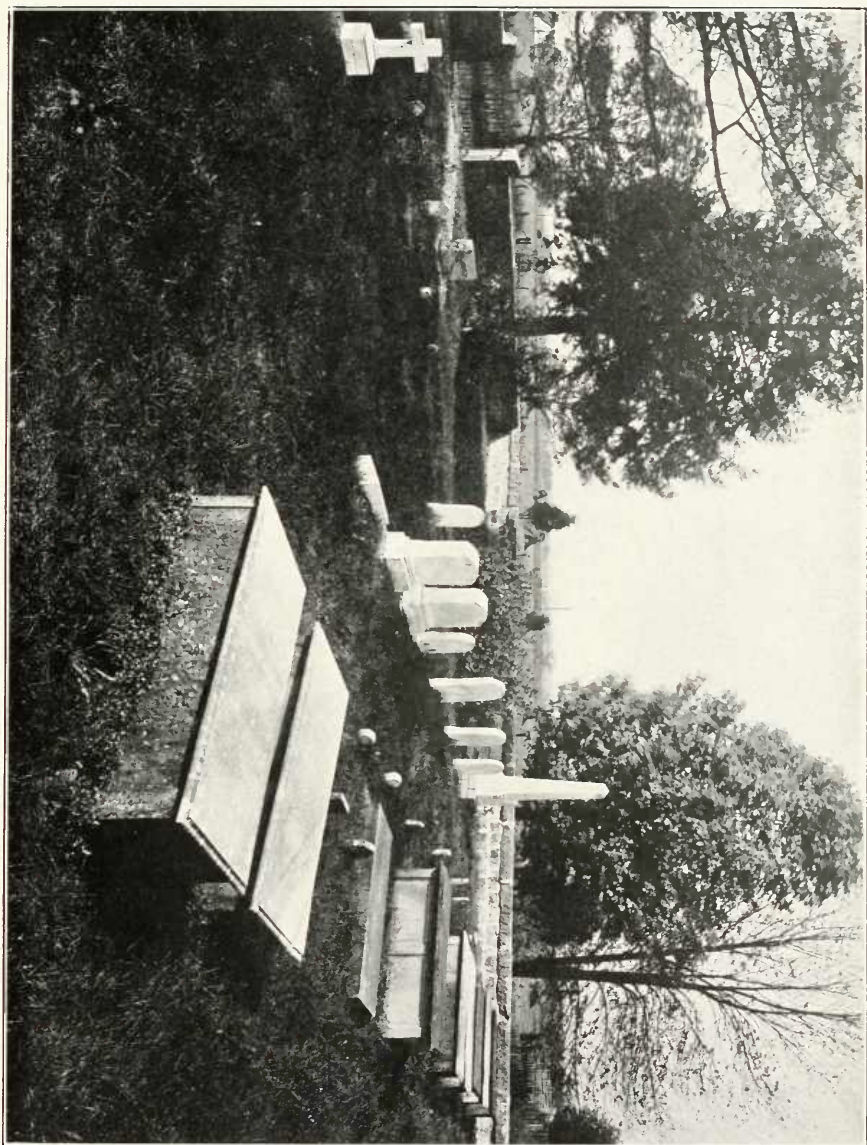
Colonel Christian was brought back to his home, but died immediately afterward.<sup>1</sup> He was buried in front of his house, on the bank of the Beargrass. This fixed the location of the "Graveyard," which has remained as the family burying ground to this day. I entertain for it a veneration greater than for any other spot on earth. I trust that my family may feel willing to lay me there when I shall pass away from this world.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West*, Vol. III, pp. 76, 77; Draper MSS., 37 J 178; W. C. Bullitt's "To the Voters of Beargrass," June 10, 1869; Mrs. William Christian's letter to her brother, Patrick Henry, in September, 1786, in which she said:

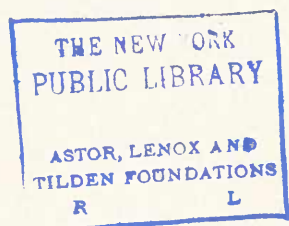
"When the fatal wound was given him he behaved with the greatest fortitude. He never murmured or complained the least, but said, 'My wound is mortal, tho' I hope to get home to my family before I die,' and when the men who carryd him had traveld till late in the night, he then made them stop & got off the litter & rode on horseback 2 miles, but by the great loss of blood was unable to proceed, & had a second litter made in which he was carryd till he desired them to stop for him to rest awhile. He told a friend he was not at all afraid to meet death and died resigned to the will of God, that it would be very melan-

<sup>2</sup>This wish was respected, and he was buried in the Oxmoor Graveyard on March 5, 1910.





Oxmoor Graveyard, with Graves of Col. Wm. Christian, Alex Scott Bullitt, and Wm. C. Bullitt.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Colonel Christian's wife died some years later at sea, or shortly after her return from a voyage to the West Indies. I do not know her burial place, but believe it is at Norfolk. I do not suppose it is possible to identify it.<sup>1</sup>

choly news for his family to hear, and then expired without a groan. They brought the dear remains home on the very day he told me at parting he expected to return."

Patrick Henry's touching letter to his sister on hearing of Colonel Christian's death is worth preserving:

"Richmond, May 15, 1786.

"I am at a loss how to address you my dearest sister. Would to God I could say something to give relief to the dearest of women and sisters. My heart has felt in a manner new and strange to me, insomuch that while I am endeavoring to comfort you I want a comforter myself. I forbear to tell you how great was my love for my friend and brother. I turn my eyes to heaven, where he is gone, I trust, and adore with humility the unsearchable ways of that Providence which calls us off this stage of action at such time and in such manner as its wisdom and goodness directs. We can not see the reason of these dispensations now, but we may be assured they are directed by wisdom and mercy. This is one of the occasions that calls your and my attention back to the many precious lessons of piety given us by our honored parents, whose lives were indeed a constant lesson and worthy of imitation. This is one of the trying scenes in which the Christian is eminently superior to all others, and finds a refuge that no misfortune can take away. To this refuge let my dearest sister fly with humble resignation. I think I can see some traces of a kind Providence to you and the children in giving you a good son-in-law, so necessary at this time to take charge of your affairs. It gives me comfort to reflect on this. Pray tell Mr. Bullitt I wish to hear from him and to cultivate an intimacy with him, and that he may command any services from me. I could wish anything remained in my power to do for you or yours. And if at any time you think there is, pray let me know, and depend upon me to do it to the utmost. I need not tell you how much I shall value your letters, particularly now, for I am anxious to hear from you, and how every thing goes on in your affairs. As so few of our family are left, I hope we shall not fail to correspond frequently. It is natural for me to increase in affection to the survivors as the number decreases. I am pained on reflecting that my letters always are penned as dictated by the strongest love and affection to you, but that my actions have not kept pace. Opportunity's being wanting must be the excuse. For indeed, my dearest sister, you never knew how much I loved you and your husband. My heart is full. Perhaps I may never see you in this world. O may we meet in heaven, to which the merits of Jesus will carry those who love and serve him. Heaven will, I trust, give you its choicest comforts and preserve your family. Such is the prayer of him who thinks it his honor and pride to be

Yr. Affct. Brother,

P. Henry."

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<sup>1</sup>She died at Norfolk on May 27, 1790, the day after she landed from Antiqua.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### BEARGRASS CREEK.

Speaking of "Beargrass," I feel disposed to preserve a little story which illustrates how Beargrass was regarded by the old settlers. I have this from Governor Charles Anderson, whose father, Colonel Anderson, lived on Beargrass a short distance above Oxmoor.

While Louis Philippe was King of France old Captain Dorsey, the ancestor of the Dorsey family of Jefferson County, having made a good fortune, went on foreign travels and landed in Paris. The American Minister, finding that though he was illiterate he was intelligent and eccentric, took a fancy to him and introduced him everywhere possible in Paris—took him to the theatres, the grand opera, etc. Finally he said, "Captain, I have shown you all that is worth seeing except one, and that is better worth seeing than all the rest: the great man of the world, the Baron Von Humboldt." He then explained to him that here was the greatest traveler, the greatest geologist, the greatest geographer and observer in the world. Captain Dorsey conceived a great desire to see him and an appointment was made, followed by a call on the Baron.

The Minister afterward described the interview about as follows:

"Baron Von Humboldt, allow me to introduce my friend, Captain Dorsey."

"Glad to see you, Captain."

"Glad to see you, *Barron*."

Dear Col the Land Business your father Left  
in my Hands is Chiefly Dunn and ~~and~~ Ready  
to be Returned Sum I have Registered and I have  
at your Request paid ~~by~~ by a Later paid  
Sum money for that business and not thinking  
of this opportunity have not time to Draw up  
your account Request the favor of you to  
Send me by the bearer James Wright two  
pound and this shall be your Receipt for  
that Sum and you will oblige your humble  
servant

Daniel Boone

NB I have a number of plots to Register at  
the general Court and am scarce of Cash  
please to oblige me if possible D B  
august the 23 1785

To Col William Christian



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## *My Life at Oxmoor*

"You are from America, Captain?"

"Yes, *Barron*; I'm from Kaintucky. I reckon you know whar Kaintucky is?"

"Yes; one of the States of the United States: celebrated for its fine horses, its good whisky, its handsome women, its splendid bluegrass."

"Bluegrass hell, *Barron*. I'm from *Bargrass*. I reckon you know whar *Bargrass* is?"

The Baron had to admit his ignorance of "*Bargrass*."

The visit ended; when on the street, the Minister said, "Well, Captain, what do you think of the Baron Von Humboldt?"

"*Barron* Humboldt! *Barron* Humbug! There ain't a nigger in Jefferson County that don't know whar *Bargrass* is!" And to his last day the Captain could not be made to believe that "*Barron* Humboldt" was worth knowing.

I was told by my father that the volume of water ordinarily in Beargrass Creek had diminished very greatly since his boyhood; that it was then a bold stream. I can fully appreciate it. It has diminished very greatly within my own memory. In my boyhood it never went dry in summer. Now it always does, or nearly so. The clearing of the country has caused the change, I suppose.

BULLITT AND CHRISTIAN.

Colonel Christian and Alex Scott Bullitt were both men of ability and distinction in their day. Colonel Christian particularly seemed destined to become the leading man in Kentucky. But for these things I refer to the histories and to the "Family Papers," which throw an interesting light on the life and character of these, our ancestors.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Colonel William Christian (1743-1786), a noted Indian fighter, colonial and Revolutionary soldier, was the son of Israel Christian (1720-1784); he was a captain in the Colonial Militia at fifteen years of age; one of the original Trustees of Staunton, Va., in 1761; captain in the Second Virginia Regiment in the French and Indian War before he was twenty years of age, receiving three thousand acres of land for his services therein; after the close of the war he was Captain of Militia for the protection of the frontier; studied law under Patrick Henry, marrying Patrick Henry's sister, Ann Henry, about 1768; a member of the Virginia House of Burgesses in 1774; colonel of the Fincastle Regiment in Dunmore's War, arriving at Point Pleasant at the close of the battle—his letter, dated October 15, 1774, to Colonel William Preston, is "practically an official report of the battle of Point Pleasant"; he was a member of the General State Convention in 1775 and on the Fincastle Committee of Safety; in July, 1775, the Virginia Convention elected him Lieutenant-Colonel to resist Governor Dunmore; in 1776 the Continental Congress elected him Lieutenant-Colonel (under Patrick Henry as Colonel) of the First Virginia Regiment, and he subsequently succeeded Patrick Henry as Colonel; he commanded a most successful expedition against the Cherokee Indians, destroying many Indian towns; resigned his commission in the regular army to head the patriotic militia of his county in suppressing the Tories; in 1780 he commanded another expedition against the Cherokees; was appointed County Lieutenant for Jefferson County; in 1781 headed a commission to conclude a treaty on behalf of the United States with the Cherokee Indians; a member of the Virginia Legislature for several years; suggested building an armed gunboat on the Ohio to fight the Indians; first visited Kentucky probably in 1777; was one of the original Trustees of Transylvania Seminary, of Liberty Hall Academy, and of the town of Harrodsburg; brought his



Camp at Point Pleasant, at the mouth of the river Kanawha

15 Oct 1774

Dear Sir

I have been inquiring for some days past for an opportunity to send some letters to you as I wanted to write to you. Some other friends have been as certain one but I have some thoughts that some person will be going off to morrow or next day, as several talks with Lewis asked me if I had written you, I told him I had not but would this evening. He desired me to tell you that he was hurried & that my father you would please to accept of from both, as I was to inclose you a list of the killed & of the wounded on Monday the 10 Instant, which I will do. I have a copy ready of a narrative by Lewis himself, from which you can have an idea of it. I will also inclose you a state of the killed & wounded I made it to day from that scattering as our people could gather. I have been this all the Camp & believe that many more men will die, there are many who in two places, one in particular followed with 2000 Ballots Town in three. They are really in a deplorable situation, bad Doctor, few medicines, nothing to eat or wrap with proper for them makes it still worse. I intended being here on Sunday, but on Monday being about 12 or 15 miles off I heard the powder was to be reached about midnight. The Cries of the wounded prevented our resting any longer. We are building a breast work Fortification, then the last Lewis has their proposition & I hope all will be done to morrow we should have crossed the Ohio for the Town ere now but we must secure our wounded. His Lordship was to march with 1200 men last Thursday morning for the Town, and wrote to Col Lewis to meet them about 20 miles on this side of Chillicothe the day before. Chillicothe is about 20 miles farther than the Town we intended for. It is necessary to go from here our pilot says, so we are now bound to set Tuesday at noon, that we can do, as we

about a Party.

Andrews, who shot in clear ground and had not to him a tree when  
speaking to him, to come on. He turned & handed her gun to some-  
body & went to Camp, telling the men as he passed along "I am second &  
but go you & be a good."

Col. Fild was killed behind a great tree looking for an "old man"  
was talking to him, whilst some others were above him on  
his right hand among some logs who shot him dead.

Col. Fleming was shot with three balls in his breast & flame  
went on in his left breast in a piece of clear ground, speaking to his  
men with great coolness & deliberation & he said round  
about "I am shot back & told them not to mind him but go up & fight  
the poor Col. Lewis soon after he reached the Camp died, & I fear  
not Fleming well; I hope a year for him so many times in  
day as — His loss here is irreparable, if Col. Thomas don't  
come on with his men. Col. Lewis is the best I ever  
saw in an army. He has "all requisites" he now begged  
for medicine & a Surgeon. We have Walker here.

I wish you w<sup>d</sup> write P. Harvey if you can hear of it  
something of the bottle, as I want my dear wife to know  
that I am well.

God bless you & yours. I am your very  
Well wisher

16  
Col. Fleming seems like living to day  
to have some hopes that the ball which spent  
in his breast has not gone far thro his body. He got up & sat  
up & seems hearty. Yesterday we gave them  
some for tea. If he minds fast he can see to  
keeping & mending them.

Last page of Letter from Col. Wm. Christian to Col. Wm. Preston, written from the  
Battlefield of Point Pleasant, October 15, 1774.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

As to Alexander Scott Bullitt, I may say my father told me that his grandfather, Cuthbert Bullitt of Virginia, had great expectations of his son Alexander Scott Bullitt, hoping that he would become a leading public man in Virginia. With this view he kept him at school for some years—until after he was a grown man—and then desired him to study law, then the stepping-stone to public life.

family to Kentucky in August, 1785, settling at Sturgis Station upon his two-thousand-acre survey on Beargrass (adjoining Oxmoor), which had been surveyed for him by John Floyd in June, 1774. He resided there until he was killed by the Indians on April 9, 1786. (See p. 9 supra.)

His death created a strong sensation in Kentucky. General George Rogers Clark wrote to Patrick Henry, then Governor of Virginia: "The loss of Colonel Christian, whom the inhabitants had great future hopes in, hath caused general uneasiness."

Samuel McDowell and John May wrote Governor Henry of the constant murders and depredations by the Indians, and urged that measures be taken to protect the inhabitants, the latter thus describing the death of Colonel Christian (Virginia Calendar of State Papers, Vol. IV, pp. 118, 119):

"They had frequently been on Beargrass, and Col. Christian, to induce others to go in pursuit of them, has, upon every occasion, gone himself. And last week he, with about 20 men, crossed the Ohio and overtook 3 Indians whom they killed; but his men not obeying his orders, which were to rush all together on them, he with 3 others only overtook the Indians, and was so unfortunate as to receive a mortal wound himself, and Captain Isaac Killer received another.

"It is most remarkable that there were only 2 guns belonging to the Indians, both of which did execution, although one of the Indians was shot through with 3 balls and was at the time of his firing his gun at Killer lying on the ground totally disabled in one arm and unable to rise up.

"On the return of the party they met with such a number of Indian encampments, where there appeared to be so many Indians, that they were obliged to make the best of their way to Clarkesville, but Col. Christian died before they reached that place.

"Since Col. Christian's death, the Indians have been at his plantation and taken away horses and have also stolen horses from and killed several men in other parts of this country."

Roosevelt, in *The Winning of the West*, Vol. III, pp. 76, 77, described his death and speaks of him as a "noted Indian fighter" and as a "very gallant and honorable man."

Marshall's *Kentucky* (1824), pp. 228-230; Collins' *Kentucky* (1850), pp. 221,



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

The son, however, had conceived a distaste for further study, and said he would rather make his fortune fighting the Indians in Kentucky, and left for that country—I think at the age of twenty-two or twenty-three years.<sup>1</sup>

223; R. H. Collins' *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 9, 21, 365, Vol. II, pp. 106, 127, 496, 764; Whitsitt's *Caleb Wallace*, pp. 70-79; Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, pp. 216, 267; Waddell's *Annals of Augusta County, Virginia*, p. 142; Woods' *History of Albemarle County*, p. 52; Perkins' *Western Annals*, p. 130; Henry's *Life of Patrick Henry*, Vol. I, p. 122; Lewis' *Orderly Book*, pp. 19, 24, 63, 64; *Dunmore's War* (Wis. Hist. Soc.), printing many of his letters of 1774; Grigsby's *The Virginia Convention of 1776*, p. 203; Lewis' *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant*, pp. 32, 38, 130; Roosevelt's *The Winning of the West* (1900), Vol. I, pp. 221, 224, 233, 303-305, Vol. III, pp. 76, 77; English's *Conquest of the Northwest*, Vol. II, p. 797; Hayden's *Virginia Genealogies*, pp. 597, 598; Bruce's *Boone and the Wilderness Road*; Hening's *Statutes at Large*, Vol. VII, pp. 171, 190-194, 473, 475, Vol. X, p. 287, Vol. XI, pp. 164, 282, Vol. XII, pp. 223, 382; Draper MSS., 2 L 23, 37 J 178; Virginia Calendar of State Papers. Vol. 4, pp. 118, 119; Bullitt MSS.; Summers' *History of Southwest Virginia*, p. 891, for many references; Wither's *Chronicles of Border Warfare*, pp. 59, 99, 165-171, 190.

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<sup>1</sup>Alexander Scott Bullitt was born at Dumfries, Va., in 1762. He was a member of the Virginia House of Delegates in 1783; moved to Kentucky in 1783; commissioned by Patrick Henry, Governor of Virginia, as major in the militia of Prince William County on May 16, 1785, and as County Lieutenant of Jefferson County on May 2, 1786; appointed one of the Trustees of Louisville by the Virginia Legislature; President of the court-martial which on March 21, 1787, tried and convicted Colonel Hugh McGary; he was a member of the Kentucky Convention at Danville of 1788; a delegate to the Constitutional Convention of 1792 at Danville, and with George Nicholas drafted the first Constitution of Kentucky, which was then adopted; elected one of the forty electors on the first Tuesday in May, 1792; was then chosen as one of the eleven State Senators, and upon the assembling of the first Kentucky Legislature at Lexington on June 4, 1792, he was elected Speaker of the Senate and re-elected for twelve years in succession (1792-1804), when he retired from public life. He was President of the Constitutional Convention which met at Frankfort July 22, 1799, and framed the Second Constitution of Kentucky, that continued in force until 1850. He was elected (May 5-7, 1800) the first Lieutenant-Governor of the State. He was an Episcopalian. Bullitt County was named for him.

In a letter to his wife's uncle, Colonel William Fleming, dated March 8, 1792, he thus quaintly described the state of politics (Draper MSS., 5 U 10):

# THE COMMONWEALTH OF VIRGINIA.

To

*Alexander S. Bullitt Esquire* Greeting:

**K** NOW you that from the special trust and confidence which is reposed in your fidelity, courage, activity, and good conduct, our GOVERNOR, upon the recommendation of the Govt of Virginia doth appoint you the said

*County Lieutenant*

of the county of

*Jefferson*

to take rank as such from the

*2nd*

day of *May* 1786 IN testimony whereof, these our Letters are made patent. WITNESS,

His Excellency PATRICK HENRY, Esquire, our said Governor, at Richmond, this

*North*

day of

*August*

1786.

REGISTERED

*J. C. Memmick*

*A. S. Bullitt*

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## *My Life at Oxmoor*

I believe that Colonel Christian assisted him in the purchase of Oxmoor, but I have not positive evidence of the fact or of the extent of assistance given. (Memo.—See Colonel Christian's will among papers.<sup>1</sup>)

He crossed the mountains several times on horseback. On one trip he fell seriously ill—so ill indeed that he allowed

“I might inform you how politically mad the whole district of Kentucky has become at the approach of our Convention. I might tell you how numbers who never felt the ‘Amor Patria’ before, have suddenly commenced Patriots and Politicians; how half bred Judges, and lawyers who were never bred at all; how preachers of the gospel &c.; &c.; &c.; are writing, printing and publishing plans for the better government of the good people of this district with faces as important,

‘As grave as wise & as devoutly Out  
As sober Lansdborough dancing with the gout’

but as you are already sufficiently acquainted with the follies of that poor two legged animal Man, I shall not trespass upon your patience by a recapitulation of them, and be contented with telling you that my little family are all well, that Mrs. Bullitt desires to be affectionately remembered to her Aunt, and that I am with the greatest respect and esteem,

Your Most Obt. Humb. St.      Alexr. S. Bullitt.”

His first wife dying November 11, 1806, he subsequently married a widow, Mrs. Mary C. Prather (nee Churchill), and died April 13, 1816, leaving his second wife surviving him. His will was probated May 13, 1816. (Will Book 2, p. 37.)

Marshall's *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 393-4, *Id.*, Vol. II, p. 294; Collins' *Kentucky*, pp. 45, 216, 221; R. H. Collins' *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 25, 275, 350, 354-357, 363, 508-509, Vol. II, pp. 106, 181, 357, 776; Green's *Historic Families of Kentucky*, p. 150; Appleton's *Biographical Cyclopædia*, Vol. I, p. 446; Hening's *Statutes at Large*, Vol. XII, p. 395, Vol. XIII, p. 991; Hayden's *Virginia Genealogies*, pp. 597-600; Durrett's *Centenary of Kentucky*, pp. 58, 59, 68, 71; *Lawyers and Lawmakers of Kentucky*, pp. 128, 236.

<sup>1</sup>By Colonel Christian's will, dated March 13, 1786 (only a few months after his daughter's marriage), he left a considerable estate to his wife and other children, and said:

“Having amply and fully given to Mr. Alexander Scott Bullitt and my daughter, Priscilla, the share of estate intended for her, I have now only to bequeath to my said daughter, Priscilla, a pair of stone shoe buckles and 2 gold rings, the whole to cost 10 guineas.” (Will Book I, page 6.)

William C. Bullitt, in an address “To the Voters of Beargrass,” dated June 10, 1869, refers to “Oxmoor” as having come by his mother, Priscilla Christian.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

his party to go on without him. The vision of certain death by the Indians or wild beasts nerved him to extraordinary effort, and he again mounted his horse and overtook the party.

In the early days of his settlement there was no post-office in Kentucky. Letters were sent by hand—travelers to and fro taking letters for friends. Letters undertook to give news, and were interesting. I find letters to my grandfather addressed to "Beargrass," and sometimes to "Kentucky."

The letters of Mrs. Wm. Christian show her to have been a person of education and culture—I judge of a somewhat imperious nature.

### WILLIAM C. BULLITT AND MILDRED ANN FRY.

My mother was Mildred Ann Fry. She was the daughter of Joshua Fry and Peachy Walker. Joshua Fry was the grandson of Colonel Joshua Fry, who commanded the regiment of which General Washington was lieutenant.<sup>1</sup> Colonel Washington pays a very handsome tribute to his character and services in a letter.

<sup>1</sup>Colonel Joshua Fry was born in Somersetshire, England, and was educated at Oxford. In 1732 he became Professor of Mathematics in William and Mary College; was a member of the House of Burgesses and of the Council; became Presiding Justice of Albemarle County, and on March 28, 1745, he was appointed County Lieutenant of Albemarle County. Together with his intimate friend Peter Jefferson (father of Thomas Jefferson) he was Commissioner of the Crown in marking boundary lines, joint author of Fry and Jefferson's Map of Virginia, which was used in the treaty of peace between England and the United States at the close of the Revolutionary War, and was Commissioner to survey the



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

The wife of Joshua Fry, my grandfather, was the daughter of Doctor Thomas Walker, of Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Virginia.<sup>1</sup> That is still a grand old homestead.

My grandfather Joshua Fry must have been a remarkable man. I was told by my mother that when boundary line between Virginia and North Carolina; in 1752 he was one of the Commissioners to conclude the treaty of Logstown with the Indians.

At the beginning of the French and English War in February, 1754, he was commissioned Colonel and Commander-in-Chief of the Virginia forces, General Washington being Lieutenant-Colonel under him. While near Will's Creek, Colonel Fry was thrown from his horse and died from the injuries on May 31, 1754, the command then devolving upon General Washington, who cut the following inscription upon the oak tree under which Fry was buried: "Under this oak lies the body of the good, the just and the noble Fry."

Colonel Fry's will was probated August 8, 1754; recorded in Will Book 2, p. 15, in Albemarle County, Peter Jefferson being one of his executors.

Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, p. 177; Perkins' *Western Annals*, pp. 54, 62; Green's *Historic Families*, pp. 150-155; Slaughter's *History of St. Mark's Parish*, p. 132 et seq.; Slaughter's *Memoir of Colonel Joshua Fry*, pp. 14-39; Spark's *Life of Washington*, Vol. I, p. 40 et seq., Vol. II, p. 27 et seq.; *Journal of Colonel George Washington*, pp. 7, 11-13; Appleton's *Biographical Cyclopædia*, Vol. II, p. 557; William and Mary College Quarterly (January, 1893), p. 130 et seq.; Ford's *Life and Writings of Washington*, Vol. I, pp. 41, 50, 60, 68, 79, 95; Hanna's *The Wilderness Trail*, Vol. II, pp. 80, 111, 227, 272.

<sup>1</sup>Doctor Thomas Walker was born January 25, 1715; he was the great-grandson of Major Thomas Walker, who was Burgess from Gloucester County, Virginia, in 1662; was a student at William and Mary College; the intimate friend and executor of the will of Peter Jefferson and guardian of his son, Thomas Jefferson; was chosen by the Loyal Company to locate its lands; explored Kentucky in 1750 near Cumberland Gap; was Major in the French and Indian War, with Braddock; made another visit to Kentucky in 1758; was Commissioner on the part of Virginia in signing the Treaty of Fort Stanwix with the Six Nations; member of the House of Burgesses; was Commissioner for Virginia in concluding a treaty of peace with the Indians after Lord Dunmore's War, presiding over the conference at Fort Pitt in 1775; member of the Revolutionary Convention, of the Committee of Public Safety, and of the Council of State, and repeatedly a member of the General Assembly; was Commissioner to fix the boundary between Virginia and North Carolina, the line which he surveyed being finally adopted

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

his father died (in Virginia) he was about nineteen years of age. His father was possessed of means, but was heavily in debt. He proposed to the creditors that if he were allowed to manage and settle the estate he would pay the debts in full. They consented, and he did promptly relieve the estate of debt.<sup>1</sup>

My mother was born on Green Mountain in Albemarle County, Virginia, on July 9, 1798. My grandfather

by North Carolina as the correct one; declined the appointment by the General Assembly of Virginia as Commissioner to settle certain accounts of the State; again became a member of the General Assembly. He died on November 9, 1794, at his home, Castle Hill, Albemarle County, Va. His will, dated May 13, 1788, was probated in December, 1794.

Marshall's *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 6, 113; Hale's *Trans-Allegheny Pioneers*, pp. 15, 250, 251, 259; Collins' *Kentucky*, p. 18; Imlay's *Topographical Description of the Western Territory*, p. 277; Bishop Meade's *Old Churches and Families of Virginia*, Vol. II, p. 42 et seq.; Perkins' *Western Annals*, pp. 107, 111, 223; R. Collins' *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 15, 16, 248, 365, 510, 515, Vol. II, pp. 40, 338, 415, 625, 731, 759; Woods' *History of Albemarle County*, pp. 51, 334 et seq.; Butler's *Kentucky*, pp. 14, 18; Preston's *Historical Sketches*, pp. 9-18, 151-158; R. C. M. Page's *Page Family of Virginia*, p. 200; McElroy's *Kentucky in the Nation's History*, pp. 4, 8, 9; Johnston's *First Explorations of Kentucky*, pp. 1-84; Durrett's *The Centenary of Kentucky*, p. 21 et seq.; *Dunmore's War*, p. 242; Doctor Thomas Walker's *Journal*, edited by Wm. C. Rives (1888) and by J. Stoddard Johnston (1898); Lewis' *History of the Battle of Point Pleasant*, pp. 62-66; Slaughter's *Memoir of Colonel Joshua Fry*, p. 62; Hanna's *The Wilderness Trail*, Vol. II, pp. 159, 219, 242-247.

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<sup>1</sup>Joshua Fry was a soldier in the Revolution at the age of fourteen, and was present when Cornwallis surrendered in 1781; married Doctor Thomas Walker's youngest daughter; moved to Kentucky, and was Presidential Elector in 1825. Opened a school for the children of his neighbors, and taught a number of men who attained distinction in after life, among them being Governor Letcher, Chief Justice George Robertson, Chief Justice Thomas A. Marshall, General Cassius M. Clay, and S. S. Nicholas. (Slaughter's *Memoir of Colonel Joshua Fry*, pp. 42, 44, 65; R. Collins' *Kentucky*, Vol. I, pp. 369, 479, Vol. II, pp. 687, 625 et seq., for a considerable sketch of him and his school.)

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

moved to Kentucky shortly afterward and brought his family with him, including my mother. I think she was only two or three years of age at that time. He settled near Danville, Boyle County, and lived on a place called "Spring House," from the wonderful spring on the place. I used to visit the place while at Center College—Mrs. Reed then owning it. The spring was truly wonderful—about twenty or twenty-five feet long, eight or ten feet wide, and in places ten or twelve feet deep.

My mother, according to my recollection, was married at this place on September 1, 1819.

My grandfather Fry having made a considerable fortune, gave most of it away to his children. Meanwhile, there being no schools near, he taught his own children. His neighbors began to send their children to him. He became enamored of the work: gave up all other business, and devoted himself to teaching for the rest of his life. He educated some of those who afterward proved to be leading men of the State. Judge Robertson, for many years a distinguished lawyer and a member of the Court of Appeals, was one of them. About 1854 or 1855, I was present when my mother and Judge Robertson met at the Fair Grounds. They had not met since as boy and girl they had been pupils under my grandfather. There was a mutual recognition: "George Robertson"—"Ann Fry." It was a remarkable instance of recognition.

My mother told me an amusing instance of the force of habit shown in a young girl at my grandfather's school. She was a Miss Nicholas—a daughter of George Nicholas, the most distinguished lawyer in the State. She had

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

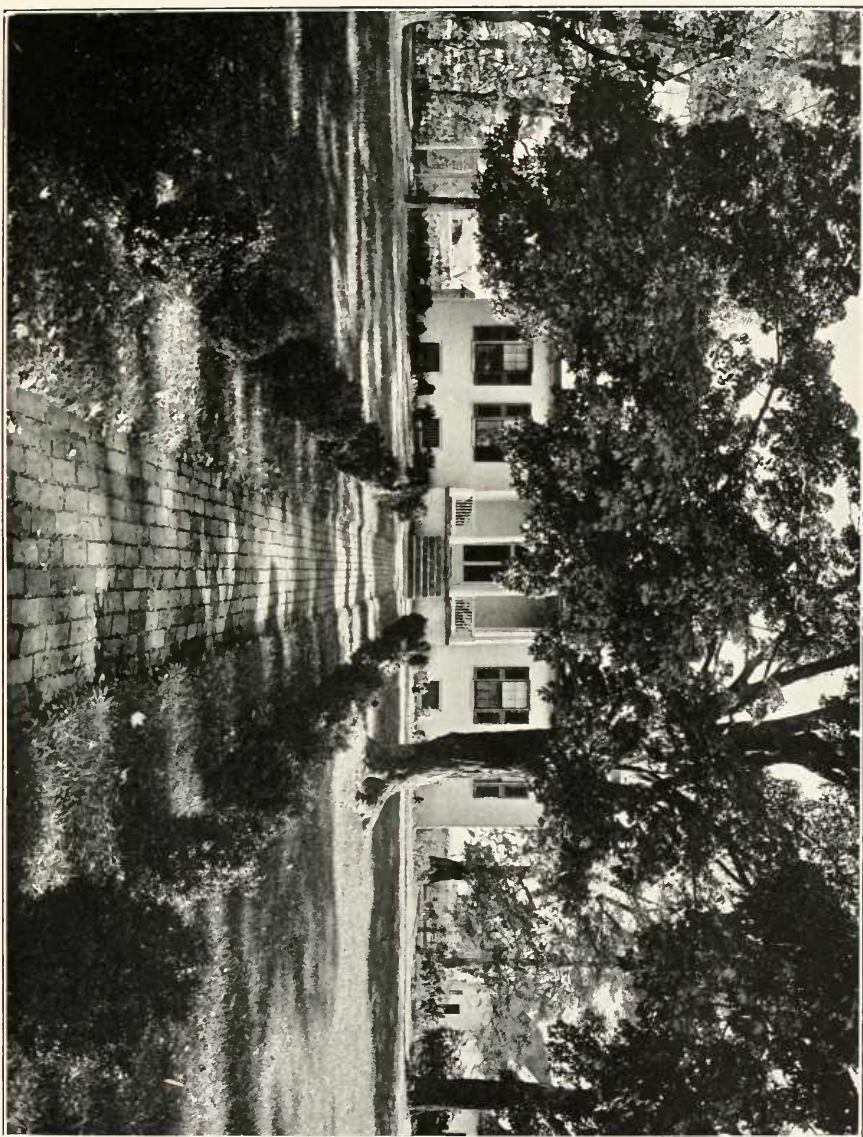
contracted the habit of swearing—swore “like a trooper.” Her family could not break her. She was placed under the old gentleman’s charge. He had tried vainly to break the habit, and finally told her that if she did not give it up he would certainly punish her. He came upon her one day when she was swearing. He called her to go with him, telling her that he intended to punish her—whipping, I believe. She was terribly frightened, and began to beg. He was inexorable. Finally she appealed to him, saying, “Mr. Fry, if you will let me off this time I’ll be damned to hell if I will ever swear another oath!”

I am told that he was rather short, heavy set, and in later years had a heavy suit of white hair. He lived to advanced years, dying about or shortly after the time of my birth. (Memo.—I am writing without papers or memoranda.)

My grandfather Bullitt died much earlier, April 13, 1816, at about the age of fifty-four. Having been very active in early life, he became sedentary after establishing his fortune. My father always believed that this shortened his life.

My father began life as a lawyer, and from my conversations with and observations of him in later life I doubt not that he would have made an able lawyer if he had continued in the profession. He was a man of very strong will, of clear intellect, vigorous reasoning power, and withal of the strongest sense of justice. Of the confidence of his neighbors in this last quality there were numerous instances, to some of which I may elsewhere refer.





Front View of the Oxmoor Residence.

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## *My Life at Oxmoor*

One piece of advice which he gave me I have never forgotten, and it has profoundly influenced my whole professional life. I had just begun to practice law in Louisville, having my office in the second story of the old building which stood where the Fidelity Trust Company building now stands—Fifth near Main. He rarely tendered advice, this being the only piece of advice he ever gave me in respect to my profession, so far as I can recall. He stepped into my office one morning and said (in substance):

“I want to give you one piece of advice in the practice of your profession. If you shall ever reach that position which you should seek to attain, you will have to draw many papers, contracts, wills, letters, deeds, pleadings, etc. When I was a young man at the bar, it was much the fashion to follow the old English custom of using a great number of words to express a simple purpose: to deal largely in technical terms understood only by lawyers and judges. Avoid that habit. As far as possible, consistently with precision, use plain English terms which any man of ordinary sense and education can understand. Write so that any man of plain sense can understand your meaning, and be very careful so to write that the most astute lawyer can't misunderstand you or misinterpret you.”

From that day I have scarcely ever written an important paper that this thought has not been in my mind. To make papers perfectly clear and unmistakable has been always the controlling purpose in their preparation.

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The result has been gratifying. I have been compelled to draw many contracts, wills, etc. With two or three exceptions, no lawsuit or controversy has ever grown up involving the meaning or purpose of a clause in any paper which I have drawn. In the few exceptions referred to, the courts have sustained the purpose which I attempted to express and for which I contended. Perhaps I may have occasion later on to refer to these exceptions in detail.

I said above that my father began life as a lawyer. He was born on February 14, 1793, and married in 1819, at the age of twenty-six. He practiced law but a short time after his marriage.<sup>1</sup> His health failing, and owning so fine an estate as Oxmoor, he retired from the practice of law and settled on his farm. My mother believed that tobacco was the cause of his ill health, and said that he gave up his profession rather than tobacco. Of course he did not concede this to be true, and I incline to think that any man with a splendid farm like Oxmoor, so near to the leading city of the State, would find the temptation very strong to give up the drudgery of the law and accept the independent life of a Kentucky farmer. Surely there was nowhere to be found a life more independent, more honorable, more attractive in every way.

<sup>1</sup>He married September 1, 1819. He had retired July 14, 1820 (Wm. C. Bullitt to General Francis Preston—Bullitt MSS.).



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### THE CHILDREN OF WILLIAM C. AND MILDRED ANN BULLITT.

At Oxmoor, then, all the children of my father and mother were born and raised. They were as follows:

	BORN	DIED
Joshua Fry Bullitt,	[February 22, 1821,	February 16, 1898.
Alexander Scott Bullitt,	August 3, 1822,	February 3, 1840.
John Christian Bullitt,	February 10, 1824,	August 25, 1902.
<sup>1</sup> Martha Bell Bullitt,	March 2, 1827,	October 26, 1847.
<sup>2</sup> Susan P. Bullitt,	February 20, 1829,	July 25, 1907.
David Bell Bullitt,	December 15, 1830,	November 21, 1833.
<sup>3</sup> Helen Martin Bullitt,	January 1, 1835,	March 29, 1896.
Thomas Walker Bullitt,	May 17, 1838,	March 3, 1910.
James Bell Bullitt,	June 16, 1840,	July 4, 1863.
Henry Massie Bullitt,	November 9, 1842,	June 17, 1908.]

Alexander Scott Bullitt died when I was about two years old. David Bell died in infancy. My sister Martha died as a young woman, after a most unhappy marriage. James Bell was killed July 4, 1863, in the Confederate army.

My sister Sue [Mrs. Dixon], Henry M., and myself are now the only survivors.<sup>4</sup> The others have died within a few years past. Later on I shall have occasion to mention them and something of their history. Suffice it here to say that, one and all, they have upheld the family name and honor. God grant that the same may be said in years to come of their descendants.

<sup>1</sup>Married Richard Allison.

<sup>2</sup>Married Senator Archibald Dixon.

<sup>3</sup>Married Dr. Henry Chenoweth.

<sup>4</sup>All three are now dead, Thos. W. Bullitt dying March 3, 1910.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### THOMAS W. BULLITT—BOYHOOD AT OXMOOR.

I was born at Oxmoor May 17, 1838, and lived there uninterruptedly until the fall of 1854, when at the age of sixteen I went to Center College at Danville.

Excepting college vacations, about five months from October 1, 1858, to March, 1859, and occasional brief visits, I was not in Louisville or at Oxmoor from the time I went to college until I settled in Louisville to practice law in the fall of 1865, after the war. Then the home at Oxmoor was broken up—never to be restored as a home. No sadder fact ever came into my life than this. The family still own Oxmoor, but it has not been a home since the war.<sup>1</sup>

The first sixteen years of my life were spent at Oxmoor. To describe Oxmoor and the life there, vivid as it is to my own mind, is not an easy task.

I believe the very earliest recollection that I have is being married when about two or two and a half years old to one of the Bullitt girls, who afterward married sure enough in Missouri. At the time I thought it very serious. I have never seen the little bride since, I believe.

The next very distinct recollection I have is of the death of old "Aunt Rose." She was one of the old negroes, and died just before Christmas. My mother believed

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<sup>1</sup>At the time he wrote this he did not know that, two months before, his oldest son (Wm. Marshall Bullitt) had purchased the old home from the estate of John C. Bullitt. He lived to see it restored as a home, to spend a great deal of time there, and to sleep in it many times during the last year of his life.

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her to be a genuine Christian woman, of a lovely character. I was given to understand that heaven was to be her home. I loved her very much. I had been told that she would rise from the dead when the Angel Gabriel should blow his trumpet at the last day. This I suppose was by the negroes. I suppose that I was about four or five years old. Christmas came and I was given a trumpet. I remember distinctly going out into the yard after breakfast and blowing my trumpet vigorously and as loud as possible, in the fixed hope that it would raise "Aunt Rose" from the dead. I could not understand why my trumpet should be of less avail than Gabriel's. To this day I cherish the memory and have a deep love in my heart for "Aunt Rose."

Another memory of this period is a visit to Oxmoor of Miss Mary Short. She was a grown-up young lady. My mother had taught me about God—that he made all things of nothing. This troubled my mind. One day I got Miss Mary to go into the house with me: to close the door so that we might be alone: and then asked her if God had made "cows' horns" out of nothing. This was the beginning of a spirit of skepticism that troubled me greatly after I had grown much older.

Of course my father and mother were always with me, and mingled unconsciously with everything in my early life. It is impossible for me to recall my first memories or impressions of them. So far back as I can recall anything, my mother taught me of God: of duty: of death: of heaven and of hell. These teachings made a deep

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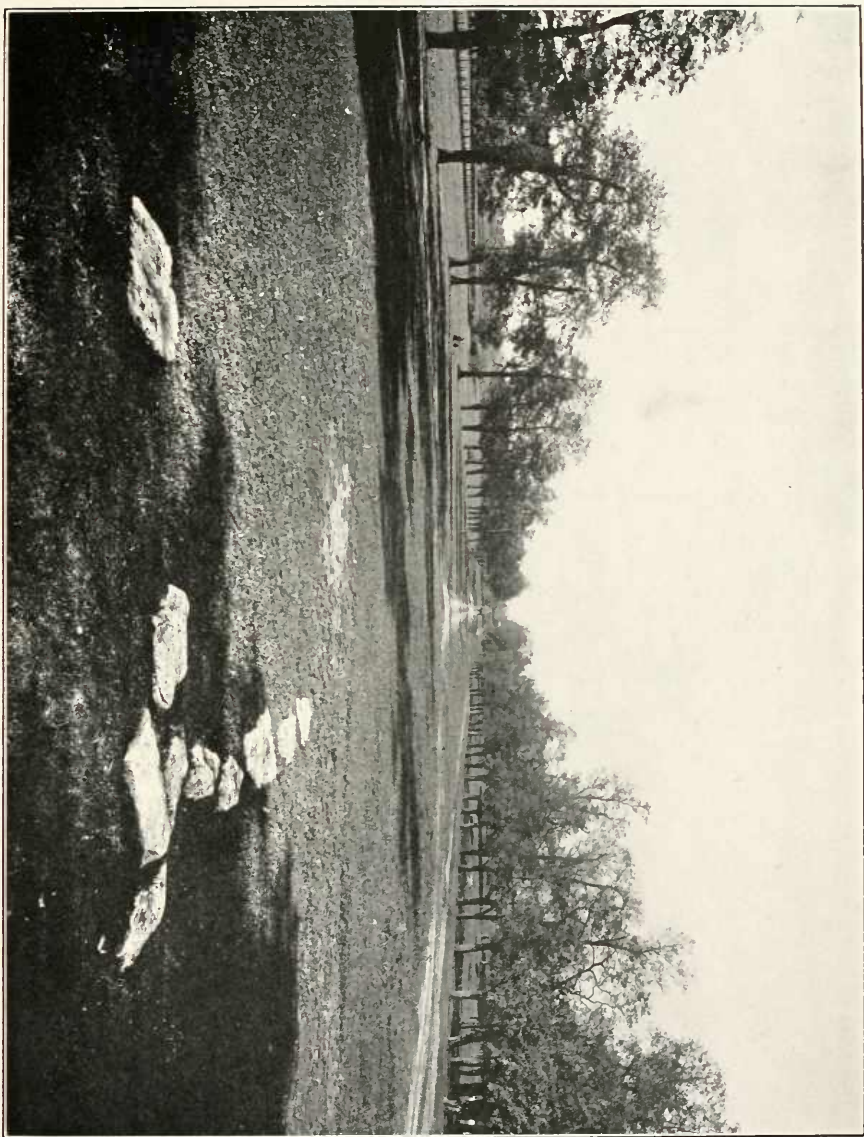
impression upon me, and the thought of religious duty and of the future world were mingled with all my earliest impressions. The duty of prayer, the Lord's Prayer, and "Here I lay me down to sleep" were impressed upon me in a way that has been ineffaceable. As I got a little older, she required me to read daily to her in the Bible.

On Sundays we drove always to church—the Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville. As I grew older I was allowed, in the summer, to attend St. Matthews Church, near "Gilman's Point." I thus became imbued with a fondness for the Episcopal service which has continued with me always.

As I grew older, I came to understand that my father did not accept the truths of revealed religion. He was, however, neither an atheist nor an agnostic. He was a deist, and was a firm believer in the existence and overruling power and government of a personal God. His father was the same.

He did not attend church; but he was a firm supporter of my mother's authority, and when my mother was absent (as she occasionally was on a visit to Aunt Bell in Danville and elsewhere) he required of us children the strictest observance of her requirements—required us to read the Bible, to say our prayers, and to attend church.

He never talked to me on the subject of religion. I think this was a subject that he discussed with no one. The only real talk that I remember to have had with him on the subject was in his last illness. He continued in good health up to about three months before his death,



Looking from the Oxmoor Residence toward the Front Gate.

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which was in the last days of August, 1877. He was then taken with a disease which he soon recognized as mortal. It was an abscess on the liver. He was living at the time with my sister, Mrs. Chenoweth. One day when we were alone he said to me (in substance): "Tom, I know that this disease is mortal. I can eat nothing. My stomach rejects all food. I know that a man can not live without food. I must therefore die of a slow process of starvation. It must involve great suffering. What I want to say to you is, that I would not endure that long-continued pain and suffering if I felt that I had the right to terminate it by the taking of my own life. I would certainly end it in that way. But I feel that I have not that right. God Almighty placed us here, and we are bound to accept and to endure what he brings to us."

The exact details of this conversation I remember to have given in a letter to sister Therese, my brother John's wife in Philadelphia. I think a copy of it will be found in my letter book of September, 1877.

Writing in the desultory way that I am doing, I find myself continually drawn away from the period of which I am writing to other times. I go back to the Oxmoor of my childhood days.

### OXMOOR AS A HOME.

To reach it from Louisville, you would go out on the Shelbyville or Lexington Pike. The "Eight Mile" House was just beyond the eastern line of the farm—that is, of the Evinger field. The entrance to the place was a "lane"

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between the Evinger field on the east and the Arteburn [old Christian] place on the west—the Oxmoor place being on the south side of the turnpike road. This lane, given almost entirely by my father, ran along the Evinger field nearly a half mile when it reached the main Oxmoor tract. Here a right-angle turn to the right or west brought you to the “Big Gate.” This lane crossed the north fork of Beargrass—the graveyard being on the top of the hill or bank on the west side of the road.

The “Big Gate” stood at the head of the avenue leading to Oxmoor House. The avenue was a measured half mile in length. It was flanked by locust trees on either side. This avenue, as it approached the house, widened into a “pasture” of considerable size. Beargrass Creek (Central Fork) crossed the pasture at a little less than a quarter of a mile from the house. The creek was flanked on either side by fine trees—willows and sycamores. At each edge of the pasture the creek was crossed by a “water gate,” which was hung from a log resting on stone piers, pillars on either bank. These were broad and flat, and those on the lower side of the pasture were a favorite trysting place for young people, and I will wager that more courting was done there than at any other one place in Kentucky.

The house was in a large yard of about two or three acres, and fronted toward the avenue. The avenue of trees widened as it approached the creek (from the “Big Gate”), and at the yard terminated a little outside its corners.



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Back of the yard was a garden—a little wider and deeper. Back of the garden was the orchard, a large and very fine one. The house was near the center of the Oxmoor tract—a little nearer the eastern than the western line.

Back of the orchard was a beautiful “woods pasture.” It extended from a point near the eastern line of the wall to a line west of the orchard—say a little less than a quarter of a mile—several hundred yards. There it turned northwardly toward and continued to the front line of the tract. It gave the appearance of a “crescent” as a background for the house and pasture. The creek passed into this “woods pasture,” and left the place where it joined the Arteburn (or north) line.

Oxmoor House was plain, and in these days would be thought small: but it was capable of entertaining, and entertained with generous hospitality more good people than any house that I know of in the present day.

The front was a one-story brick: a broad hall in the center: the dining room on the right, the parlor on the left as you enter—both large rooms. A basement extended across its entire width—the “front,” the “middle,” and the “back cellar.”

The brick front was connected with the old frame built by my grandfather as follows:

The broad hall above mentioned entered by a door into a “cross-passage” which extended the width of the frame building, and between the frame and brick buildings.

The frame part of the building was as follows:

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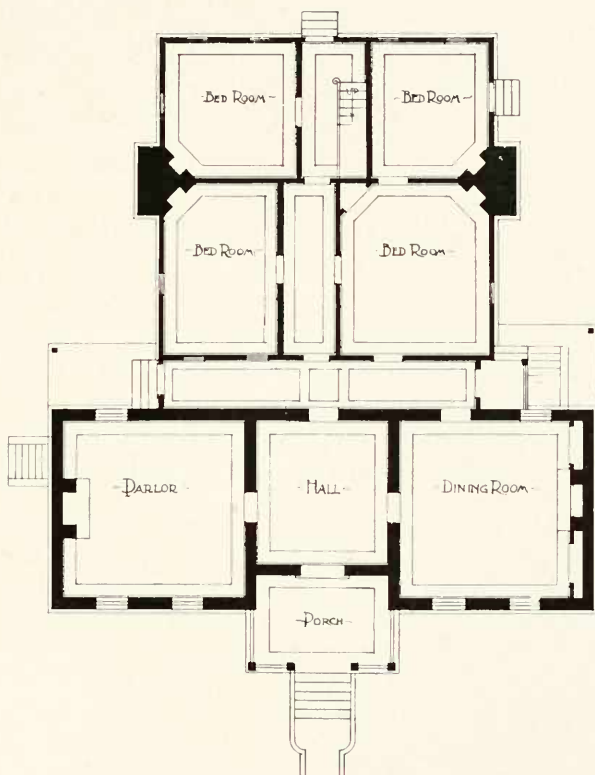
A central hall extended from the cross-passage to the back door. On the right of this hall was "Mother's" room; on the left was "Sister Sue's" room. Back of mother's room was the "little room," and back of Sister Sue's room was "Brother John's," afterward Cousin Ellen's room. Above were two attic rooms, one looking west and the other east. They were reached by a walnut stairway, prettily carved, going up across from the door to Cousin Ellen's room. The west room was the library.

The kitchen and wash-room were at the edge of the yard, on the west side. A brick walk extended from the kitchen door to the "side door" of the house, being the entrance to the cross-passage.

I should have observed that the first floor of the house was several feet above the ground. In front of the side door was a small porch. By the side of the porch was a short flight of steps that went down to the "front cellar." This was paved with brick, and constituted the ordinary "dining room." The room above was the "company" dining room. My father preferred the cellar as a dining room because when coming off the farm with his muddy boots and wet clothes he did not have to be bothered about soiling the carpets, etc.

The "middle" cellar my mother used as a store room and pantry. The "back" cellar was used to store apples, potatoes, etc.

How this house was made to accommodate the family and the guests assembled there, though at the time it appeared simple enough, is to-day an unfathomable mystery



## OXMOOR

Home of William Marshall Bullitt, Esquire  
Jefferson County Kentucky.

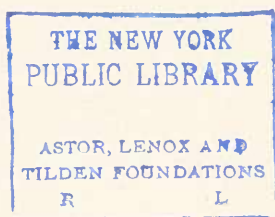
The Frame Building Facing The Southeast Was Built By  
Alexander Scott Bullitt in the Year 1787

The Brick Building Facing The Southwest Was Built By  
Wm C Bullitt Some Years Later

Measured And Drawn By George Herbert Gray Archt.  
measured 1906 drawn 1911



Ground-floor Plan of the Oxmoor Residence.



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to me. It did, however, and with a generous hospitality which I have never seen surpassed. Friends never hesitated to come for dinner or supper and to stay all night. The dinners and the suppers were simple enough, because my mother was always ready for them. But at night—where did she put them all?

### FAMILY LIFE AT OXMOOR.

Back of 1848 or 1849, when I was ten or eleven years old, my memory, except as to a few special things, is of course hazy.

Beginning at or about that date, what was the family? My older brothers Joshua and John had ceased to live at home: they were practicing law.<sup>1</sup> My sister Martha was dead. But about that date Mr. and Mrs. Gwathmey died. Mrs. Gwathmey was the daughter of Aunt Garrard, and was my father's first cousin.

My mother took as members of her family Cousin Ellen, Cousin Lou, and John Gwathmey, who was about my age. Cousin Lou was about Sister Sue's age, and Cousin Ellen was older. From this time then, and for some years, the family consisted of my father and mother; my two sisters, Sue and Helen; three boys, Jim, Henry Massie, and myself; Cousin Ellen, Cousin Lou, and John Gwathmey—ten in all.

<sup>1</sup>Joshua F. Bullitt subsequently became Chief Justice of the Court of Appeals of Kentucky. John C. Bullitt moved to Philadelphia in 1849, and was the author of the "Bullitt Bill"—the present charter of Philadelphia.

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It was a merry household. The girls were talented and popular. Cousin Lou was beautiful. My mother was fond of young company, and loved to see the girls have a good time. She had many friends of her own also. It was not uncommon that six, eight, or ten people would come to supper, and frequently several of them would spend the night.

Horseback riding, hunting, fishing, skating, and swimming formed the ordinary amusements of the boys, especially during holidays, though a part of all holidays and many Saturdays were spent at work on the farm.

Dancing was the favorite evening amusement; sometimes, but I think not very often, games were played—blind-man's buff, question games, etc. I am speaking of the "parlor": of course we children played everything. But dancing was the great amusement. And it was made great by the finest musician I have ever known. My father owned an old negro named Jack—"Uncle Jack." He did not know a note of music, but could play anything that he heard. He was very short, very broad, had a very big head, bald and shiny; and very big, flat feet. He had an innate love for music and a genius for dance music. I don't know what he could have done in the higher ranges of music. He played the fiddle: he always had a good one. He called the figures himself. I can hear now his jolly voice calling "forward," "change partners," "hands all round," etc. He played with his hands, his head, his feet, his whole body. His whole being seemed to be absorbed in his work, and he threw into his music and into

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the dance a spirit of fun, of enthusiasm, and of wild abandon that I have never seen elsewhere.

In an obituary written by my sister Sue some years after the war, she said of the old man that the "very spirit of music seemed to dance upon his fiddle strings," and it seems to me to express the truth about him. My father used frequently to loan him to the neighbors for a dance. As he grew old, a free negro, Cunningham, started a band in Louisville and it became popular to use him. I don't think "Uncle Jack" ever forgave his intrusion. I remember a story of the old man which I wish to preserve.

Somewhere in the '30s there was a great "falling of stars." At Oxmoor it was brilliant and terrifying; many of the negroes, and among them "Uncle Jack," believed the world was coming to an end. The old fellow thought the Devil would catch him with his fiddle, and broke it up and threw it away. It was a sore subject ever afterward with him.

There is another little incident connected with the old man, within my own recollection, which amused the family when it occurred.

My father had a negro, "Titus," whose wife was "Aunt Phyllis," who belonged to Cousin Annie Courtney and lived in Louisville. Titus went every Saturday evening to see his wife, and stayed until Monday. He frequently came back pretty drunk. My father, though considerate of and kind to his negroes, was of a stern and resolute temper, and required implicit obedience from the negroes, just as he required obedience by the children to our mother.



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He had tried in various ways to break Titus of this habit of coming home drunk on Monday mornings, without success. One morning Titus came to the harvest field evidently quite drunk. My father determined to try the effect of mortifying him. The negroes did not like to be ridiculed by the others—and their ridicule was sometimes very sharp.

The harvest field was adjoining the "wood pasture" above mentioned. "Uncle Jack" was too old to work in the field, and was "cutting weeds" in the wood pasture. My father called Titus to him, in full view of the other negroes, and told him that he was not fit to go into the field to work. He ordered him to lie down under a tree and sleep off his drunk. He then told "Uncle Jack" to break off a branch from a tree and "keep the flies off of Titus." Both obeyed, and my father took his seat under a tree just behind "Uncle Jack" and waited to see the result; neither of them knew he was there. After a while Titus woke up, at least partially sobered. He saw "Uncle Jack" sitting up, but fast asleep, with his fly-brush on the ground. His indignation arose. "Jack!" said he, "Jack!" The old man awoke, when Titus went on quite fiercely, "Didn't your marster tell you to keep de flies off of me? If you don't wake up and 'tend to yo' duty I'll have you giv' a hundred lashes!"

My father was too much amused to make his presence known.

I am trying to describe life on a Kentucky farm in the days "before the war": we always spoke of "farms,"

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not "plantations," as was the case farther south. I am not accustomed to such writing, and find it no easy task. The practice of law does not conduce to ease or facility of expression in other lines. The impressions of that early life are vivid—far more so than much that is more recent: but how to communicate them to others is the difficulty.

I have spoken of the Oxmoor House and of the white family.

### THE NEGROES.

The negro family consisted of about one hundred—men, women, and children. Their quarters were erected on either side of the pasture in front of the house, as mentioned above. They were built of brick, and were dry and warm.

The negroes eventually became so crowded (the number indeed exceeding that required or capable of convenient handling on the farm) that my father bought the "Cottonwood Farm" on the Ohio River below Henderson, which I now own. This was in 1858.<sup>1</sup> He removed to Cottonwood a considerable part of the negro force. This, however, belongs to a later period.

The negro kitchen, or "new kitchen" as it was called, was just east of the yard and on a line with the house, the road to the stables passing between it and the yard.

<sup>1</sup>Four hundred and eighty acres; deed W. A. Towles to W. C. Bullitt, Oct. 14, 1858 (Deed Book S, p. 10, Henderson County; Deed Book R, p. 18, Union County); W. C. Bullitt to Thos. W. Bullitt, February 12, 1868 (Deed Book W, p. 325, Henderson County; Deed Book W, p. 497, Union County).

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The stables and cribs were east of the back part of the garden—of course back from the house.

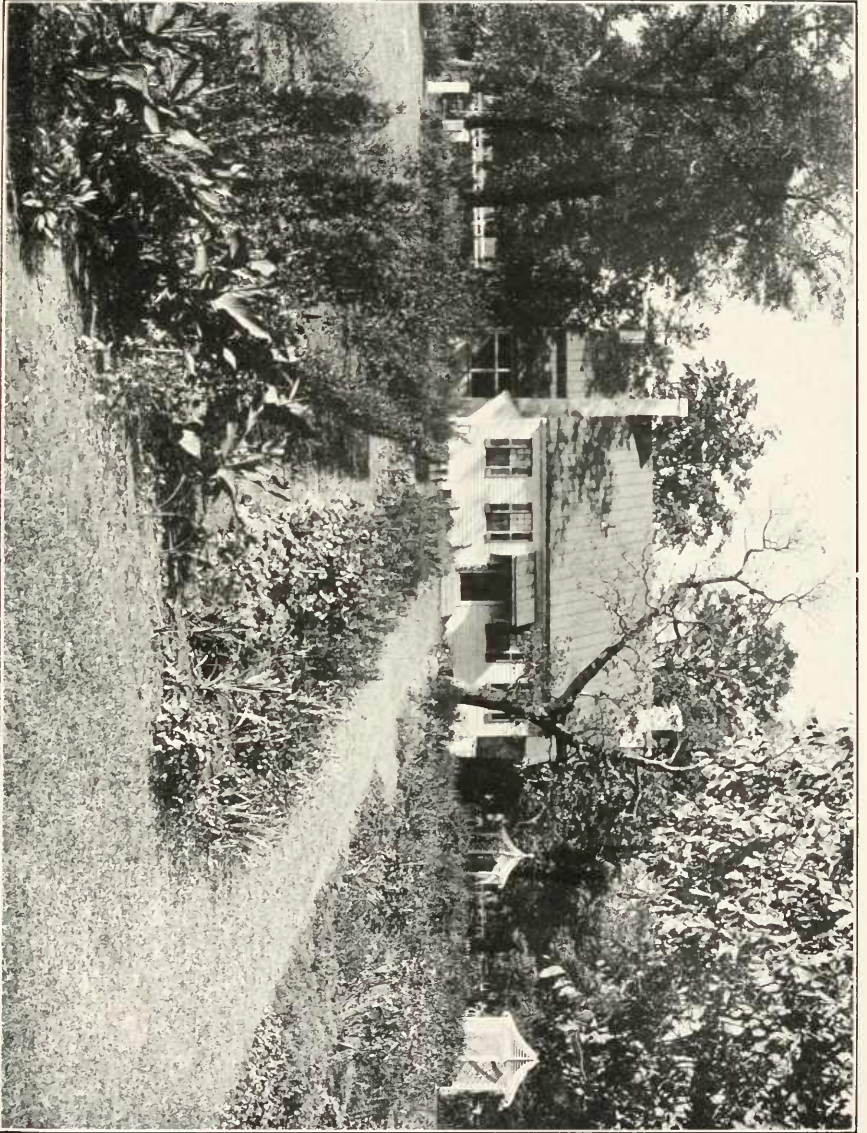
Up to 1849 my father never had an "overseer." The negroes despised an overseer. My father was not willing to subject them to such control. In 1849 he became a member of the Constitutional Convention at Frankfort, and then employed a man named Rice as an overseer. After that my mother induced him generally to keep an overseer—he being nearly sixty years of age in 1850. Even then, however, my father practically directed the work on the farm—overseeing the overseer and the negroes alike.

It was his habit to rise early—always before day in winter; to take his breakfast alone, and to be out about the stables to see the stock cared for and to start the negro men to work. The family breakfasted later, but early.

The women never did field work, nor did the boys until they became fully able to do so. The work required of them was adjusted to their age. The women were under my mother's directions. They were required to take care of their families; to keep their houses clean; to spin; to sew, and to do housework. There was, of course, a great deal of work required to supply clothing for so large a negro family.

The "crops" raised were hemp, corn, and wheat. Hemp was the money crop, though corn and wheat were also sold. A considerable amount of both, however, were consumed on the place.

There were two gardens. The one behind the house



Rear of the Oxmoor Residence.

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was partly a flower garden and partly a vegetable garden for the use of the white family.

Another and much larger garden was for the raising of cabbage, onions, turnips, and other vegetables for the negroes. There was always a large space devoted to sweet potatoes and Irish potatoes, with which the negroes were furnished abundantly. Watermelons, cantaloupes, apples, peaches, pears, and strawberries were abundant. There was always a large flock of sheep, a herd of cattle, and many hogs. The cattle were short-horned "Durham"; the sheep were "Southdown." My father esteemed them more highly than any other then known. Jerseys and Alderneys were practically unknown then in Kentucky. Of course there was a full supply of draught horses, and always excellent horses for family use.

My mother had her carriage—two-horse—always with an excellent driver. We children had our saddle horses and a jersey wagon. My father always rode horseback: he never rode in a carriage. He was a fine rider, and always kept a splendid horse. Until some years after the war he never owned a buggy. There was never one on the place—of our own, I mean. After the war he was induced to buy a buggy. He used it but a short time. His horse ran off with him. He returned to horseback riding, and up to the date of his last illness, in his eighty-fifth year, he rode every day from twelve to twenty miles. A number of times he rode to Frankfort on horseback, preferring it to either the stage or the railroad train.

My father was very truly attached to his sister, who was first Aunt Massie, then Aunt Martin, and lastly Aunt

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Key. She was slightly his senior. Uncle Martin was a sagacious business man, and became one of the very richest men in the State. In conversation, however, he was trivial: laughed at his own jokes, which were hardly witty or humorous. He was kind to children, and we were fond of him. My father respected and liked him for his good qualities, but had no patience with his jokes, etc. Consequently his death made a very slight impression on him.

Uncle Martin was buried at Lexington—taken up on the railroad cars. My father accompanied Aunt Key to the funeral and brought her home with him. It was a glorious fall day; Indian summer, I think. Father had never been on a train. We were eating supper in the “cellar” when they came back. As they entered the room, Aunt Key in her mourning weeds leaning on his arm, my father, forgetful of all else but the novelty and beauty of the ride, exclaimed to my mother, “Ann, we have had a most delightful excursion!”

My mother almost went through that brick floor.

My father every year sold certain calves and lambs, and occasionally cattle and sheep. A good supply of cows, however, was necessary to furnish milk for the negroes, and milk, cream, and butter for the family. My mother became celebrated for her butter, and always sold a good deal of it. She also sold turkeys, which were always fine. She was still more celebrated for her hams. At a dinner given by my brother John C. Bullitt, in Philadelphia, Mr. Buchanan, then President of the United



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States, tasted one of these hams. From that time to the close of his term my mother furnished the hams for the White House.

These things were her "pocket money." In this connection I have a vivid remembrance of a trying experience of my own. I was used to work on the farm. Many Saturdays and a part of every vacation we boys were required to do on the farm—side by side with the negroes—any work which we were able to do: and I may say that I have done every sort of work that is done on a Kentucky farm. That I did not mind. It seemed a part of the natural order of things. But when I got to be about twelve or fourteen years of age another duty was placed upon me. My mother was determined that I should do the marketing of butter and turkeys. George Abrams was the lamb butcher to whom my father sold his lambs. He had a stall in the market, then located in the center of Market Street and extending from Third to Fourth streets. My mother arranged with George Abrams to give me a space in his stall.

Every Saturday (for I don't remember how long) I had to get up at two o'clock in the morning, load butter and turkeys into the spring wagon, drive to town and take my place at daylight in George Abrams' stall and sell the turkeys and butter to customers. The price on turkeys my mother fixed. The price on butter I was to make ten cents above the market price that day, and I always sold it.

As gentlemen and ladies did their own marketing, I was obliged to stand there and bargain with people that

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I constantly saw at our own table, and at whose houses I visited. Whether my mother conceived that I had a vanity which needed to be suppressed I do not know. It certainly then seemed to me that with all those negroes on the place one might be found to relieve me of that humiliating service.

But I must say, that from that time I believe I have never been ashamed to do anything that was honest: and I respect so much my mother's judgment that I doubt not her wisdom in the matter.

Another experience of my own is illustrative of what was expected of us boys.

In 1849 (when I was eleven years old) my father was a candidate for the Constitutional Convention. Governor Merriwether was also a candidate. Two were to be elected. They were to speak at Fisherville, about sixteen miles from Louisville on the Bardstown Road. The night before the speaking Governor Merriwether stayed at Oxmoor. He was disturbed because he had left his "saddle-bags," with his documents, etc., at the office of his son-in-law Graves in Louisville. By my father's direction I started early next morning on horseback to Louisville, rode to Mr. Graves' office (nine miles), got the saddle-bags and took them to Fisherville, where I arrived about two o'clock, just before the speaking was to begin; got no dinner, and rode back to Oxmoor (about eight miles) before I got anything to eat.

This was not unkindness nor indifference on the part of either my father or Governor Merriwether. Dinner was over in Fisherville: the speaking was about to begin:

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and a thirty-mile ride for a boy was not a thing to be made much of.

I may here observe, also, that my sisters and cousins never hesitated to send me to town in any weather to buy a spool of thread or to do any errand: and it never occurred to me to object to it. They were sweet, kind, and affectionate to me, and I do not remember to have ever received a harsh word from any of them.

It was the habit for the negroes to go to work about sunrise in the winter—a little earlier in the summer. The dinner horn, in the early days (afterward a big bell), blew or rang the dinner signal at twelve o'clock, and they came to the house for dinner. It was served in the "new kitchen." They had, I judge, about an hour for dinner. In summer they left the field a little before sundown, but in the short days of winter worked until dusk. This was especially true in hemp breaking, which was the main winter work.

The planting, cutting, and shucking of corn I suppose remains substantially the same as when corn was first made known by the Indians to our ancestors. Machinery has not been introduced into that industry, except in the dropping and covering. Of course plows have been improved, and cultivators have been introduced.

An account of my early life would be incomplete if I should omit the fact that I had an incorrigible tendency to "tell stories": that I never told one that was not found out, and that I never missed a good whipping from my mother when she did find it out. I remember, as if yesterday, while going to school to Mr. Atkinson, on the turn-

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

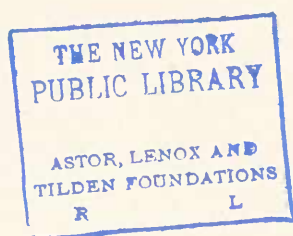
pike just opposite the Brown woods, at recess a little whirligig of wind on the turnpike carried up the dust and some corn stalks in a sort of whirl several feet in the air. When I got home, a little before sundown, I told of a whirlwind that had lifted a wagon and team and carried it about a half mile, landing it at the Campbellite church. My mother at once had the carriage harnessed up and took me down to the scene of the mighty wind. She wanted to find out what basis there was for the story. I can remember as we drove along how I endeavored to modify and minimize, until by the time we got back to the school the story had been reduced to about its true proportions. I can remember also, and will not forget, the licking I got when we reached home. I believe I have been and am known in the world as a man of scrupulous observance of the truth, but without undue imagination.

The corn used to be dropped by hand and covered with a hoe. The same is true of hemp. Machinery has been practically a failure there.

A marvelous revolution has, however, taken place in the cutting and threshing of wheat. When I first remember, wheat was cut with a sickle. It was stacked in order to become very dry. The threshing process was as follows: A circular road say fifteen or twenty steps in diameter was marked off. The bundles of wheat were laid on this road and horses ridden by boys were walked or trotted over it. The grain was thus separated from the ear; the straw was thrown off by pitchforks, and the residue was put through a fan worked by hand, which winnowed out the chaff from the grain. It was great fun



Old Parlor (now Library).





## *My Life at Oxmoor*

for us boys to ride the horses for "treading out" wheat. Substantially I suppose there had been little or no progress since the days of the ancient Egyptians and Hebrews. But about 1850 the progress of improvement was rapid. The "cradle" and the "thresher" came first; then the McCormick inventions, which have developed into the marvelous machinery of to-day.

Though hemp was formerly so important a crop and though the process of handling remains still practically unaltered, yet it is hardly known now in Jefferson County, and but little hemp is raised anywhere in Kentucky. Russian jute, manilla hemp, and metal bands for cotton bales have nearly driven out the hemp industry. I find many persons, even Kentuckians, who have never seen hemp. It is too long to go into the process here. Suffice to say, cutting hemp in summer and breaking hemp in winter was the hardest work done on a Kentucky farm. Yet they were the two kinds of work the negroes liked most. The reason was that both were task work, and a reward followed good work. The task of a man in cutting hemp was a land and a half across an eighty-acre field. A "land" was a span about twelve feet wide, between light furrows. The task of a boy of fifteen or sixteen years was a land—two-thirds of a man's work. When the task was finished, work was done for the day. Occasionally men would finish by dinner time—generally early in the afternoon. The remainder of the day was spent in resting, or according to the fancy.

The task of a man in hemp breaking was one hundred pounds: I forget that of the boys, but I think about sixty

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

pounds. For each pound over one hundred there was paid one cent.<sup>1</sup> A good hand would break, according to the quality of the hemp, from one hundred and twenty-five to one hundred and sixty and sometimes over two hundred pounds. I remember one year, when the crop was specially heavy, that several men broke as high as three hundred pounds, and one man, Daniel, one day broke three hundred and sixty pounds. This extra cent a pound was pocket-money, spent as the owner pleased. My father was extremely careful about this, weighing the hemp at the end of each day and noting the amount of each man's work. I don't remember whether the money was paid weekly or at the end of the season. I think, however, it was paid weekly.

There was something picturesque and even pathetic about the bringing in of the hemp at night.

The hemp stalk was from five to seven or eight feet in height. The fibre extended unbroken from the root to the top, and, while green, stuck close to the stalk. After being properly "rotted" (by spreading on the ground and receiving the rains, etc., for several weeks in the late fall and early winter) the fibre was easily detached from the stalk and the stalk was easily broken—shattered into

<sup>1</sup>Some other opportunities were afforded to the negroes for making pocket-money. The outer rows of the cornfields were planted in broom corn, and the negroes were permitted to use it for the making of brooms. Some of them became good broom-makers and sold a good many brooms. They became, some of them, also very expert in making foot-mats and the seats for chairs out of the corn shucks, and they made nice little sums in that way. When I undertook, a few years ago, to have some chairs "shuck-bottomed," I found that it was almost a lost art. It is a pity, for the shuck bottom is very comfortable and quite lasting.—T. W. B.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

short fragments say an inch long, more or less. The hemp was in shocks about the size of corn shocks. A man would break several of these shocks in a day—usually dragging the hemp to his brake, but sometimes moving his brake to the shocks. Each night there would be around each brake a large pile—sometimes several piles—of “herds” or “shores”—called by us the former—being the shattered fragments of the stalks. They were dry and very inflammable. The work, being done in winter when the days were short, was continued until dark. Each man “baled” his hemp. About dark the wagon, a large four-horse team, would go around to collect the hemp. At that time every pile of “herds” would be set afire—to get rid of the herds and to light the wagon.

As soon as the wagon was loaded and started toward the house the negroes formed behind and beside it and began to sing. They kept up the singing until they got nearly in, when voluntarily they stopped.

The hemp was unloaded and carried into the “hemp house,” a large brick building, strictly fireproof; carefully weighed by my father, though as I grew older he sometimes intrusted the weighing to me; and then the work for the night was over.

There was a striking difference between the singing as the negroes came from the hemp field and that at “corn shucking.”

The corn shucking was done in the late fall or early winter. There was considerable good-natured rivalry between the negroes as to the amount of corn they could respectively shuck. Each man was supplied with a metal

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

pin about six or eight inches long, with which he tore open the shuck; then breaking the ear away, he threw it into his pile, ready to be hauled off. Almost invariably as this work began in the morning, especially if it was a bright frosty day, a song would be raised and joined in by many of the men. It was sung rapidly on a high key with great vigor, and expressed at once the simple joy of life—of active life—and of rivalry in the work on hand.

The hemp-breaking songs were sung at night, at the close of a day of labor, when repose was pleasant and was promised. The songs partook of the mood. They were slow, and if not melancholy in themselves, fell with pathos on the ear of the listener.

To stand on the front porch or the "stile"; see the fires light up; then hear in the distance, say from one-third of a mile to a mile off, the voices rise, gently at first but swelling in volume as they draw nearer; voices always strong, well modulated, and attuned to the spirit of the words; frequently sad, perhaps with a tinge of melancholy, always made a profound impression upon me. Doubtless there was a real pathos in them which, as a master instead of a slave, it was not possible for me to receive or realize.

It is a matter of deep regret to me that I did not write down or memorize, for good and all, these negro songs. It did not occur to me that there would ever come a time when they would not be singing them or others like them: that they would be lost to the world, and with them would be lost the key to much of the negro character and life





Looking across the Garden toward the Springhouse.

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## *My Life at Oxmoor*

as it then existed. Where they got them or who composed them I do not know. I do not suppose they knew themselves. They simply picked them up from one another. Of one thing I feel quite sure—they were not the work of white men. They were the spontaneous expression of negro thought and feeling. They bore almost no likeness to “Old Kentucky Home” or “Suwanee River,” or to any of the other songs of poets who have sought to portray the thoughts and emotions of the negroes in slavery. I have no recollection of any negro song which in terms bemoaned or even referred to the negro’s condition of slavery. According to my best impression the negro in Kentucky—at least on my father’s place—having been born in slavery, knowing for himself or his race no other condition, did not repine: did not aspire to anything beyond it. If not happy, they were contented, and were certainly capable at times of great fun and pleasure.

On this subject I feel that I can speak with knowledge. As a child I played with the little negroes; I visited the cabins of the older ones, and was intimate with them all. I have spent many nights in the woods with them “coon” and “possum” hunting. Many a fine tree from three to five feet in diameter have we cut down for a “coon” or a “possum”—I should say “they,” for up to the time I left home for college I had never become a good axman. There were always some of the men who had good coon dogs, and they were always pleased to have me go hunting with them; I loved to go.

What would now be thought of a negro cutting down

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

a fine tree for a coon? Truly times have changed. Is it, certainly, altogether for the better?

It was on these hunting trips at night that I learned, more than at any other time, of the superstitions of the negroes respecting ghosts. I do not think the Kentucky negroes generally were affected by the intense superstition of the more Southern negroes. No negroes directly from Africa were, or for many years had been, brought into Kentucky. Indeed, so far as I am aware no African slaves were ever imported into Kentucky. Their long intercourse with their masters and other whites had obliterated the memory of African religion or superstition. As a boy I never heard of "hoodoo"; the negroes had no religious observances other than Christian. Of course they were emotional; they were not well instructed in religious views, and "getting religion" was a very sensational thing with them at times. Still they knew of God and of Christ and of salvation. When I read the stories of "Uncle Remus" they were entirely novel to me. I never heard them at Oxmoor, intimate as I was with all the negroes, young and old.<sup>1</sup>

Their sole superstition, so far as I can recall, was a

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Bryan, Evelyn's mother, tells me that the Uncle Remus stories were known to the negroes in Virginia and told to the children. Evelyn tells me that as a child she heard them. Jim, however, says he never heard them at home when a child. Virginia was nearer the seacoast and the Carolinas, and the negroes preserved better the traditional folklore.

I have read this paper to Mrs. Bryan, and with the exception just noted she declares that I have given a just and accurate account of the negro, his life and habits, as known in Virginia. She has many most delightful reminiscences of them. It is a great pity she does not reduce them to writing.—T. W. B.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

firm belief in ghosts. This certainly was a general belief among them. Yet they were not especially afraid of ghosts, and rarely professed to have seen one. It was mostly while coon hunting that they were affected by a fear of ghosts.

The man that I hunted with most was a tall, raw-boned fellow named Samuel. For some reason not known to me he was called by the negroes and by us boys "Susie." He was religiously inclined; very kind; rather slow in his movements; a fine work hand; always had one or more good dogs, and was devoted to coon hunting. He had the greatest faith in his dog; believed he would never follow a false trail, or trail a rabbit or anything but a "coon" or a "possum." If Susie's dog "treed" and nothing was found in the tree, or if he started off on a false trail or a rabbit trail, Susie became satisfied that a ghost was leading him off, and nothing would keep him from going straight home.

Our hunting was generally in my father's "Big Woods," back on the "Anderson" tract of about two hundred acres, or in Mr. Brown's two hundred and fifty-acre woods, which was a short distance from it. My father always had a large drove of hogs feeding in the woods, and some of them became practically "wild hogs."

I remember being out with Susie one night. We had had bad luck; no trail till about midnight. Suddenly the dogs began to bark like wild, but showed no sign of following a trail; their voices came continuously from about the same direction. Susie tried to call them in, but strange to say they did not answer his call. He

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

became nervous and several times suggested "ghost" and a return home. However, we lingered awhile in hope; when suddenly the dogs (there were several) commenced a violent barking and a chase. They were some distance from us, and began to come nearer. Suddenly a couple of very big wild hogs burst from the bushes about twenty yards in front of us, dashed across a little open space, and disappeared in some bushes on the other side. The dogs followed close after them, but Susie called them in and announced his purpose of going home. He was absolutely satisfied that the hogs were ghosts, which had taken that form to lead us on and into danger.

No argument, I think, could have held him; though, so far as I can remember, I used none. I was not unwilling to go in myself. I did not believe in ghosts, but a strong feeling in one person's mind will communicate itself to others. There were several young negroes in the party, and all accepted Susie's explanation. It was preferable to believing that so true a coon dog would lie by trailing a hog.

Susie was a thoroughly conscientious man. He followed the dictates of his conscience always. I recall a somewhat somber and dangerous exercise of it.

Jim, an excellent negro, had typhoid fever. He was very ill, and was approaching the crisis of the disease. Susie was put to nurse him. Doctor Flint had directed my mother to give him whisky every quarter or half hour. My mother, after visiting him about bedtime, gave Susie the whisky and positive directions as to its use.

About midnight Susie knocked at the window and asked my mother to come to Jim at once; he seemed to be dying.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

My mother went to him at once and found him in a collapse; froth on his lips, and nearly unconscious. She at once applied the stimulant, and he revived (and I may say recovered). After reviving Jim, she asked Susie if he had given the whisky regularly. He said, "No, Mistus; when he got to looking so bad I thought he was going to die, and I couldn't find it in my heart to let him go drunk into the other world!"

Susie thought the Devil would certainly get Jim if he smelled the liquor on his breath.

Speaking of typhoid fever recalls an epidemic of that disease on the farm. There were fifteen cases. It was in the winter. Doctor Flint, then certainly the ablest physician in Louisville, attended them. I think he was the first physician in Louisville who distinctly and practically recognized that typhoid was not to be medicated. Good nursing, a little febrifuge, and at the crisis the use of a stimulant, was his treatment.

Each sick negro had a negro nurse—a man or a woman—and every night before bedtime and again about one o'clock my mother went the rounds of the cabins to see their condition and to give directions. I carried the lantern for her. In this epidemic there was not a single death, though one negro girl contracted consumption as the result of the fever and died of it.

I think it was during this epidemic that my brother Joshua had a dreadful spell of typhoid fever at Oxmoor, and that the epidemic terminated by my mother being taken with the same disease. She was ill for many weeks, but recovered.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

There was during my boyhood another epidemic, viz., of dysentery. There were thirteen cases, but I think no deaths.

These facts, I conceive, throw a strong light on the treatment of the negroes at Oxmoor. They had good nursing, and at least no medical malpractice.

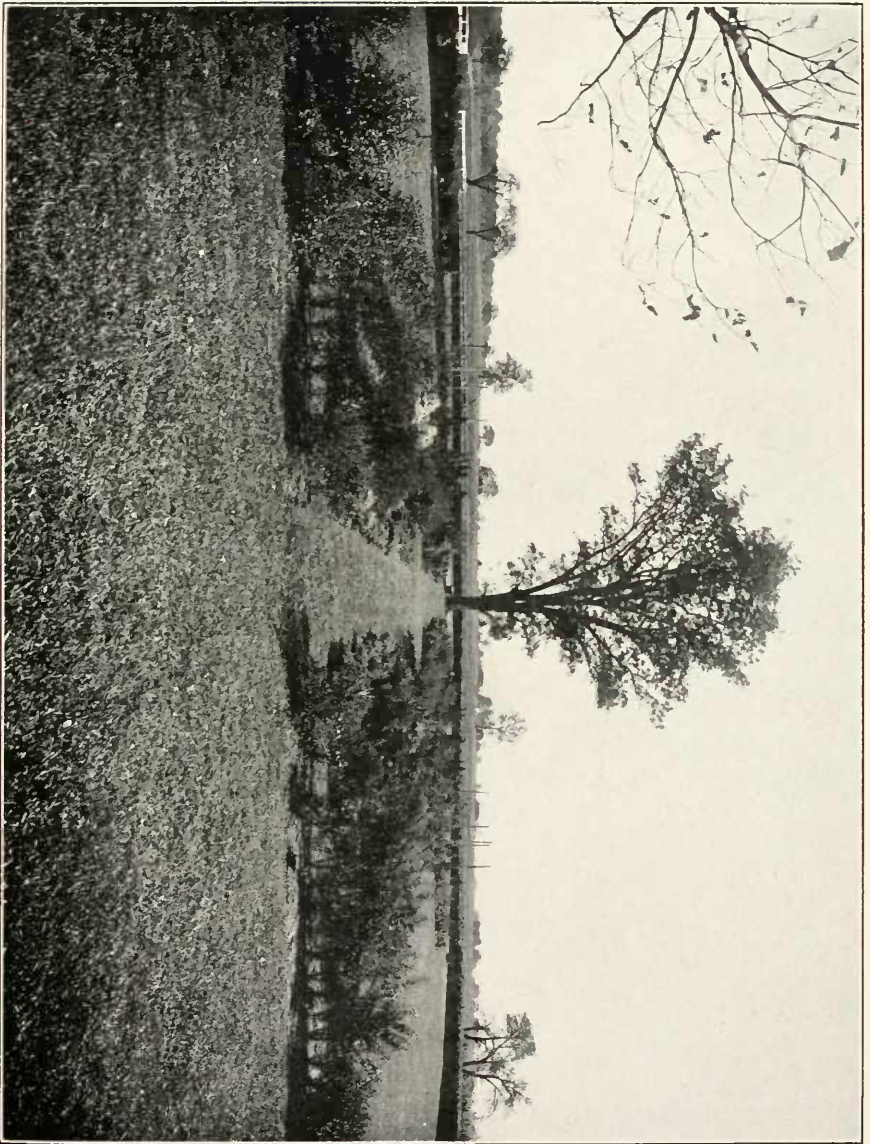
It has been supposed that negroes are especially subject to tuberculosis. I recall but two cases of consumption among our negroes; one mentioned above, the other a young man named Andrew, who died when I was very young.

There was indeed but little sickness and very few deaths among the negroes during my childhood and youth. The place was naturally healthy; the "Spring" was very fine; the negroes worked steadily and well, but they were never overworked, and were well clad and fed abundantly with the best of food—meat, bread, and vegetables. When sick they were carefully nursed and skillfully tended.

Corn and sweet potatoes they loved beyond anything, and "possum" was the greatest of delicacies. They loved chicken, but it was not part of their ordinary diet.

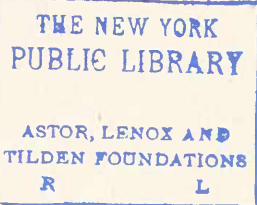
I recall an anecdote told by my old partner, Judge W. O. Harris, about the Virginia negro, which seems in place just here.

Two negroes made a bet as to which could say the "three best things in the world." They threw up for "first say," and the winner said, "Possum, tater, and yaller-leg chicken!" The other pushed over the stakes and said, "Here, nigger, take de money; you ain't left nothin' for me to say!" Doctor Stuart Robinson was specially



Looking from the Rear Door toward the Tennis Court.





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amused at this story, as he remembered that in Virginia the "yaller-leg" chicken was always esteemed the best.

I can not understand why one of Judge Harris' negroes should not have brought in the watermelon, for if there was one thing which brought bliss to a negro it was the "water million." It leads me to think that the old State must have been lacking in one of the comforts of life.

It is a remarkable fact that the great cholera epidemic in the "thirties" did not visit Oxmoor. There was a panic of terror in Louisville and many persons left—some of them contracting the disease and dying after their flight. Even the doctors, many of them, were panic stricken. The strictest diet was enjoined. Fruit and fresh vegetables were forbidden—especially cucumbers and cherries.

My father, who recognized my mother's absolute dominion about the house and family, would not change his own habits or suffer the habits of the negroes to be changed. It was his conviction that fear made people open to attacks of cholera, and that constant attention to diet and abstention from ordinary food—a change of habit, in other words—kept the matter constantly before the mind and awakened fear. He went on eating just as usual—cucumbers, especially, to my mother's horror. He was specially fond of cherry pie for dessert. One day he asked for cherry pie, and my mother told him the doctors positively forbade it. The next day he asked for cherry pie: my mother always had had it for him. He received the same answer. The third day he failed to appear at dinner—a most unusual circumstance. My mother made inquiry, and was told by one of the servants

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

that just before dinner she "saw Marster get on his hoss and go out of de Big Gate." About three or four o'clock he returned, and my mother inquired where he had been. He said he had gone in to the Galt House to get some cherry pie. My mother gave in, and he had his cherry pie thereafter.

I can scarcely doubt that this cool and resolute courage, the absence of fear, adhesion to ordinary habits, which in themselves were healthful, contributed much to the freedom of Oxmoor from this dreadful scourge.

About 1850 there was another cholera epidemic. The same course was pursued at Oxmoor, and it escaped cholera. These facts made a deep impression on me, and have governed my own actions in later life.

It is not to be assumed from what I have said that my father was either a gourmand or a bon vivant. He was in fact a most abstemious man. He had no fondness for "made" dishes or for highly seasoned food. For breakfast he took a cup of very strong coffee without sugar or cream, a little meat, and hot rolls or biscuit. For dinner (about 12:30) he ate rather lightly of meat and vegetables; but always liked a dessert—cherry pie, apple dumpling, etc. For supper, as far back as I can remember, he ate nothing but cold rice and cream.

There was never such a thing as a "course dinner" at Oxmoor. At breakfast and supper everything was put on the table at the beginning—except that hot bread, hot cakes, etc., were brought in from time to time.

At dinner, soup was, in a sense, a separate course. Vegetables, etc., were not handed around till soup was

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taken off. Whatever meats or vegetables were to be served were all placed together on the table so that each could choose what he wanted. Dessert was not served until the meat dinner had been removed and the tablecloth carefully brushed off. There was no "eating on crumbs."

It may seem strange that I should talk of "hot cakes," etc., when, as said above, the kitchen was seventy-five feet from the house. Nevertheless no house of to-day has "hotter" cakes, waffles, and beaten biscuit than graced the table in that cellar dining room every day—even in the coldest winter weather. Of course, the plates containing them were covered, and they were served promptly.

Living at Oxmoor was simple, but it was comfortable, and in some respects luxurious to a degree unattainable now except at enormous expense.

Oranges, bananas, and tropical fruits generally formed no part of an Oxmoor dinner ordinarily. Neither did bought "confections" of any kind appear there. We were too far from the city to rely upon such supplies. Neither did we rely upon the butcher or the baker for anything. Excepting coffee, tea, sugar, flour, and perhaps some other groceries and a few simple spices, the farm supplied practically everything for the table. My mother kept always large flocks of turkeys, chickens, geese, and ducks, also squabs. She was never without a whole ham. It was her rule as soon as a ham was cut to cook another. A "fruit cake" she always kept on hand—one of the large "black cakes" made in fluted mold. My wife has the old molds, and I am very proud of them. She generally had also a pound cake or a sponge cake. She was

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never without ginger cakes for the children. Milk, cream, and butter—always fresh, sweet, and rich—were unlimited in amount. Ice cream—usually vanilla—was as rich and fine as ever graced a table, and nobody could make better coffee or tea than our old cooks. And then the beaten biscuit! There was in the kitchen a large smooth stone-top table. Before breakfast and before supper the pounding of the “biscuit beater” on the dough upon that table was music to the ear. It meant a biscuit white, light, and fit for the gods to eat.

The chickens were broiled or fried. The turkeys were sometimes boiled and served with egg sauce: sometimes put into a tin “kitchen” before the great open wood fire. The roast of beef was often done the same way. The saddle of mutton seamed and dressed with jelly—what could surpass it in richness and flavor? The ham was generally cooked two days—slowly boiled one whole day and baked the next.

But I find that I am sadly mixing up breakfasts, dinners, and suppers. Any intelligent mind, however, can analyze and separate them, and can see that with waffles, hot cakes, batter bread, and beaten biscuit, added to the other things mentioned, a breakfast, dinner, or supper could any day be served that would charm, tempt, and satisfy any healthy appetite.

There was very little drinking. My father always kept on the sideboard in the upstairs dining room a decanter of whisky, one of wine, and I think also one of brandy. When gentlemen called on him he always invited them to take a drink: also when his Sunday Club dinner

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occurred, liquor was on the table. But my father never made a habit of taking whisky or any other drink. It was never on our ordinary table, and I do not think that even wine was on the table when young company was entertained. We children never thought of taking anything to drink. I don't think I ever tasted whisky or brandy until after I was grown. Yet neither my father nor mother was a teetotaler, and neither of them ever sought to create upon us the impression that to take a drink was innately wrong. Temperance, but not total abstinence, was their view.

It was the same about cards. We were taught, especially by our mother, that gambling in any form was immoral, but that cards, otherwise, were innocent. I shocked Cousin Sallie Barkley, with whom I boarded while at college in Danville, by saying at the table one night that the only Christmas present I had ever gotten from my father was a pack of cards and a barlow knife.

It had become at one time necessary to adopt strict regulations to prevent the negroes from gathering in crowds at nights and on Sundays. This was due to efforts by the abolitionists secretly to instruct them in the desire for freedom; to dissatisfy them with their condition; to induce them to "run away," and to prepare them ultimately for insurrection. Rigid orders were given, pursuant I suppose to legislation, forbidding negroes to leave their masters' farms without a "pass" signed by the master. The enforcement of this order the gentlemen of the neighborhood had not been willing to intrust to any hired official. Consequently they formed their own



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

“patrol.” If a negro was found away from home without a “pass” he would be whipped and taken or sent home. There was, so far as I can recall, but one of the slave owners who resented this patrol—Mr. Austin Peay, who had married Cousin Peachy Speed, my mother’s niece. It made a breach between him and my father, the details of which, however, I do not remember.

When the patrol was dissolved, its members—twelve, I think—formed a club and used to dine at one another’s houses, alternately once a month on Sundays. My father, Captain Veach, Mr. Fred Edwards, and Mr. W. L. Thompson were members of it. I do not recall the others. My mother regretted the Sunday dinners, but always prepared them without a murmur. These dinners continued, I think, until about the time of the war—certainly until I left home for college.

I recall an incident about table manners. Owing to the supposed prejudices of my father, my mother had never purchased finger-bowls. We had napkins, and were expected to use them or to go to our rooms after meals to rinse our fingers. My mother used not infrequently after dinner to dip her fingers in her tumbler and wipe them on her napkin. One day father told the servant to hand him a glass of water, and added, “Don’t bring me that glass that your mistress washes her hands in.” The next day she bought a full set of finger-bowls, and my wife now owns them.

When we were married the Oxmoor home had been broken up seven or eight years. Most of the furniture, plate, etc., had been given away; but mother authorized

# \$100 REWARD, IN SPECIE!!

RANAWAY from the subscriber's farm in Jefferson county, Ky. in the month of August last, a Negro Man named



## THE FUGITIVE

He is about 5 feet 8, or 9 inches in height, a sturdy stout man, quite black, and of rather a dull and surly countenance; he is supposed to be about 25 years of age, and is a good ploughman and waggoner. About a year since, he lost, in part, the ball of the thumb of one of his hands, (I think it is the right hand) and also the little finger of the same hand at the second joint, from a disease in his hand, which was then fully cured by a physician.

If he is apprehended in this county or state, and safely lodged in the Louisville jail, Jefferson county, I will give a reward of *Fifty Dollars*, currency of this state---if he is apprehended in any other state or territory, and secured in prison at the place where he is apprehended, so that I get him, I will give *Fifty Dollars* in Specie, or, if in the latter case he is committed to the Louisville jail so that I may get him, I will give to the taker up ONE HUNDRED DOLLARS in Specie.

WM. C. BULLITT.

Oxnore, Jefferson County, Oct. 7, 1822.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

us to take whatever was left. In that way we have come to own a number of old Oxmoor pieces. I afterward bought some of the furniture from Henry Massie, who was married several years before I was.

I should have observed that our house servants were women; I do not remember any man serving in the house. A young servant always kept the flies off the table. Kentucky negroes were generally polite—I think because they were contented and well cared for. The Oxmoor negroes were universally recognized as especially polite. There were several reasons—perhaps others beside those I mention:

*First.* They belonged, most of them, to what may be called “good families” of negroes. There was a difference here, as well as among white people.

*Second.* The marital relation was recognized and enforced. Each family was distinct and entitled to exclusive right in its cabin. Nothing would have induced my father to separate a man from his wife, or indeed to sell a negro away from his family except the most determined and defiant misconduct.

*Third.* The negroes were well cared for, as shown above. They knew and recognized it. They respected my father, and generally they were much attached to my mother.

*Fourth.* They were taught politeness from their infancy—by their own parents as well as by my father and mother.

Even the smallest children in the family were addressed and spoken of by the negroes as “Mars Tommy,” “Mars

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Jimmy," etc., and the girls as "Miss Helen," "Miss Susan," etc. They never addressed a member of the family except with hat in hand, nor indeed any other gentleman or lady. This politeness then was partly habit, but was founded in respect and in contentment. I do not think it possible that it could otherwise have been maintained.

Of course strict discipline and implicit obedience were essential. The institution of slavery could not otherwise have been maintained. Disorder, resulting in insurrection, would have been the certain result of any other or weaker policy. To a Kentucky negro the threat of selling him "down the river" (which meant the cotton or sugar plantations) was a genuine terror, and justly so. It meant not only a permanent separation from his family and friends, but an introduction into new and untried conditions, which to his mind were terrible. The mere threat would usually subdue the most unruly negro.

I do not remember that my father ever sold a negro except one—Caroline, a woman. She became defiant and uncontrollable. She was sold to Arteburn, a "negro trader." She sent for my mother, who went to see her. She begged to be taken back, promising good behavior forever. My father bought her back at an advanced price. She was true to her vow. She was a superb cook, and her conduct afterward was unexceptionable. She outlived my mother many years—dying, in fact, only a few years ago. As long as she was able she always came to see "Miss Cilla" and to get her dinner on Christmas Day and Thanksgiving.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### THE KITCHEN AT OXMOOR.

This is an institution which is gone, not to return.

Plain, rough, uncouth as it would appear to modern eyes, it offered facilities for such cooking as the modern range is incapable of. It was a single room of brick, the wash-room being under the same roof. The floor was of brick, the hearth of brick. There was no well or cistern, and the spring was one-fifth of a mile away. But the spring was a great one, and a boy did nothing but bring water for the kitchen and the house. His name was Frank, about my age, and blind from rubbing "poison oak" over his face in bravado. He was kept busy. He always carried the bucket on his head, and would never spill a drop. The fireplace was about six feet wide. Only wood was used, but it was of the best; seasoned, and of all sizes. The "wood-pile" was just back of the kitchen, outside of the yard and out of sight. Each morning it was the duty of certain negro men to prepare wood for the day and to supply the house and kitchen. "Back" logs, front logs, and kindling were abundant.

Neither coal nor gas can equal wood for a kitchen fire. The smoke was carried up a broad, well-drawing chimney, and wood smoke don't contaminate. A great swinging crane in the back of the fireplace provided a support on which could be hung a "kettle," or any vessel for boiling water. The live coals and the hot ashes in the fireplace or on the hearth provided for frying, baking, roasting, and for everything needed by a cook. Then the "spit,"



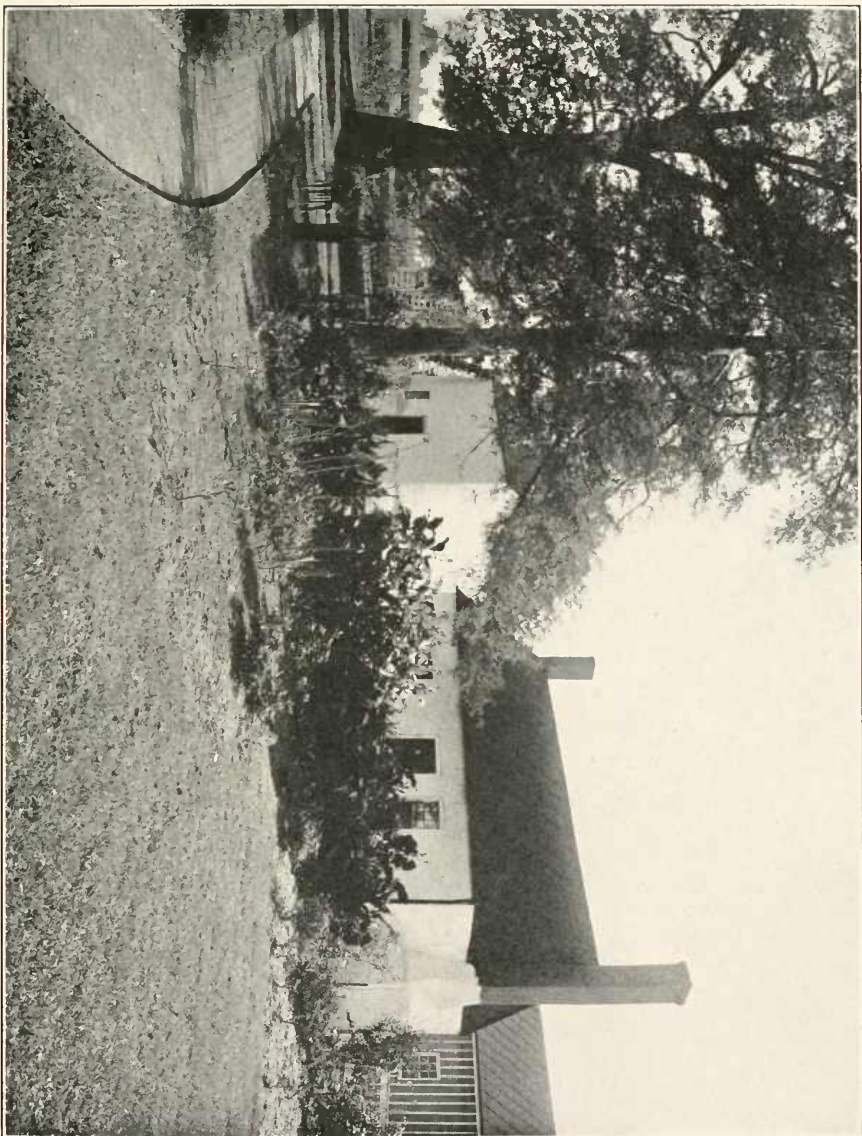
## *My Life at Oxmoor*

the tin "kitchen," etc., provided for cooking a turkey or anything that was to be cooked by heat alone, without touching the fire or any metal utensil.

The "kitchen" was a half cylinder of tin open on the side next the fire and at the bottom, arranged so that a whole turkey could be placed in it, exposed to the heat of the blazing fire, and turned from time to time so as to be cooked through; the drippings being caught in a pan on the hearth.

The skillets, the frying-pans, the ovens, the waffle-irons, the pans, the dishes, the biscuit-beater, and the old black cook flinging things around and absolute mistress in her domain—all are as plain to my vision as if that time were but yesterday. I only wish I had a woman's knowledge of the arts and mysteries of the kitchen so as to really describe these things so that the knowledge could be preserved. But it is beyond my ken or my powers of description. Suffice to say that in the best hotels and restaurants and private houses of to-day I find no cooking of the plain and simple but luxurious type which surpasses or equals that which came from old "Aunt Betsey's" or Caroline's kitchen.

Then the strawberries, the cherries, the watermelons, the cantaloupes, the raspberries, the gooseberries, the peaches, the grapes, the corn, the sweet potatoes, the asparagus, the okra, the Irish potatoes, the lima beans, the peas, hominy, and every vegetable that a fine farm could produce; the beef, the mutton, the turkeys, geese, ducks, and chickens; the ham and game; rich cream, buttermilk, and sweet milk; butter like gold; coffee;



Old Kitchen and Smokehouse.

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tea, hot and strong; rolls, beaten biscuit, hot cakes, waffles, and batter bread! Ye gods, was there ever a table-scene like it?

The flower garden was not rich like the gardens of to-day. But roses, violets, pinks, and many other flowers whose names I do not recall—or never knew—made a pleasing show. Two trailing rose bushes, one white, the other red or pink, growing on either side of the back door, were very attractive. In the yard, besides the double rows of locusts extending from each front corner of the house to a corresponding corner of the yard, there were, between the house and the smoke-house (just back of the kitchen), a splendid weeping willow, a hackberry, and an elm, and scattered through the yard were a number of fine trees—a cypress in the front yard was especially beautiful. It was not uncommon that my mother would give her guests breakfast under the shade of a tree in the yard.

Cousin Lizzie McKnight and some other girls, besides our own girls, were one morning late for breakfast. My mother thought to mortify them into being ready the next day. So she had the table cleared off; started the servants about their daily tasks, and herself set the table in the yard for the girls. She had prepared for them the very best breakfast, and then waited on them herself. After a while Cousin Lizzie exclaimed, "Oh, girls, isn't this fine? We'll do this every day!" My mother gave in to let them have things their own way.

Writing in this desultory way, with no formulated plan, I find myself skipping back and forth continually. Recollections come and go. Jim and Evelyn continually keep

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at me to incorporate things which I have mentioned to them in our many chats about early times—and at whose solicitation, indeed, I am now writing. When I complain of the great length of the paper and of the trash in it, they continually declare that it is just what they and the other children want, in that it portrays the times “before the war” better than a more consistent story would do. As I live now largely for my children, I obey; so here goes.

The character of the negro would hardly be complete without a reference to two or three additional facts.

*First.* Their contempt for and actual dislike of what they called “poor white trash.” This referred to the lower classes who owned no negroes and who had to perform daily labor, as working on the turnpikes, cultivating little patches of ground, etc. Their contempt was very genuine. They had an almost equal contempt, many of them, for “free niggers.”

*Second.* A genuine feeling that they partook of the aristocracy of their masters. The negroes of a gentleman distinguished for his wealth or for any other reason were proud of the fact, and felt that it elevated them.

Bishop Galleher, of New Orleans, who was on General Buckner’s staff during the war and who began the practice of law at Louisville as a contemporary of my own, used to tell a story of a Mississippi negro quite illustrative of this quality.

The Mississippi Valley line of railroad passed in front of the house of a wealthy and aristocratic sugar planter. He ordered the carriage, to drive into the country town.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

He and the old mistress got in and were driven by the old driver, who felt to the fullest extent the importance of the family. It was the first drive after the road had gone into operation.

As the carriage approached the track, a locomotive and train were coming down at a high speed. The old negro paid not the slightest attention to it, but drove on over the track. The locomotive just grazed a hind wheel, with the result that the carriage was turned over and the driver thrown into the clover patch. Nobody was seriously hurt. When they had gotten out, the old gentleman turned to the driver and said, "Henry, didn't you see that locomotive coming?" "Yes, Marster." "Why the h— then did you go up on the track?" "Why, you know, Marster, I thought when they seed it was we-all's kerridge, dey would stop!"<sup>1</sup>

*Third.* The negro women—especially the "mammies" who nursed or tended the children of the family—conceived a greater affection for them than for their own children, although they were fond of their own children. The same was true of the maids toward their mistresses; "old" mistress or "young" mistress, and of the boys or men who became body servants. We did not have the latter

<sup>1</sup>"Master" should be pronounced with the broad Virginia *a*—ah. The *r* which I have used should not be pronounced. I give it only to indicate the right sound of the *a*. "Mistress" was never pronounced "Missus," but "Mistus" or "Mistis"—generally the latter. It was applied to the head of the house, as also "Marster" was. It was not unusual to hear the negro speak of "old Marster," "old Mistis," or "old Miss"; likewise of "young Marster," "young Mistis." The younger members of the family, however, were usually addressed and spoken of as "Mahs Tom" and "Miss Helen," etc.—T. W. B.



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at Oxmoor. My father and mother did not believe that it was good for their sons to have special servants.

The negroes had a sense of humor, and were disposed to ridicule one another. Doubtless it contributed to their health and to their contentment.

I have mentioned Rice, my father's first overseer. He was a stout young man, and I think reasonably good tempered, but because he was an overseer the negroes disliked him. Joe, who I think was Aunt Betsey's child, was a little morose-tempered; he got this from his "mammy." Uncle Jack was his "daddy." One morning, in the field lying to the east of the avenue, near the Big Gate, Rice reprimanded Joe for something—I suppose his work. Joe replied with insolence. Rice started toward him, doubtless intending to flog him. Joe took off his hat, waved it over his head, and called out, "Good-bye, boys! I never expect to see you again!" He started off in a run, Rice after him. Rice had the better wind, and after a chase of a mile or so caught him and brought him back to the field, duly humbled. As Joe came back to take his place, Harry looked up with a surprised air and called out, "Joe, whar has you been and what has you seed?"

Harry was a fellow full of fun and of very quick humor. He had a brother Simon, who was an excellent fellow, but with a grave disposition. As a boy Harry was always in mischief: Simon was habitually good. They were the grandchildren of old Uncle Billy, who was nearly a hundred years old at the time of his death. I remember him well, though what I now mention was before my personal recol-

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lection. He had become blind from old age. Harry was constantly playing pranks on the old man, who had promised him a thrashing. One day Harry had been specially mischievous. The old man provided himself with a switch, and as Harry thoughtlessly passed by him the old man recognized him by his voice, and reaching out grabbed him and began on him with the switch. Harry, after getting a few licks, called out, "Grandpap, dis ain't me—dis is Simon!" The old man flung him off and angrily said, "Damn you, den, you go and bring me Harry!"

Little Billy, in chopping wood, nearly cut his foot off just back of the toes. Doctor Flint was sent for. He dressed and bandaged it, directing that Billy should not put his foot to the ground—keep it in a horizontal position—and expressed the hope that it would "heal by first intention." After a few days, when the doctor took off the bandage, he found that there was no healing, but the reverse. He told my mother that evidently Billy had been using the foot. Billy vehemently denied it. On close questioning he said, "Why of cose, mister, I worked it back and fo'th this way (indicating with his hand), jist to keep it supple."

There are several of these old negroes to whom in thought I refer with profound respect and admiration.

Frank Walker drove the four-horse wagon. He was a tall, well-formed man of middle age. He had a fine team. His "wheel horse," which he always rode while driving, was the largest and most powerful horse in the county. His name was Farmer; he was an iron gray, and very high spirited. Frank managed that team as

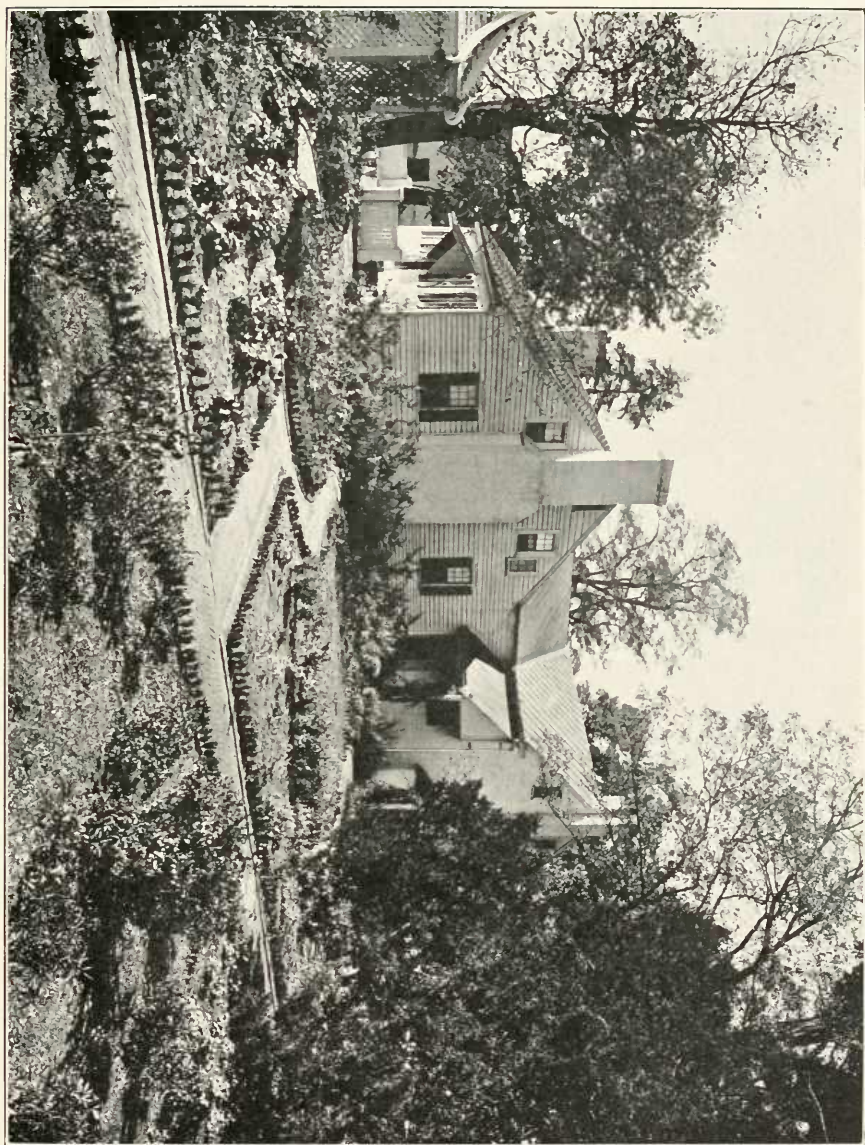
## *My Life at Oxmoor*

well as the best stage-driver, and tended them as if they were children. He was a man of honor and of truth. My father and mother trusted him implicitly.

Lucinda, John Gordon's wife, was the mother of a good-sized family. Her children were very good servants. She was the mother of Frank, the blind boy above mentioned. She was the maid who attended to the cleaning up of the house—her daily work: and as neat and clean a house she kept as was ever seen. The floors of the parlor, dining room, and hall between (as indeed all the floors) were of narrow ash plank. She kept them "waxed and rubbed" till they were almost as smooth as ice. I never heard my mother give Lucinda a rebuke, as far as I can remember. I believe her to have been an honorable, truthful, and virtuous woman.

And then Louisa—"old mammy Toosh." I suppose she got the name from some of the older children attempting to pronounce "Louisa"—I think Sister Sue.

"Mammy Toosh" came from my grandfather Fry, I think—certainly from the Fry family. She was a mulatto. Her father was understood to be a white man in Danville; I forget his name. She was a few years younger than my mother. She had quite a family of her own—Nathan, Daniel, Wallace, Beck, Tena, and Eliza Julia, all intelligent and excellent servants. She nursed all of my mother's children. She was, I believe, quite as much attached to them as to her own, and they were all deeply attached to her. In kindness and affection she could not be surpassed: but in high principle and in truth and honor she was not the equal of Lucinda. It was my delight in boy-



East View of the Oxmoor Residence.

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hood to catch small fish—say four to eight inches long—in Beargrass and get her to broil them and fry corn to go with them.

Here I wish to record two facts.

So far as I have known or heard, no Oxmoor negro after the war was ever convicted or charged with an offense against the criminal laws. Of course, the farm being broken up, they became scattered and I lost sight of them to a large extent. Still I kept up with a good many of them, and even those who had gone off, if they had got into serious trouble I think would have communicated with me. Those who fell into want, my brothers, my sisters and myself assisted as it was in our power to do—I only wish we could have done more. But we had families to support, and our means were limited.<sup>1</sup>

The other fact is this: So far as I am aware, no mulatto child or children were born at Oxmoor. I believe my father to have been absolutely faithful to his marital vows. Besides, illicit connection with a negress would have repelled him as a degradation and a dishonor to himself and family. He would have resented in the most resolute way any interference with the negro women by white men—his own sons especially. It has been the fashion to reproach Southern farms and Southern society on this ground—doubtless with too much truth. But it is my conviction that in this respect Oxmoor was free from the stain of criminality.

<sup>1</sup>John C. Bullitt and Thomas W. Bullitt supported quite a number of the old slaves, paying their rent, board, etc., during the past thirty years—the last one dying about two years ago, to wit, 1909.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

I have said the negroes were cheerful and contented. It was shown in their daily work and in their fun-loving exercises at night. They loved to dance, and often danced without music except "patting"—that is, patting with the hands on the knees; and this they learned to do to perfection, giving and keeping "time" to the dance. Such dances were usually by one or two negro men for the amusement of themselves and the others. To "pat Juba" and to "dance Jim Crow" were inspiring.

"Once upon the heel tap,  
And then upon the toe,  
And ev'ry time I turn around  
I jump Jim Crow."

I see it now, and laugh at the sight.

"Hog killing" was a great day for the boys and children, white and black. Pig-tails, crackling bread, spare-ribs, chine—but especially the pig-tails and cracklings—were their delight. The "bladders," at least a good many, were carefully preserved. They took the place of balls, and especially of fire-crackers at Christmas. Fire-crackers then were not so cheap or so abundant as now.

It was a pleasure to me as a young boy to teach the negroes about the Bible, and to teach them hymns, etc. My mother encouraged this, and my father did not object. My energy, however, was not equal to my sense of duty, and my work was not persistent or perhaps effective.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### OXMOOR FAMILY LIFE.

I have been drawn on from one thing to another about farm life, the negroes, the kitchen, etc., to such an extent as to neglect the ordinary occupations and life of the members of the family. Indeed, the life was a simple one, each day following in the steps of the former and affording but little that is striking or picturesque.

Work, for the father and mother and for every child in the family (except the girls, who were expected to be ladies), and hospitality, were the keynotes to the Oxmoor life.

My father spent the day on the farm supervising the work of the negroes. He was recognized as one of the best farmers in the county, in the sense that all work was thoroughly done according to the best plans then known; that the farm was kept up in the best style, fences and buildings always in the best repair, and stock and farming implements in the best condition. There were other farmers who were better money-makers and better money-savers. He made a respectable living, however, and spent the money in giving his children the best education they would take, and in enabling my mother to extend the most generous hospitality and in giving to the girls an advent into society.<sup>1</sup> This about absorbed his income, and until most of the family were grown he laid up no money and did not extend the fortune received from his father. The

<sup>1</sup>When the boys had finished their education he expected them to take care of themselves.—T. W. B.

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purchase of the Anderson tract, the Evinger field, and Cottonwood (in 1858) were the only additions to his real estate. From my Aunt Key, who died shortly before him, he received a part of "Ridgeway," which by his will passed to my brothers Joshua and John. He died practically without personal estate of value. He would never permit himself to go into debt, and family expenses had to be conformed to his means. He never speculated in stocks or bonds, corn, whisky, cotton, or anything else. What he made came from an intelligent handling of his farm. Devoting it to his family, instead of laying it up, proved in the end more beneficial than the opposite course pursued by some who made and saved more largely. His sons became men of eminent respectability, and his daughters married men who were universally respected. He never read or lounged during the day. He spent the day on the farm, and after supper invariably he spent the evening reading until nine o'clock, which was his bed-time. He always sat in a straight-backed shuck-bottomed chair, leaned back against the wall, with a small pine table and a lamp (formerly candles) by his side. His seat was beside the broad wood fire-place.

He read neither novels (unless perhaps Smollett and a very few of the older ones) nor poetry, scientific or religious books. His reading was historical mainly. He admired and read Hume's Essays, Bolingbroke, and Lord Chesterfield. He was an excellent historian.

He did not participate in the gayety of the young people. He never went into the parlor at night, and always went to bed about nine o'clock, whatever might be going

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on in the house. He was, however, always polite to the company at table, and never complained of the noise of dancing or romping. He was a stern man and reserved, but occasionally laughed most heartily. He had great contempt for puns and for punsters. He liked the fiddle, and had no objection to a man learning to play on it. But he had absolute contempt for a man that "played the piano." He was certain that that man was of no account; and indeed, considering the times and the facts as they existed at that time, he was not far wrong in his judgment. He always loved to hear hymns; the hymn tunes appealed to him. For operatic music he had a dislike—indeed, for most music except that of the fiddle, and for hymns.

My mother told me that when he was a boy my grandfather offered a music teacher a horse, saddle, and bridle if he would teach my father to "turn a tune." He tried it faithfully on "Yankee Doodle," and gave up the job.

As I grew up and was at home on vacations I made it a rule to sit and talk with my father in the cellar dining room, after supper, for a considerable time. I did this whoever might be in the house. He always welcomed it, and I derived from those evenings both pleasure and profit.

My mother was quite different. She loved poetry and music. To her last days she could repeat almost whole pages from the "Lady of the Lake." She loved young company. She loved to watch the dance and the romping of the young people, and she made it a rule always to go into the parlor for a time every evening. She wanted

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to know the associates of her children—especially of her daughters.

Her life was a laborious one—more trying even than my father's. She had the care of the household; her children; the table; the house generally. There she was supreme. She also had charge of all the negro women and children and their work. She had exclusive control and responsibility in respect to the sick, in the house and in the cabins. She saw to the making of butter; the care of the fowls; the getting of dinner and other meals for the family and the negroes; the cutting out and making up of the clothes for her children and the negroes.

The entire hospitality of the house devolved on her. She invited whom she pleased and entertained them as she pleased. My father never interfered, and except for his Club dinners invited but few friends to the house. Those whom he did invite were welcomed cordially by my mother.

We children invited whom we pleased and when we pleased, without request or notice to our mother. She was always ready. "Surprise parties" were not unusual, and ten or fifteen persons would drive out from Louisville for supper and an evening of fun. They would never find my mother unready.

These things, together, cast a great weight of care and responsibility upon her, and many was the night that she went to bed worn out and tired, to arise next day for similar duties. She met the responsibilities upon her always intelligently and courageously. She liked dress, and dressed well, rather handsomely; but as far

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back as I can remember, always in black. I do not think she ever wore colors after the death of my sister Martha. Black silk was her favorite style. She was of good height; stout, but very erect in walking and even in sitting. She never touched her back to a chair.

She was born on Green Mountain, in Albemarle County, Virginia, about ten or twelve miles from Charlottesville. I presume that her mother and family were Episcopalians; but at Danville there was no Episcopal church. She became and always remained a stanch Presbyterian. She was one of the earliest members of the Second Presbyterian Church in Louisville. She was deeply attached to Doctor Humphrey, who was her pastor for over twenty years.<sup>1</sup> She respected Doctor Stuart Robinson and liked him, but never had for him the attachment that she had for Doctor Humphrey. She died in 1879; Doctor Robinson in 1881.

She spent a good deal of time in making quilts—silk quilts especially. It was quite the habit to make quilts from scraps of silk dresses furnished by friends. Her favorite occupation, when “off duty,” was knitting. On summer afternoons the cross-passage was the favorite sitting-place. Many times have I seen her sitting perfectly erect, with her knitting dropped in her lap, and sound asleep. My brother John used to say that whenever mother wanted a good nap she would have him read to her from “Flavel’s Fountain of Life.”

She was a person of strong attachments, but not of

<sup>1</sup>Rev. Edward P. Humphrey (1809-1887) was the father of Judge Alex. P. Humphrey.



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enmities. In repose her face was sad, but in conversation it was bright and remarkably intelligent. A photograph of her always failed, because of its almost melancholy expression. She loved her friends, and to the end of her life kept up with them, feeling an interest in all that interested them. It was remarkable how the younger people clung to her. It was a fact that lightened very much her declining years. She was deeply religious, and her religious convictions controlled her life. She loved scenery, the moonlight, the sunsets, flowers, grass, and all the beauties of Nature. She had some romance in her nature. She had strong emotions, but was wholly free from superstition. Such things as unlucky days, thirteen at table, and the like made no impression on her mind. She had no faith in mesmerism, spiritualism, ghosts, or any supernatural manifestations. There was but one incident in her life that would seem to contradict this statement, and that was remarkable. It made a deep impression on her mind, though she rarely referred to it, and never as anything supernatural. She told me of it some years after the war. In July, 1863, General Morgan made his famous raid into Ohio. Jim, Henry Massie, and myself were all members of his command. My father and mother were living with Aunt Key on Jefferson Street (south side), between First and Second, in Louisville. About the fifth or sixth of July, my mother and Aunt Key were sitting in the dining-room. My father came in, and addressing his sister said, "Nellie, I have thoroughly investigated that report and find there is nothing in it. I have been to the Louisville and Nashville depot and have

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done all I can to trace the report to its origin, and I am satisfied it has no foundation." My mother said, "What report?" My father answered, "A report came that Tom had been killed. I would not mention it to you till I had investigated it. I am satisfied now that it is without foundation." My mother said, "It is not Tom—it is Jim; and I believe it is true." She then explained to them, as she afterward did to me, that on the fourth of July she was standing at her bureau, combing her hair, preparing for dinner. She saw no vision, but heard a voice behind her say distinctly, "Jim has been killed." She looked around, startled in the highest degree: but there was no one there. She kept it to herself as a mere imagination, due to her constant anxiety, until she mentioned it as above. The fact is, Jim had been killed on the fourth of July, at just about the time she thought she heard the voice. This had no effect upon her religious views, and did not awaken a belief in spiritual manifestations.

Next to Sister Martha's death, I think Jim's death caused her the deepest pain and distress of any event in her life. Henry had been pretty badly wounded and taken prisoner in July, 1862, but had recovered and was exchanged. Within a few days after Jim was killed I was severely wounded, and a short time thereafter Henry was again a prisoner; but this is part of a subsequent story.

It was a grief to my mother that my father was not a Christian. Old Aunt Rose in early life had cheered her with the hope that he would become one. "Don't fear for Marse William. He will come all right—he had a prayin' mother!" That was Aunt Rose's faith.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

But to write about my father and mother with a free rein would be interminable. They belonged to the class that made this country great—upright, faithful, brave, and loyal: their influence was broad, deep, and lasting.

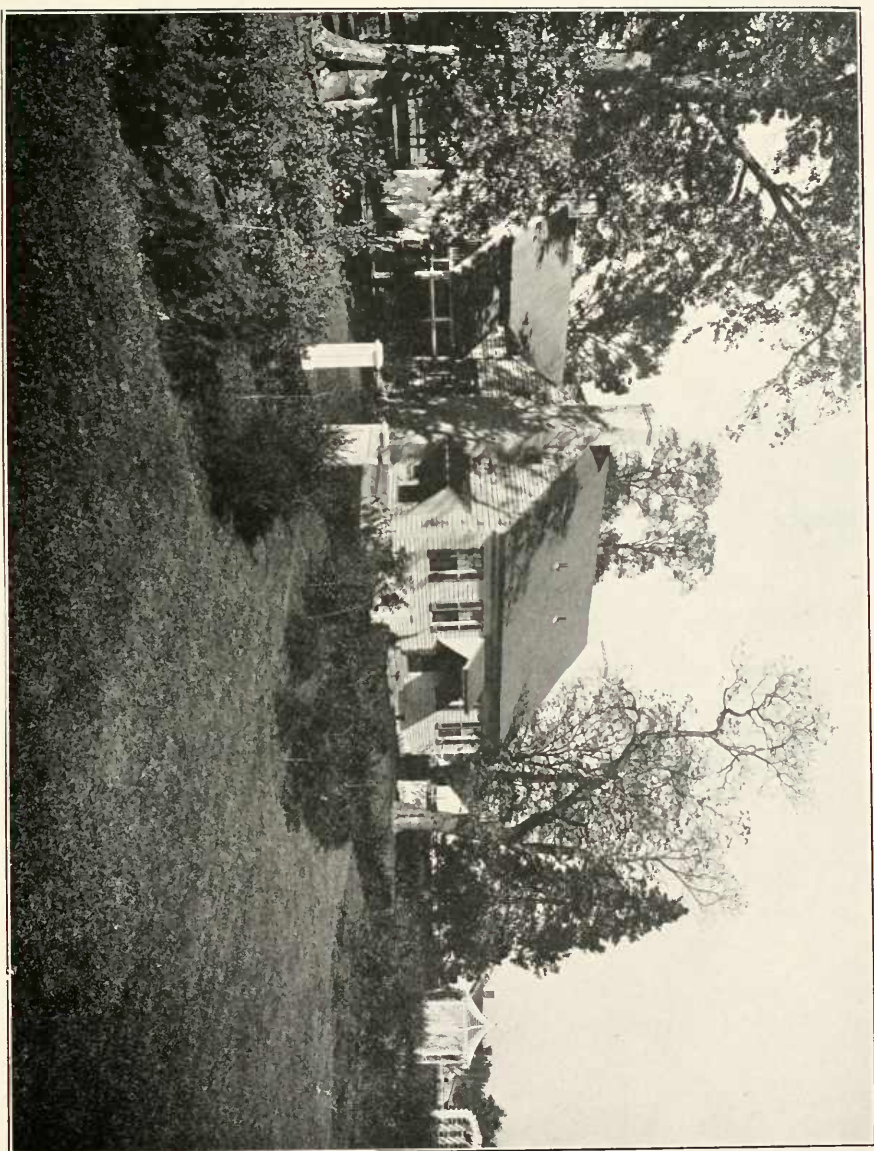
What was the life of the other members of the family?

My brothers Joshua and John, the one seventeen and the other fourteen years my senior, had ceased to live at home before the time when my recollection of things is distinct. They were men of a very high order of ability: both were of unspotted integrity. My brother John became undoubtedly the leading lawyer, and it may well be said the leading citizen, of Philadelphia.

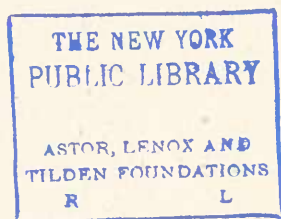
I have said above that my brother Scott died when I was about two years old: my sister Martha died in 1847. My recollection of her is of a sister beautiful in person and lovely in temper and disposition. Her marriage was unhappy, and she died a short time after. The name of Richard Allison was never mentioned in the family.

The family, then, within my earliest very definite recollection, consisted of my father and mother, my sisters Sue and Helen, my cousins Lou and Ellen Gwathmey and John Gwathmey, Jim, Henry, and myself. I was two years older than Jim, and he was two years older than Henry Massie. I was named for my mother's grandfather, Doctor Thomas Walker of Virginia. The others likewise bore family names without exception.

Our lives were simple in the extreme. As children we took an early breakfast and started at once for school, on foot or on horseback; spent the day in the schoolhouse except for a recess of about an hour, when we ate the lunch



Southwest View of the Oxmoor Residence





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carried with us and played—bandy, town ball, prisoner's base, fox and geese, etc.—went home a little before sundown, took supper, played awhile, and went to bed.

We had no "family prayers," but each child was required to "say his prayers" before going to bed; one of us also was required to read aloud to mother a chapter of the Bible, either in the morning or at night. Many Saturday holidays and part of every vacation we boys worked on the farm, side by side with the negroes. Of course as little fellows we began by cutting weeds and other light work; as we grew older we did all the work of a Kentucky farm.

I fell into ill health when very young—about seven or eight years—and had a hard struggle. When about fourteen my mother feared I had Bright's disease. I quit school, and for six months lived on bread and milk alone, at the same time living actively—on horseback, hunting, fishing, etc. I then spent one year at work on the farm, which built me up and enabled me to go to college at sixteen years of age. During this period of ill health my mother induced me to have a daguerreotype taken. My wife now has it.

Boys and girls attended the same school. One day was a perfect repetition of every other. No exciting events were likely to occur in that simple school life.

In view of the great schools and school systems of to-day, it may be interesting to know that we had no public school system. This is of a later growth—barely begun a few years before the war. The education given was not broad nor very high; but the essentials of a fairly



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good education might be obtained in these country schools. Reading aloud, spelling, handwriting, and geography were carefully attended to. The children were well drilled in arithmetic, Latin grammar, and in reading Cæsar, Virgil, etc. They were even carried through the Greek grammar and into a few of the easier Greek books. Colleges were expected to complete the education of boys beyond this.

There were no girls' "colleges," but boarding schools were to be found in Philadelphia and in other large cities. Miss Mary Brown, in Louisville, was considered a fine teacher for girls.

The country schools were private schools, taught by persons who on their own initiative, or upon suggestion of some of the neighbors, would settle down and open a school.

I attended the following schools: Mr. Smith, Mr. Atkinson, Mr. Wiley, Mrs. Leacock, Mr. Fulton, and Mr. Anderson; and excepting Mr. Wiley and Mr. Fulton, they taught each in a different school. With the exception of Mrs. Leacock's, which was at the old Colonel Anderson place, each of the schools consisted of a single frame room, but little if at all exceeding 20x20 feet in size. Benches, with desks in front, were occupied by the scholars. The teacher had a desk on a small raised platform, facing down the one aisle between the benches. He was always provided with a good beech switch, and used it freely. "Spare the rod and spoil the child" was the motto adopted by teachers and approved by parents, with of course a few exceptions: the latter were not the best parents or citizens.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Without assuming to criticize the good people and customs of the day, and fully realizing that the conditions were very different from those of the present time, I am compelled to say that there was, even in the best schools, an antagonism between teachers and scholars which does not now seem to exist. The change has been beneficial.

I remember a scene which occurred when I was not more than about eight or nine years of age.

Mr. Fulton taught school in the "Brown Woods"—near St. Matthews, then Gilman's Point. The boys wanted a holiday for Easter Monday, and he refused to give it. They determined to "bar out" the teacher. It was arranged on Friday evening that all the boys should be there early, before the teacher. The big boys agreed on it, and gave their orders to us little ones. So early on Monday morning the boys were all gathered in the school-room. The windows and door were nailed and the benches piled against the door. The teacher arrived on time, but could not get in. Finally he sought to prize up the windows, which being of soft pine were about to yield, the nails not holding fast. Thereupon Irving Williams and Plutarch Dorsey jumped up on the benches and with feet and hands held down the windows. Mr. Fulton, though a small man, with a very bald head, was resolved. He left for a short time, and returned with a bunch of beech switches and a fence rail. With the fence rail he smashed in the window, and then with switches in hand sprang in at the opening. Dorsey and Williams were still standing on the benches, and the old gentleman began on them

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

with his switches. Dorsey, who was considerably larger than the teacher, could not stand it and jumped out of the window. Irving Williams, who was just about Mr. Fulton's size, jerked a switch from his hand and began to return cut for cut; and there, for a few moments, they stood "cutting jackets." Irving Williams, however, could not stand it long, so he jumped out of the window. Mr. Fulton jumped down and took possession; but the window being open, the boys went out pell-mell, leaving the teacher master of the situation. A parley was held, and the teacher agreed to whip nobody if all would return, which they did, and the whole school went on as usual.

This, however, was not a usual occurrence. It was the only attempt at "barring out" that I ever witnessed, though it was the subject of frequent discussion.

Mr. Wiley was the teacher when Jim began school. Jim was, I think, not more than six years of age. He came home one night and told my mother how some of the big boys teased and worried him and imposed on him. She said to him, "Don't you allow it, Jim. If they try it again just you get a stick and lay about you with it!" The next morning, as we went to school, Jim stopped in the "seed hemp" patch and picked out the biggest stalk he could find. It was about six feet long, as big around as my wrist, and weighed but little more than a feather. Jim marched into school, walked up to the corner, and placing his hemp stalk against the wall turned and faced the teacher and the school and said, "I expect I will commit murder here to-day: my mother told me to do it!" Mr. Wiley found it difficult to maintain his dignity.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

I wish that I had the power to portray truly the person and character of this boy, Jim Bullitt. His was truly a character rarely met with. I would not be understood to say that he was a man of exalted genius or even of brilliant talents, though he was a fellow of fine sense and of solid judgment; nor would I say that he possessed extraordinary energy or enterprise, though he had a strong will, a capacity for labor, and a resolute purpose which would have made him a man of mark.

His temper, though very sweet and affectionate, was violent when aroused. When angered a large blue vein just above his brow seemed to swell almost to bursting. Anger with him, however, was rare and not easily or quickly aroused; he was ordinarily of the quietest, sweetest, and merriest temper and disposition.

He was a firm and devoted Christian, I believe from his earliest youth. He accepted absolutely the truths of religion as revealed in the Scriptures. God to him was the Eternal Father, and Christ was to him a personal Saviour—his Saviour. I do not believe that a wave of skepticism ever swept over him, or that his mind was ever for a moment disturbed by a doubt of the truths of religion. He rested in implicit faith upon Jesus Christ as the Saviour of the world and as his personal Saviour. His mind and his heart were alike pure. He never indulged in conversation or in anecdotes of a lewd or lascivious character. His companions among the boys recognized this fact, and when in his presence rarely indulged in conversation that might be offensive to him. At the same time they recognized his unflinching courage and indomitable

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

will, and respected in him what in many others would have been treated as effeminacy.

He was fond of the society of girls, and they were all fond of him much more than they were of me. Among them he was free, easy, and merry. His laugh was so bright and merry and natural that it was a delight to hear it.

As a boy, as a young man, as a soldier in the Confederate army, I was never able to see that danger of any sort ever made any impression on him. He did not seek danger. I have known other soldiers more enterprising—some who sought danger for the love of adventure and the glory that was in it. But while he did not seek danger, he did not in the slightest degree avoid it. He was not in the army for ambition or for personal glory; he neither sought nor desired military promotion or command. He was there from a deep conviction of duty; ready to sacrifice ease, comfort, or life in its performance, with no reward but that of a sense of duty well performed. He went forward, therefore, in the performance of his duty as a soldier without murmur or complaint of hardship, and absolutely regardless, so far as I could see, of danger. He was the same under fire as when at the camp-fire: but always with the front line in battle.

I remember a little incident quite characteristic of him in this respect, at the battle of "Snow's Hill," in Tennessee. I was at the time on detached service, but went with the company (Company C of Duke's regiment) into the fight. We were on the extreme right of our line, which lay across the road which ascended a lofty hill—

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

Snow's Hill. General Duke was suffering from a wound, and Morgan was absent. Colonel W. C. P. Breckinridge was in command. He posted his command half way down the hill. Our position was completely dominated by a ridge just across a ravine. The ridge was covered by a heavy Federal force and they were firing down on us, while our balls fell a hundred yards short of them. Breckinridge soon found that the position was utterly untenable, and at the same time that he was about to be flanked on the left. The order was given to retreat, but we alone did not receive it, and found ourselves a single company alone on the field. We were reasonably protected, however, by trees and logs. Finally the order came to us also to retreat. The wood was quite open and free from undergrowth. When we started in retreat, naturally and properly it was at a double-quick, or rather a run—purposely not in column or in line, which would have made the exposure greater. As we rose to retreat, a tremendous fire was opened from the ridge beyond. We had to make about two hundred yards before getting behind cover. As we were moving off I looked around for Jim and did not see him. I feared he had been shot, and looked back to see if he had fallen. There he was, about thirty yards behind, walking off as calmly and unconcernedly as if going upon a pleasure walk. I wanted to get him off and to get off myself. I could not go on and leave him. I called to him, "Come, Jim—run—get out of this!" for the bullets were still falling around like hailstones. He did not, and I could not get him to quicken his pace, and we walked off that field together.



## *My Life at Oxmoor*

This was not bravado, for no one but myself saw or knew of it; and certainly I did not approve of it. It was simply a natural action with him; he felt no sense of danger, either running or walking.

With his death, on July 4, 1863, passed from earth one of its noblest spirits. "Pro Patria," on his gravestone, tells the story of his life and of his death as a Confederate soldier.<sup>1</sup> His letter to my mother on leaving for the army recalls the spirit which animated him. Had he lived, he would have been an esteemed and useful minister of the Gospel.

Let it not be supposed that I have less affection for Henry Massie, my youngest brother, than for Jim. He was an excellent soldier, and has been always an upright, honorable and true man; the kindest, most affectionate brother; my companion through life, loving and beloved.

And my sisters Sue and Helen. I have said somewhere above that the girls were exempt from labor and were expected to be ladies. Let it not be understood that they did not receive an education and training calculated to fit them for a useful and cultured life. True, the avenues of business now universally open to women were closed in those days to young women of good family. Labor, in the sense of providing for one's own support, brought loss of caste to a girl: she dropped from society. The position of a Southern girl who did not marry and was without means was almost of necessity one of dependence, sometimes very trying and likely to lead to an unhappy

<sup>1</sup>He was killed while carrying a flag of truce near Lebanon, Ky., about 11 A.M. July 4, 1863.

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

marriage. At the same time, the family tie was strong; the duty of caring for dependent girls was recognized and generally accepted as a pleasure by the other members of the family. As in the case of loss of fortune by parents marriage was important to girls, they were educated and trained to be capable of accepting and performing gracefully and well the duties of married life. They were given the same literary education as boys—up to college entrance—and many of them were sent to “boarding schools” to finish off.

They were taught to sew, to knit, to ride horseback, to sing, to play the piano, to dance, to read aloud, and to talk. Conversation was cultivated as an art, and one of its first elements was to learn to talk of things rather than people. This was deeply impressed upon me by my older sister Sue as the most important element in the art of conversation, in which she herself excelled. Housekeeping the girls simply absorbed from their mothers, without having it imposed upon them generally as a duty. They were taught to read and love poetry, music, and light literature generally—sometimes history and philosophy.

They were required to give great attention to the preservation of their complexion, and generally to cultivate grace of movement and ease in society.

There were faults in such education, surely. The old “sunbonnet” and the perpetual “veil” were a sore trial to the boys and young men, and certainly did not contribute to vigor of health in the girls themselves. It may seem anomalous, but, important as marriage was to girls, they were by education deeply imbued with the romantic

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

respecting it. Marriage must be for love, or it must be rejected.

To discuss the fortune of a beau was very bad form, and *vice versa*. Of course I speak of the general influence. There were ambitious mothers and daughters who disregarded custom, and to whom wealth or distinction were of higher value than romance.

One notable change introduced from the North has taken place in Kentucky society, and throughout the South. I refer to the early announcement of engagements. The engagement of a girl before the war was kept as a secret sacred to the family circle—often within her own breast until the marriage day approached very closely. She continued in society, and did not permit her lover to monopolize her time or her society. The result was that not infrequently engagements were made and broken, and the world was never the wiser. Another result was a good deal of flirting. It was no discredit to a girl to jilt a man. It was a lasting disgrace for a man to do the same. A young friend of my own had been jilted. Some of his friends learned the facts, and teased him. He complained bitterly about it. He said to me, "If a man should lose his father and mother, it would be considered cruel and disgraceful to make a jest of it, yet here is something harder to bear than if one should lose his whole family, and people laugh at me about it!"

Taken as a whole, more lovely or lovable girls were never produced than the girls of Kentucky and the South; nor girls who met more bravely or intelligently the responsibilities, the trials, and even the misfortunes of life. They

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

were a stay to their husbands and a faithful guide to their children; nurturing them in the love of virtue, in the duties of home life, and in the loftiest patriotism. Purity of heart and life, grace of person and ease of manner, intelligence and general culture, courage and patriotism, made the Southern woman a model of loveliness. The war demonstrated their heroism, as well as their sympathy and their love.

My sisters were educated as other girls of their day. My sister Sue became a fine Latin scholar and fine writer; few persons excelled her in conversation. She married Senator Archibald Dixon, a lawyer of eminence, a large and successful farmer and an influential public man. Her literary work of late years has given her some distinction.<sup>1</sup>

My sister Helen married Doctor Henry Chenoweth, a physician of ability with an extensive practice, having the confidence and affection of his patients and his neighbors. His health compelled him to live in the country. He was of the best class of country doctors. As a girl she possessed beauty and grace; was an excellent musician, with a remarkably sweet and magnetic voice. As a mother she was quiet, but at once kind, resolute, and tender. To me from the earliest days she was a sister tender and loving. Her death left a void in my life which can never be filled.

It is to me an inexpressible consolation that from none of my sisters nor brothers did I ever receive a harsh word. There was always unity between the members of

<sup>1</sup>Author of *The True History of the Missouri Compromise and its Repeal*. (The Robert Clarke Co., 1899.)

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

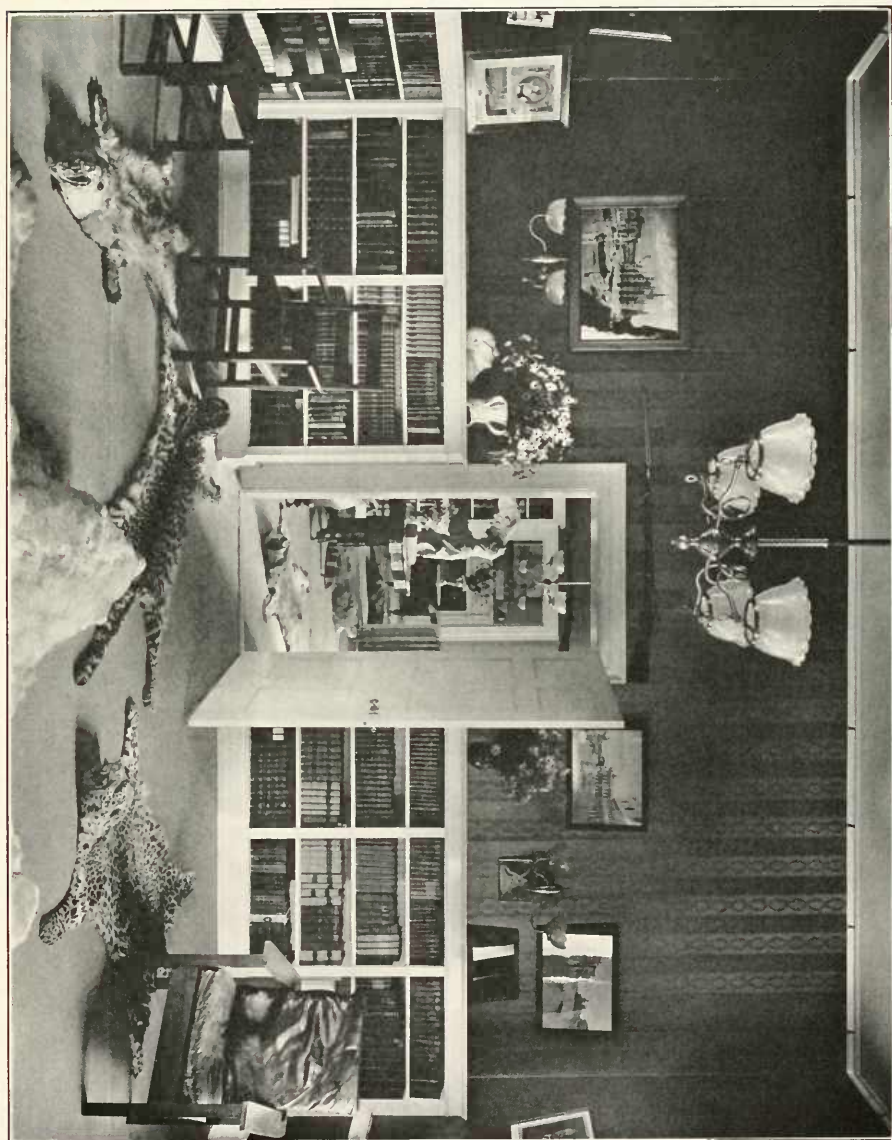
the family. This was strikingly shown at my mother's death, when, to accomplish certain verbally expressed wishes of hers, the division of my father's estate was postponed by unanimous consent for a period of five years, the income meanwhile being applied according to her wishes.

Oxmoor House was plainly but in some respects handsomely furnished. In the parlor and dining room and front hall, especially, my mother had accumulated furniture made of very handsome mahogany. Its like can hardly be found now. Her table furniture was, much of it, expensive and extremely pretty. Throughout the furniture was, if not rich, at least comfortable. The beds were good, and the various articles of bed covering, such as sheets, blankets, quilts, and comforts, were inexhaustible.

The library was not large, but the books were well selected and covered a considerable range of history, philosophy, poetry, and fiction. They filled two good-sized book-cases—about one half being books of my grandfather. These were divided between my brothers Joshua and John. The rest—mostly my mother's books—were given by the family to me.

There were but few portraits in the house. The portrait of my father was painted for and given by Aunt Key to Sister Helen. That of Sister Martha was also given to her by my mother. They were painted by Bush—Sister Martha's after her death. My mother's portrait was painted after the war by Cooper and given to Sister Helen.





Looking from Library through Hall toward Dining Room.



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PUBLIC LIBRARY

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TILDEN FOUNDATIONS

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## *My Life at Oxmoor*

### A FEW CLOSING WORDS.

I left home for college in the fall of 1854. I graduated in 1858. I remained at home, reading history, from October, 1858, to March, 1859, when I went to Philadelphia to study law. I was there admitted to the bar in 1861, and remained until the spring of 1862. I returned to Kentucky, resumed my citizenship for about three weeks, and then left to join the Confederate army.

When the war ended, Oxmoor was no longer a home. When we boys left for the army my father and mother remained on the place alone. With the influences that were constantly at work among the negroes, especially after Mr. Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and after the occupation of the neighborhood by Federal soldiers, my father concluded that it was neither desirable nor safe to remain on the farm. Upon a sudden impulse, he rented the place to one of the Arteburns, without consultation with my mother. This wounded her very deeply; the feeling was profoundly emphasized by the fact that an Arteburn was to hold Oxmoor. Her aristocratic sense was deeply outraged. She never afterward visited the

## *My Life at Oxmoor*

place: she could not bear to see it in other hands than those of the family.

Thus ended the life of the home at Oxmoor.

I can scarcely think of it except as verging upon tragedy. Yet when I recall the homes of the South, which at the time were closed under circumstances so much sadder, often amidst real tragedies of fire, devastation, and death, I can but give thanks to Him who rules in all things, for His loving-kindness and tender mercy.

THOMAS W. BULLITT.

September 15, 1906.

This ended the life of the Home  
as we know it.

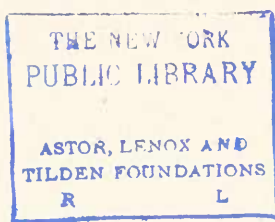
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Thomas W. Kent

Sept 15 1906

Facsimile of the last page of the Memoir.



## APPENDIX





## I.

### WILLIAM C. BULLITT.

**I** WOULD add a few words about my father, William C. Bullitt. He was of medium height, or a little above—say five feet nine inches or thereabouts. He was slightly stooped, especially in old age. He had sufficient breadth of shoulder and chest, but was on the whole perhaps “sparely made.” His forehead was broad and high, his nose slightly aquiline. His expression as a whole was that of a firm, resolute man, of clear head and sound judgment.

The one portrait of him, taken by Bush before the war and belonging to my sister Helen, is an admirable picture. To the time of his death he changed from that portrait but very little—only becoming older. The steel engraving, of which I have the plate and several copies, was taken from that portrait.

I have said above that my father gave up law and moved to his farm on account of his health. He never thereafter had a serious spell of illness except once a congestive chill, and at another time whooping cough; both when he was an old man. The congestive chill my mother thought was due to exposure at Cottonwood.

My mother was absolutely free to employ the best physicians for the family, white and black; but my father, in his own person, would never consult a physician—though I believe he submitted when he had the congestive chill.

## *Appendix*

One Sunday morning, only three or four years before his death, I was at my brother Henry's at Oxmoor. Cholera was then threatened as an epidemic. We were lying on the grass, and saw father come riding up on horseback. I met him, and saw that he was extremely weak—scarcely able to get off his horse. I took the horse, and asked him what was the matter? He said that he had been threatened with cholera the night before; from what he told me it was a severe threat, and yet here he was on his horse, having ridden three miles, from Sister Helen's, at nine o'clock in the morning. It did him no harm. I mention this simply as one of the evidences of his iron will.<sup>1</sup>

My Aunt Key told me that in his youth my father had the lightest and merriest disposition possible, and that his laugh was expressive of it. I doubt not that this was true; but I judge from what he has told me, that combined with it was a certain quickness and fierceness of temper—especially resentful of what he considered insult.

Shortly after his father's death he became involved in a most unpleasant disagreement with his stepmother and her family. My Aunt Key said that from that time he became grave, stern, and reserved. That undoubtedly was his general tone; but from personal observation and association I can say that at times he enjoyed a laugh, and laughed heartily.

The incident referred to by Aunt Key was substantially as follows. I never heard my father make the slightest allusion to it, but I gather the facts partly from my

<sup>1</sup>Jim and Evelyn interpose to urge that I shall add something about my father's temper and disposition, his prejudices, his sense of justice, etc.—T. W. B.

## *Appendix.*

mother's talks with me and partly from the correspondence in my possession.

After the death of my grandmother (about 1806) my grandfather Alex Scott Bullitt married the Widow Prather. On his death, in 1816, he left Oxmoor to my father, subject however to a life estate in his widow to the residence and the front part of the farm. My father became possessor of the rear at once—known as the “Dry Run” place, which I now own.

The Widow Prather was a sister of Colonel Sam Churchill. She had a brother, Armstead Churchill, who appears to have been a fierce-tempered, vicious, and bad fellow. She brought him to Oxmoor as her manager or overseer. He and my father evidently did not agree: there was very harsh feeling between them.

I have a letter from my father to Colonel Churchill, the brother of Armstead Churchill, in which he demands he shall through his sister cause the latter to be withdrawn from the place because of his desperate and vicious character, and threatening to hold Colonel Churchill responsible for Armstead Churchill's conduct. The reply of Colonel Churchill is a dignified protest against being held responsible for the conduct of Armstead Churchill, over whom he had no control. (I have not these letters here to examine or to quote from.<sup>1</sup>)

I do not know the intermediate details, but Armstead Churchill shot and killed Frederick, who had charge of “Dry Run” as my father's overseer. I do not know the details of the killing, but understood from my mother

<sup>1</sup>See p. 117 *infra* for this correspondence.

## *Appendix*

that it was an unprovoked and brutal murder. My recollection, as derived from my mother and from the older negroes, was that Frederick was killed in front of his house on Dry Run. Cousin Annie Courtney thinks that it was just in front of the "Little Room" door at Oxmoor.

Armstead Churchill was indicted and tried for murder. My father, instead of standing by Churchill and seeking to clear him, believed that the killing was an unprovoked murder, and was in some way instrumental in having him prosecuted—though he certainly did not participate in the trial, and was not present.<sup>1</sup>

Ben Hardin, then the greatest criminal lawyer in the State, defended Churchill, and I suppose he was acquitted; though I am not certain as to the result of the trial. In the course of Mr. Hardin's speech he made the statement that my father and my uncle Cuthbert had conspired to drive their stepmother from Oxmoor. My father challenged Mr. Hardin to a duel on account of the charge. Mr. Hardin declined the challenge. If he had been content to rest his refusal on the ground that he would not be held accountable for remarks made in a speech delivered in the course of a duty to a client, his position would have been very strong, and probably justified even in that day. Unwisely, as it seems to me, he added that the challenge came from a young, unmarried man to a man with a wife and family. Thereupon my uncle Cuthbert challenged him, observing that in the respect named they were on an equality. That chal-

<sup>1</sup>See p. 120 *infra*.

## *Appendix*

lenge was likewise declined. The correspondence on the subject will be found among the papers which I have put into scrap-books.<sup>1</sup>

The laws of Kentucky as then existing debarred my father from the practice of law by reason of his having sent this challenge.<sup>2</sup> He attended an entire session of the legislature in Frankfort seeking to obtain relief, and finally succeeded in getting a law passed relieving all persons from disabilities theretofore incurred by reason of a violation of the duelling laws.<sup>3</sup> It should be understood that special legislation was not forbidden by the Constitution of Kentucky until 1890.

This matter of Armstead Churchill produced a permanent breach between my father and the Churchill family, which was not healed to the day of his death. To this event, and the circumstances attending it, my Aunt Key attributed the change in my father's temper—suppressing his naturally merry disposition and fixing him in a grave, austere temper.

There was a curious sequel to the affair, which I received from my mother. Some years after the Armstead

<sup>1</sup>For this correspondence see p. 121 *infra*.

<sup>2</sup>Act of February 4, 1812, entitled "An Act more effectually to suppress the practice of duelling" (Acts 1811, p. 178; 4 Litt. 381), which contained the following preamble:

"WHEREAS, the Commonwealth have repeatedly sustained great and irreparable injury, in the loss of some of her best and most valuable citizens; inroads have been made in private families; their peace, happiness, and domestic felicity destroyed, by the present inhuman practice of duelling; a practice contrary to the precepts of morality, religion, and civil obligation, which originated in a barbarous age, fostered by savage policy, and only perpetuated in this enlightened era by mistaken ideas of honour."

<sup>3</sup>Act of January 29, 1818 (Acts 1817, p. 407). He was re-admitted to the bar February 3, 1818; his original license was dated December 1, 1812.



## Appendix.

Churchill incident had been closed, Colonel Churchill, having a controversy with a neighbor, chose my father as arbitrator, and submitted its decision to him.<sup>1</sup>

His sense of justice was perhaps the most prominent trait of his character. He was one of the few men I have known who, I believe, could have banished from his mind all question of friendship or dislike in deciding a question of right between men. In public affairs he was governed by similar views. He considered the public interest to be supreme, and I do not believe that his friendship for one or his dislike for the other ever guided him in his vote as between candidates. In this matter, too, he had the absolute courage of his convictions. His views made a deep impression on me in this respect, and I have endeavored to follow his example—not, I fear, with the same firmness that characterized him. He never sought or held public office, except that he was a member of the Constitutional Convention of 1849.

He was a firm believer in the duel, and in the Convention opposed the provision against it.<sup>2</sup> He believed that it was the only sure means of placing the ordinary man of peaceful inclination on a level with the bully. He

<sup>1</sup>Mrs. Dixon, in an unpublished memoir, gives this version of it:

“On one occasion a man to whom he had not spoken for many years came up to Oxmoor from his own place eight miles below Louisville, to ask my father to go up to Shelby County with him (twenty miles off) to arbitrate the question of a road which would be a great injury to his property there—that he knew he was in the right about it, but my father was the only man he knew whom he believed would do him justice—and his opponents had expressed themselves as entirely willing to accept my father’s decision in the matter. He mounted his horse, rode to Shelbyville with the party, found he had justice on his side, gave the decision in his favor, mounted his horse and rode back home, without ever speaking one word to the man to whom he had *done justice*, and such a favor!”

<sup>2</sup>Debates Constitutional Convention (1849), p. 815.

## *Appendix*

thought, indeed, that it was a degradation to a gentleman to seek redress at law for an insult or for an injury to a man's person, his honor, or his family. Such injuries must be resented and redressed in person. This involved either a duel or a street fight, and he believed that the duel tended to avoid the latter, as a gentleman would always resort to it in preference.

It must not be understood, however, that my father was a quarrelsome man or a bully, or that he did not entertain a respect for the law. He was most careful of the respect due from man to man; he had not one element of the bully or the braggart; yet I think he was absolutely a brave man. Within my personal recollection he never had a quarrel. Even as a young man he never had a serious difficulty, I think, and never sent or received a challenge, except one—outside of that to Mr. Hardin.

He told me that when a young man, a man received in society but at heart a bully had insulted him seriously in the presence, I believe, of ladies. He concluded that there was no way to deal with him except in terms so peremptory as would give him no opportunity to explain or apologize. He sent him a challenge in terms of contempt—intimating that if not accepted he would use a horsewhip. The man left town. I think I recall the name, but withhold it as I might be mistaken. The name is not known now in Louisville, though formerly prominent there.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Sir

Louisville Jan'y 22d 1815

Your remarks to me yesterday in the company of several Ladies of the first respectability, were highly indecorous, indelicate, and ungentlemanly, and

## Appendix

After his experience in respect to the Hardin duel he wrote to a friend of his own age (Mr. Robert Lawes) that he was resolved never to be again engaged in a duel. (See letter in scrap book.<sup>1</sup>)

He owned a pair of fine duelling pistols—purchased, I suppose, at the time of the Hardin challenge. He afterward refused to loan them to a gentleman who applied

such as induced me to make remarks improper to be made in the presence of Ladies. This, Sir, is to advise you that you are never again, as long as you live, to address me in a similar manner. Whether your remarks were intended to be in jest, or in earnest, is perfectly immaterial to me. Nor do I wish to know, nor do I care, what your motive was. Such a man as you shall not address me in that Manner, even in jest.

Permit me Sir, with all imaginable politeness to inform you that I have a Brace of Pistols to defend myself against attack, and a cane to chastise the insolent.

Perhaps I might call upon a Man of a different Character, in a different way.  
Your humble Servant      Wm. C. Bullitt  
Mr. Thomas D. Carneal.

---

<sup>1</sup>Dear Robert

Louisville February 23rd 1818.

*Liberus et legalis homo tibi scribit.* A law has been passed by the Legislature of this State postponing the operation of the Duelling Law to the first day of the year 1818, and granting entire absolution to all persons who have incurred any disabilities under said law. I have consequently resumed the practice of law at this place, and for the first time for several months I have all this morning been closely engaged in reading Coke upon Lyttleton.

I attended the Legislature nearly two months on this subject and was so fortunate as to succeed at last; The relief law was opposed by Mr. Rowan in two speeches and would not have carried but for the number of persons under the bann of the Duelling law in different parts of the State, nor will it ever be repealed in this State. A similar law before long will no doubt be made in your State:

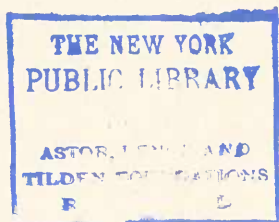
I will therefore give you my advice on the subject candidly as a friend, premising that I laboured under the bann of the duelling law about six months, & have therefore a right to speak from experience. There was formerly scarcely any young man who professed more chivalric & exalted ideas of honour than myself, insomuch that a refusal of a challenge in a young man from an equal placed him low indeed in my estimation, but reflection has greatly changed my opinion on this subject: was there no prohibitory law at all it would require a vast deal indeed to induce me to fight: but I am fully resolved never again on any occasion or under any possible circumstances to become an excommunicated outlaw by giving or accepting a challenge—these are my present impressions—for you may rest assured that no man ever violated such a law without repenting



Duelling Pistols of Wm. C. Bullitt.

Tomahawk of Dr. Thos. Walker (p. 19 supra), lost on June 11, 1750, found nearly one hundred years later. Owned by Thos. W. Bullitt (Johnston's "First Explorations of Kentucky," pp. 68, 79).

Salt-cellar of Israel Christian, 1743



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for them, stating that he was resolved that they never should be used for duelling purposes. (See letters.<sup>1</sup>) These pistols he devised to William C. Bullitt, the son of my brother John.<sup>2</sup> Notwithstanding this resolution, I seriously doubt if at any time in his life he would not have

of it, and if during the existence of the law I ever again give & accept a challenge it will be in me an act not of courage but of weakness & folly. This lecture you will excuse: I give it you for your sake only & because I believe if you should ever be placed in the same situation that I was you would violate the law, and would in all probability not find one friend who would dissuade you from it.

Anderson is in Congress as you know: Littell has removed to Shelbyville—Denny & Thruston are getting into a respectable business; and your friend is tolerably sanguine of success in the profession; So much for the Lawyers.

As to the fashionable world, (if I may be permitted to speak of it to a married man) there is not a young Lawyer of our mutual acquaintance (excepting George Woolfolk lately married to Catherine Gwathmey) who has as yet been able to please a Lady, your humble Servant among the number, hence I conclude you are a man of more winning ways than any of us. And if you can snatch a moment from the company of your better half, let me hear from you soon. I wish to keep up a correspondence with you & if I do not it shall not be my fault.

Robt. Lawes esqre.

Your friend

Wm. C. Bullitt

My best respects to Mr. Wimberton

<sup>1</sup>Dear Sir

Danville Sept. 14th 1819

Yours of the 11th of this month was on this evening handed me by your brother, in which you request the Loan of my Pistols for another Gentleman. When the letter was first read by me I observed to your brother he should have them; but upon reflection of a few moments I am satisfied that I could not with propriety lend them for the purpose intended.

In the first place I have long since resolved that they should not be used as duelling pistols & have refused to some of my oldest & most intimate friends; the rule I have violated only twice I believe (& both times regretted it) though numberless applications have been made.

And in the second place the Gent. against whom they are designed to be used, applied to me thro a friend for the use of my pistols on a similar occasion not long since: I refused them to him for the reasons above stated & he would now in all probability not expect that I would loan them to be used against him, but whether he would or not I feel myself under the very disagreeable necessity of a refusal.

I am with the highest respect

Your obt. St.

Wm. C. Bullitt

George W. Chambers esqre

favd by           Louisville

Ben T. Chambers esqre.

<sup>2</sup>In 1909 Wm. C. Bullitt gave the duelling pistols to Wm. Marshall Bullitt, and they are now kept in their original place in the Oxmoor house.



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departed from it if, in his own person, occasion demanded it.

In a published "Address to the voters of Beargrass," issued after he had passed seventy years, he quoted with approval from Colonel Taylor (father of the president) (in substance): "For injuries to my property I look to the law; for injuries to my person or my honor, I look to myself."<sup>1</sup> This indeed was the sentiment of his day. A libel suit a gentleman could not afford to bring.

Many years ago I was told of an incident in my father's life which was characteristic. My father never mentioned it, and I had some doubt of its correctness. A few months ago, happening to be with Richard S. Veech, who is several years my senior and who was at home when the incident took place, I asked him about it, and he told me that he remembered it and that it had occurred just as I related it. It was as follows:

In 1855 and 1856 the "Know-Nothing" party became dominant in many parts of the country and in Louisville. It had arisen on the ruins of the old Whig party. Its one principle was hostility to the Catholic and foreign vote. In 1855 terrible mobs had occurred in Louisville—foreigners being driven from the polls, beaten up, and in some instances killed.

The order was known to be secret, but in the "Gilman's Precinct," now "St. Matthews," Doctor Lewis was generally known to be its President. He was a very large and powerful man; ordinarily a good citizen and peace-

<sup>1</sup>For the text of that paper see Appendix III, p. 127 *infra*.

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ful man. On the election day in 1856, early in the morning a wagon load of roughs from Louisville landed at the polls at Gilman's Precinct. It became manifest that they intended to take control of the polls and to drive off objectionable voters.

My father and Captain Veech (father of Dick Veech) went directly to Doctor Lewis. They said to him (in substance): "Doctor, the purpose of this crowd of roughs is manifest. If they are not here at your orders, at any rate we know that you can have them sent away. At this precinct the polls have always been free; every man has been allowed to vote his sentiments, without interference or threats. We intend to see that that freedom is not destroyed here to-day. We do not intend, however, to get into any fight or controversy with these hired bullies. We will hold you personally responsible for their conduct. If they are allowed to remain here and if they attempt to interfere at the polls, then at the first sign of disturbance we will kill you."

Doubtless it was illegal, perhaps harsh, but it was effective. The bullies returned to the city, and the election passed off peaceably.

To succeeding generations it may seem difficult to understand that such men as my father were "law-abiding" men; yet such they were in the highest and truest sense. For the laws governing the rights of property they had the highest respect, and were ready to give and enforce implicit obedience. For the courts and for the officers of the law—city, State, and Federal—and for the performance of their duties, they entertained a respect

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far beyond what we see to-day. For embezzlement, for bribery, for graft, public or private, for every degrading crime, they had infinite contempt. They set their face definitely against mob law, and were always ready to sustain the public authority in the enforcement of law. There was but one point where they were regardless of the law and its methods. For seduction, for insult to a woman, or for injury to a man in his person, his family, or his honor, the law afforded in their view an inadequate remedy. For such wrongs a man must look to himself alone. For such a lawsuit was a degradation.

These were the views of the early pioneers, brought from Old Virginia and further back from the Cavaliers who settled in Virginia. Undoubtedly the conditions of pioneer life and the aristocracy of slavery fostered and maintained them. Whatever of illegality or moral wrong they involved, however they were capable of abuse, it must be recognized that among gentlemen of the better class they imposed a courtesy, a self-restraint, and above all, a respect for women and for the sacredness of the family relation which the law, however stringent, does not enforce.

When a man knew that the "lie" meant death to one or the other, it imposed courtesy as between gentlemen. When a man knew that the seduction of a virtuous girl, or the alienation of a wife's affections, meant death, certain and immediate, at the hands of father, brother, son, or friend, evil passions were restrained. Girls and married women were allowed the greatest freedom, yet scandals were rare and divorces hardly known.

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I have attempted to give the views of the men of my father's generation: views which existed among the young men of my own day, though modified by a growing sentiment of aversion to bloodshed. Personally I was opposed to the whole system from my earliest youth. In my boyhood and youth that opposition rested on moral and religious grounds and upon a certain native aversion to bloodshed in private quarrel. I felt that I would almost as soon be killed as to kill a man in such a quarrel. There was but one circumstance which I felt would justify the killing of one man by another, and that was an injury to the good name or honor of a female member of his family. The seduction of a virtuous girl, I have always felt, ought to be punished by death.

In later years my aversion to the duel has been strengthened and emphasized by the conviction that it is capable of use, and was used, for the very worst purposes. The challenge was used by men accustomed to arms, for the humiliation of men not so accustomed and of men who entertained conscientious scruples against duelling, and was not infrequently stimulated by fellows who desired to obtain a cheap reputation by acting as friend or second to one of the parties. In the earlier days this was rare, and was controlled by the sentiment of the community.<sup>1</sup> But I am sure that I have personally known of at least one instance of each of the objections above referred to.

I am glad to believe that duelling among gentlemen

<sup>1</sup>See page 129 *infra* for an account of a curious duel in 1765, in which Judge Cuthbert Bullitt (then a very young man) was concerned. He was subsequently Judge of the General Court of Virginia (Va. Cases, p. xi); and the father of Alex Scott Bullitt.

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has passed away in Kentucky and throughout the South. Public sentiment would not now tolerate the duel in Kentucky. Censure and ridicule would follow any duel which was not fatal, and prosecution would follow a duel resulting in the death of one of the participants.

It may seem anomalous, but I feel sure that the Civil War sounded the death-knell of the duel in the South. The causes were various. Among them may be numbered these:

*First.* No prominent professional duellist achieved distinction either for courage or for talents as a soldier. On the other hand, many men who were utterly averse to fighting, some who were even regarded as timid, showed the most splendid soldierly qualities.

*Second.* Soldiers who showed their manhood on the field of battle felt no call thereafter to demonstrate their courage on the duelling field. They conceived a contempt for men who felt it necessary to do so.

*Third.* Soldiers came to feel that to take the life of a man who might render a service against the common enemy was a disloyal and a dishonorable act. This sentiment followed them into civil life.

*Fourth.* The sentiment of the veterans of the war dominated the community generally.

It is a source of gratification to me that, since the war, I have been able to interpose and to stop two contemplated duels—duels which, except for my intervention, I believe would certainly have taken place. In one of these my effort was supported by General John B. Gordon.

In another instance I induced an old Confederate



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soldier, an officer of rank and one of the bravest men I ever knew, to make a personal apology to a man whom he had threatened to horsewhip if, by a certain hour, he had not done a certain thing demanded of him. I went with him in person at the very hour that the threat was to have been executed, and his retraction and apology was complete and manly in the highest degree.

Speaking of the effect of the war on the duelling spirit, my old friend, General St. John, told me of an occurrence between General Toombs and General D. H. Hill.

In a battle (I think Gettysburg), Toombs' brigade or division had broken and was being driven from the field. Hill met Toombs and censured him in severe terms, intimating a lack of good conduct. On the return of the army to Virginia, Toombs sent Hill a challenge. Hill was sitting at the table writing when the challenge was handed him. He read it and handed it back to the gentleman who delivered it, with the remark, "My compliments to General Toombs, and say to him that General Hill is as careful of his person on the duelling field as General Toombs is careful of his person on the battle field. His challenge is declined."

It would be incorrect to assume from what I have said that gentlemen in Kentucky, especially those who grew up shortly before or shortly after the Civil War, have wholly resigned themselves to the fact that personal wrongs must be settled by the law. The fact is, the situation is anomalous and at times very difficult. Courage on the part of men is demanded by the public as much as ever, and an exhibition of cowardice subjects a man



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to contempt. While the duel and the street fight are condemned, the libel or slander suit are held in contempt. This at times renders the situation difficult for a spirited man who feels he must resent insult or affront. The whole subject, I trust, is working out on lines leading to a very good result.

Along with the passing of the duel and the street fight, has passed away the habit of carrying concealed deadly weapons. Fist-fighting has always been regarded among gentlemen as undignified. As a result, men place a severe restraint upon themselves: many things which would have formerly been regarded as occasion for a duel or street fight with weapons are passed in silence or resented by the hurling of an inkstand at the offender, followed by the intervention of friends. I have known personally of several instances where men, who were wholly unwilling to submit a personal wrong to the courts, have permitted things to pass which before the war would certainly have been made the subject of a duel or of a deadly street fight.

Public sentiment, likewise, is beginning to force, by its silent influence, a courtesy which formerly was enforced by the certainty of accountability for its breach. Young men are inclined to regard the use of opprobrious language as unbecoming to themselves. I do not believe that the duel or the street fight are essential to the fostering or the preservation of courage in a country.

My friend General Basil W. Duke has told me of an amusing speech made by Thomas F. Marshall as illustrative of this fact. Mr. Marshall was a devoted adherent to the Union, but his sympathies were with the South-

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ern boys in the Civil War. When the Kentucky boys first began to go south, a company was formed in Versailles. Marching down the street they met "Tom" Marshall, as he was universally known. They called on him for a speech—which he was always ready to give—and he gave it right there. It was, in substance, like this:

After expressing his affection for them and his doubt as to the wisdom of their course, he undertook to warn them that the undertaking was far more grave and hazardous than they conceived. He said: "You boys think you are entering on a frolic of a few months. You think the Yankees are cowards and will be driven from the field in a little while. That is where you are mistaken. I know you boys are brave. Give you a horse, a mint julep, and a pair of pistols and you will fight the devil. Should a man call you a liar, a fight to the death would follow. The Yankee is not so quick to resent an insult. If you call him a liar he will probably turn from you with the remark that your language is ungentlemanly. You think that his conduct stamps him a coward. But let me tell you, boys, you are mistaken. We all came from the same stock, and courage is a common heritage. The difference is a matter of education and environment. Take that same man, who has submitted to being called a liar and thus made you believe he is a coward—you get between him and a codfishery or between him and the profits on a barrel of molasses, and he'll give you hell!"

Tom Marshall's prophecy was correct. The native

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American soldier, from whatever State, showed himself a man of superb courage and endurance.

I have unconsciously been drawn far away from the mere estimate of my father, which was the object of this Appendix. But it seems essential to deal somewhat with the spirit of the times in which he lived. Men must be largely judged by that as a standard of their own lives and character.

I have said that a sense of justice was perhaps his most striking characteristic. Yet combined with that was a certain deep prejudice respecting certain men and things. If he knew a man to have been guilty of one act which was unmanly or dishonorable, he could see no good in him—had no patience with him in anything. He had an utter contempt for a man who was lazy, and he was likely to assume that a fellow was lazy and good-for-nothing who devoted much time to the fine arts, such as music or painting, or who sat up late at night and rose late in the morning, or who indulged in puns.

When I began practicing law I slept at my office. He and my mother were living at Aunt Key's. He always took a walk before breakfast. I offered to walk with him, and he would call for me. Occasionally I would fail by reason of having been up late at a party or perhaps at work. He told my mother that he feared I was becoming dissipated. I became satisfied that I should entirely forfeit his good opinion, and told my mother that I should have to give up those walks altogether, which I did.

But while not only in this but in several instances

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during my youth I felt the severity of his austere and sometimes not altogether reasonable temper, yet as I look back upon his life as a whole—as a husband, a father, a neighbor, a citizen—I have known no man who more deeply inspires my respect and my admiration. It is needless to say that as a son I revered and loved him.



## II.

### CORRESPONDENCE RELATIVE TO THE ARMISTEAD CHURCHILL AFFAIR.

[Wm. C. Bullitt to his stepmother, Mrs. Alex S. Bullitt. Written on Monday.]

Dear Madam

August 26th 1816

We are informed that Armstead Churchill\* left the Dry Run Plantation on Saturday night last, and has not yet returned. His departure is a subject of no astonishment, however much we may be surprised at the deed, which no doubt induced him to leave the Plantation, and it seems to us not unreasonable to suppose that the same dictate of prudence which induced his departure will prevent his return.

The crop is suffering: Under these circumstances, we think it necessary that some person should be employed to superintend the place; For fifty Dollars we can get an overseer; we would be glad if you would drop us a line by Anthony and let us know whether you have any objection to our getting an overseer to finish the crop. A few days delay might occasion much injury to the tobacco crop particularly.

Candour obliges us to inform you that we will in no way be concerned with your brother Armstead Churchill†. He must have nothing to do with the place: This we mention in consequence of a suggestion sometime since from yourself that he should assist his son.

We must act promptly in this business and hope you will concur with us. We remain with the highest esteem and respect

Your friends and Obt Servants

Mrs. Mary Bullitt

Wm. C. Bullitt.

[Mrs. Alex S. Bullitt to her stepsons, Wm. C. and Cuthbert Bullitt.]

Dear Sir

August 26 1816

I have know objections to you geting A man to overlook the Dryrun Plantation provided you do not get Mr Fredrick nor none of his Connection but any good man you may think propper your ware Mistaken in thinking I wanted my Brother to overlook the Dryrun Plantation. I had no such intention.

I remain your affectionate frind Mary Bullitt

Cuthbert and  
William

[Wm. C. and Cuthbert Bullitt to Colonel Sam Churchill.]

Dear Sir

Louisville Sept 5th 1816

We have determined after the most mature and deliberate reflections to address you this letter. Whether you will be surprised at it or not is more than we can tell.

\*Armstead Churchill, Jr., son of Armistead Churchill, Sr.

†Armistead Churchill, Sr.



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You have heard no doubt that your nephew Armstead shot a negro girl—you have also heard that your brother Armstead murdered Frederick in a manner shocking to relate, and disclosed his intention to wade up to his knees in blood and that he would begin with Frederick, before his sister should be wronged—but what the wrong complained of was, I have not been able to discover.

Armstead at the time of making these threats spoke particularly of our not letting him have one of the horses on the Dry run farm which it seems he claimed under a purchase from Mrs. Bullitt; from the remark about the horse it is fully evident that we were alluded to in the threat. Our blood has not been shed yet but we know not how soon our lives may be attempted—

Now do you mark the following circumstances

After our fathers Death you acted ostensibly and avowedly in the business of the estate for your sister—and you well know that she would transact no business with us without your advice and concurrence.

One circumstance ought not to be forgotten and I have no doubt you are well apprised of it—we thought it necessary to sue you and told your sister it was necessary she should join in the suit—she declared that be the consequence what it might she never would agree to join in a suit against you—and stated that she looked up to you particularly for advice and assistance—

After discovering the unbounded extent of your influence over your sister and after discovering also that you were making use of that influence very improperly one of us to wit William told you he had had enough of your agency in transacting our business with Mrs. Bullitt and he hoped it would cease for the future. After that time you have not been seen openly to interfere with us, but Old Armstead seems to have become the active agent, and has been as we are well assured intermeddling with the overseer in the most unjustifiable manner.

Now sir we believe it was by your advice that old Armstead was put there; and if he was not put there by your advice you are as much to blame for suffering him to go there as if you had placed him there.

For the following reason: During our father's life you were more intimate with his family and had more of his confidence than any of your brothers—in short you knew all the secrets of the family and their feelings towards every member of your family. You knew that Armstead Churchill had been turned off the plantation by our father and that from this and some other circumstances he was odious to the whole of us. Add to this you knew him to be a troublesome dangerous man, and that it was impossible we could agree. You knew also that he had destroyed your sister's confidence in us in such a manner that she would feel disposed to countenance the intermeddling of Armstead in the affairs of the plantation, under the false idea which you had rooted in her mind that we had combined with the overseer to cheat her. You sir are a reflecting calculating man and you well knew that some ill would result from Old Armstead being on the plantation, but we wish you to understand explicitly that we do not implicate you in any shape in the murder of Frederick, or the shooting of the negro—but thus far we charge you—that you wished your brother Armstead to go on the plantation for the purpose of bullying and browbeating us while you would remain behind the scene.

We are therefore determined to hold you responsible for all trouble or mischief that may happen on the plantation in future and the threat which has been made by your brother Armstead should ever be executed by himself or any one else we must both fall at once or you shall die. Your blood shall atone for every drop that may be shed from the veins of any of our family. We feel bound to do Henry Churchill the justice to state that we have no reason to believe he has

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ever improperly intermeddled in our business—or attempted to create a prejudice in his sister against us. If you should be dissatisfied at any thing we have stated or have any communication to make we shall remain in town until four o'clock this evening.

Your obt. Sts.

Wm. C. Bullitt  
Cuthbert Bullitt

S. C.—I certify that the within letter is a correct copy of a letter delivered by me to Samuel Churchill on the 5th day of Sept. 1816

Chs. L. Harrison

[Colonel Sam Churchill to Wm. C. and Cuthbert Bullitt.]

Messrs William C. Bullitt and Cuthbert Bullitt

Gentlemen

On yesterday about Ten OClock I received your joint letter addressed to me by Mr. Charles L. Harrison implicating me in a manner at once harsh and severe,

You state in your letter that Armistead Churchill made some threats against you both concerning a Horse which he said he purchased of my Sister Mrs. Bullitt and that altho your blood has not been shed as yet, you know not how soon your lives may be attempted—In answer to this Charge so far as it respects any part or member of my family I have no hesitation in saying and believing that a thing of the kind was never thought of—

In another paragraph of your letter you accuse me of destroying the Confidence which Mrs Bullitt had in you and you also accuse me of infusing a belief into the mind of Mrs. Bullitt that you wished to Cheat her, this I most positively deny for I regret as much as any one the difference which exists between our families—

In another part of your letter you accuse me of being the Cause of Armistead Churchill being put upon the Plantation, and you say that he was put there by my advice and that I am just as much to blame as if he was not placed there by my advice for that I knew that he was odious to the whole of your family. I now state explicitly that he was not put on the Plantation either by my advice or Consent for that I always advised my Sister to have nothing to do with him for that she was a lone woman and that I considered Armistead Churchill to be a hasty passionate and indiscreet man in his Conduct, and I further say that I knew nothing of Armistead Churchill having anything to do with the Plantation until some time after my Brother Henry Churchill had rented the Farm of my Sister and taken Armistead into partnership with him, and for the truth of this assertion I refer you to my Brother Henry Churchill whom you say you acquit of all Blame—

I can never believe that my Sister contenance the Conduct of Armistead Churchill in any shape whatever, but on the Contrary any interference on the part of Armistead toward the Overseers gave my Sister uneasiness—

You say that you do not blame me for the shooting of the Negro nor for the murder of Frederick but that you blame me for putting of Armistead Churchill on the Plantation for the purpose of bullying and brow beating of you while I acted behind the scene, but far be it from me to place any man between me and danger—

I now come to that part of your letter wherein you say you are determined to hold me responsible for all trouble or mischief that may happen on the Planta-

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tion in future and you further say that if the threat made by Armistead Churchill should ever be executed by either himself or any one else that you must both fall at once or I shall die and that my blood shall atone for every drop that may be shed from the veins of your family. This is a threat that I am wholly at a loss to account for, for I have never supposed that one man was accountable for the acts of another and you have surely here taken a very broad ground. I lament as much as any man that there should any difference exist between us, for your Father was a man whom I highly respected not merely as one that had intermarried into our family but that I respected him on account of his many Virtues.

I do not write this letter to allay your anger but to repel the unjustifiable Charges you have made, And let me tell you I shall not be deterred by your threats from advising and acting as my judgment shall dictate—I have no desire to interfere with *your* affairs but shall always feel it a duty to interfere in the affairs of my Sister when she shall request it and I shall conceive it proper.

I am Gentlemen

Yr Obt Sevt.

Samuel Churchill.

Louisville Sept 6th 1816

Wm. C. Bullitt probably offered a thousand-dollar reward for Armistead Churchill's arrest, as in the "Argus of Western America" of November 15, 1816, appears the following extract from the "Courier":

"Louisville, Oct. 24.

"Yesterday Armistead Churchill Senr. for whom \$1000 reward has been offered in this paper, was brought to town on the charge of murdering Joseph Frederick."

Both Wm. C. and Cuthbert Bullitt volunteered to prosecute before the magistrate—Cuthbert riding from Shelbyville for that purpose. The subsequent history of the case is rather curious.

On November 11, 1817, Armistead Churchill, Sr., was indicted for the murder of Frederick; his case was passed until the next April Term, and he was committed without bail.

Intense feeling was engendered, and at the next session of the Legislature his friends secured the passage of an act entitled "An Act providing for a change of venue in the case of Armistead Churchill," approved February 3, 1817, which recited that "Whereas, it is represented to this General Assembly that Armistead Churchill stands indicted in the Jefferson Circuit Court for murder, and that owing to the unusual prejudice existing there, he cannot have a fair and impartial trial," and then provided that Churchill might elect to be tried in the Bullitt Circuit Court. (Acts 1816, p. 172.)

On April 21, 1817, he elected to be tried in the Bullitt Circuit Court, was taken there, and at the June Term he was tried. The trial began June 3d, was submitted to the jury on the 5th, and not being able to agree on a verdict they continued to consider the case until September 27th, when one juror (James Dougherty) disappeared. This seems to have brought the trial to a close; Chur-

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chill was admitted to bail, the case was continued until the February Term (1818), when the Commonwealth was awarded a *venire facias de novo*, but on motion of the defendant it was subsequently quashed, and on February 25, 1818, the defendant was discharged without further trial.

[Messrs. Bullitt to Ben Hardin.]

Sir

Shelbyville June 12th 1817.

We have been truly surprised to learn there is a report of very extensive circulation in Louisville, that on the trial of Armstead Churchill you & Mr. Rowan charged us with having entered into a combination for the purpose of expelling Mrs. Bullitt from the farm on which she lives and that we employed Frederick as a tool to execute this base design of driving our Stepmother from the Dwelling our Father had left her. If this report should be without foundation we hope you will feel no hesitation in giving us such a statement as will enable us to correct it: and if the charge was really made by you, we should be glad to know whether you still persist in it.

Your obt hble Servants

Wm. C. Bullitt  
Cuthbert Bullitt

Mr. Benjamin Hardin.

[Ben Hardin to Messrs. Bullitt.]

Gentlemen

Bardstown June 17th

On yesterday I was by the politeness of Mr. Strother favoured by your Joint communication. I have examined its contents and in answer thereto I have very little to say at this time. I do not recollect that I adopted any course of argument that was not warranted by the evidence or indulged in any remark of wanton asperity towards either of you. What I did say you can easily ascertain by an inquiry from the gentlemen of this Bar who reside in Louisville which is a much better source than common report, but I assure you that I did make use of every argument that I conceived from the evidence was a fair and legitimate ground of debate without respect to persons. You desire to know whether I still persist in it. I am not conscious of having conducted my part of the defense improperly. I have said but little about the matter since but if I ever argue the case again I shall certainly, uncaring consequences, adopt the same course of argument with such alterations as I shall deem for the better.

With respect Yours Etc Ben Hardin

Messrs W & C Bullitt Esquires  
by Mr Strother

From a letter dated June 19, 1817, from Wm. C. Bullitt to his brother, Cuthbert Bullitt, which has been mutilated by the mice, it appears that they had written to Mr. Rowan a letter similar to that to Mr. Hardin, and that under date of Federal Hill, June 17, 1817, Mr. Rowan had replied in much the same tenor as Mr. Hardin, in which he said that as far as compatible with his duty he made it a paramount rule not to interfere with the private character of witnesses, saying:

"In no case has its observance been more strictly maintained than in relation to yourselves upon the trial of Armistead Churchill. Restrained by this



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ruling principle I did not mention to the jury that you had both (after one of you had ridden upwards of 30 miles for that purpose) volunteered to prosecute before the magistrate the brother of your stepmother, the uncle of your half brother, nor did I exhibit or mention to the jury your extraordinary joint or combined letter to Mr. Saml Churchill, although both those facts related to & were intimately connected with the subject under discussion."

The letter is too mutilated to make anything more out of it.

A copy of a letter from Cuthbert Bullitt to either Mr. Rowan or Mr. Hardin is so faded in parts that it is illegible, but its general tenor was that—the bystanders present at the trial differing in their understanding of the statements made by the lawyers—he again insisted upon knowing whether the speaker had made the direct charge of a conspiracy to expel their stepmother from the farm.

[Wm. C. Bullitt to Ben Hardin.]

Sir

Louisville July 29th 1817

Your letter of the 17th of June—in answer to a joint letter of Cuth. Bullitt & myself was in due time handed me by Mr. Strother.\*

I am bound from the terms of your letter to believe that you did make the charge spoken of in the joint letter of Cuth Bullitt & myself, & not satisfied with this you tell us what you intend to do hereafter. Now Sir I shall expect you to give me satisfaction in an honourable way; all necessary arrangements on this subject will be made by my friend Doctr. Thomas Booth who will hand you this.

Your obt. Hble. St. Wm. C. Bullitt

Benjamin Hardin, Esqre.

[Ben Hardin to Wm. C. Bullitt.]

Sir

Bardstown August 1st

This morning through the politeness of Doctor Booth I was honoured with your note. In June last I received a joint address from you and your Brother Cuthbert Bullitt to which I returned an answer and altho I would not submit to answer interrogatories in the order and manner propounded yet I there denied making use of any argument in the defence of Churchill not required of me by the evidence and at the same time disdaining all intention in that defence of wantonly assailing either the character or feelings of you or your brother.

That letter your Brother in a second letter to me acknowledged the reception of. The second letter which was from your Brother alone contained some expressions so entirely inadmissable as to put it out of my power consistent with the respect due to myself to answer. I expected a third communication from *him*, but instead of that I am favoured with your note. To that I answer that in the defense of Churchill I said no more than my professional duty to my client demanded of me. Less would have been a desertion of his Cause. I therefore do not consider myself under any obligation to give you or any person else, unless out of mere courtesy satisfaction for anything I said on the trial.

\*In the original draft the following words have had a pen drawn through them: "You should have heard from me on the subject some time since had I not understood that my brother had again written to you upwards of three weeks ago; that you had promised to write & asked time, but the delay on your part I consider quite unreasonable."

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A demand from you on me is inadmissible for a variety of other reasons. One of the most prominent is the inequality of our situation. I have a family you have none.

You are not the first young adventurer who has sought the road to fame and political promotion by either barking at my heels or snapping at my throat. I shall not give you the satisfaction you demand but give you the privilege to come and take it.

Yours &c                      Ben Hardin

William C. Bullitt, Esquire.

[Cuthbert Bullitt to Ben Hardin.]

Jefferson Coty. Augt. 4th 1817

Sir

I wrote to you by Mr. Bullock on the 4 of July, by whom I was informed you intended to answer the letter; after waiting upwards of three weeks for your answer, I again wrote to know whether you had answered my letter or had declined it. This letter it appears from yours to William Bullitt by Doct. Booth, which I have seen, you have not receiv'd.

In your letter of the 1st Agt. to Wm. Bullitt, you state that you expected a third communication from me; what of communication you expected from me I cannot conceive, as I was informed by Mr. Bullock you promised to answer my letter.

Having stated in yr. answer to Wm. Bullitt that instead of a third communication from me, you had received his note, I am at a loss to know what you mean: If you mean that Wm. was pushed forward at my instigation to do what I have done, you are under a gross mistake. William settles his own quarrels & I settle my own. And I assure you Sir, my silence on that subject since my communication by Mr. Bullock, has resulted from the assurance you gave that gentleman, as he informed me, that you would answer my letter.

You state in yr letter to Wm Bullitt that my letter by Mr. Bullock contained expressions so inadmissible that you could not answer it, but you do not point out what these expressions are (and here permit me to remark that if this part of your letter to Wm Bullitt was designed for my inspection, it is at least a very singular and indirect mode of Communication to me). I am not aware of having used in my letter by Mr. Bullock any expressions which were not warranted by the tone of yr answer to the joint yet polite letter of Wm C Bullitt & myself.

It is singular that you should take exceptions to my letter, when you must recollect that in your answer to our joint letter you did not satisfy our enquiry either literally or substantially—but after stating in Substance that you had said nothing but what you conceived was warranted by the evidence—you conclude with a threat to do the same thing again.

I once more apply to you to know whether you intend to answer my enquiry on the subject of the charge said to have been made by you against me on the trial of Churchill & specified in our joint letter & also in my letter by Mr Bullock or whether you have determined not to answer it.

To Benjamin Hardin Esq.                      Your Obt Sert.                      Cuthbert Bullitt

[Ben Hardin to Cuthbert Bullitt.]

Sir

Bardstown August 5th

On yesterday morning I received your communication under date of the 4th insta handed me by Mr. Elliott. Your third I never received. Mr. Bullock



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I presume misunderstood me when he informed you that I promised him an answer to your letter delivered to me by him. My impression is that I spoke to him with some doubt whether I should answer or not.

That hesitancy arose from a belief that my first letter ought to have been satisfactory and also because your Letter contained expressions more calculated to insult than to adjust amicably and honorably a difference between us & in your second letter you charge me with evasion and from report of availing myself of my professional relation to slander you.

What I said upon that trial was heard by hundreds. Could you expect I could give a detail of an argument which I was near three hours in delivering and that not committed to paper and almost *ex tempore* for I had only been employed during that Court and even if I could have given my argument verbatim that I would have done it? When gentlemen present differed about what I did say or what Mr. Rowan said, for you did not state which of us used the expression, which circumstance alone would have subjected me by some to misrepresentation. You in your first and second I believe inquired whether I still persisted. I informed you that I had said little or nothing about it since the trial. You had no right to ask me what I intended to do hereafter I am only answerable for what I may do. I cannot now give you a further answer to your original joint letter until you either withdraw or give me such an explanation of the exceptionable expressions in your second letter as will satisfy me and ought to satisfy any other gentleman of proper feelings and sentiments that they were not intended as an insult.

Respectfully yours Ben Hardin

To Cuthbert Bullitt Esquire.

[Cuthbert Bullitt to Ben Hardin. This is only an incomplete fragment of the copy, but was evidently dated August 7th.]

Sir In Consequence of a remark in your letter to Wm. C. Bullitt that a demand from him to you was inadmissible for a variety of reasons the most prominent of which was that you had a family & he had none, it would seem that you would not refuse to meet a man with a family. From another part of your letter in which you state that you do not feel yourself bound to give satisfaction to him or any one else for anything said by you on the trial of Churchill it would seem doubtful whether you would give me satisfaction in the manner asked by Wm. C. Bullitt—I have therefore authorized Mr. Elliott to enquire of you whether you will give me satisfaction in an Honorable way & if you will you will name your friend, time & place to him & further arrangements will be made by your friend & Mr. Starke Washington of Shelbyville as mine

[Ben Hardin to Cuthbert Bullitt.]

Bardstown August 8th

Sir This morning Mr. Elliott politely favoured me with your communication under date the 7th of this instant.\* I have carefully examined its contents and also the first note addressed by me to you and your Brother. It appears to me very evident that in my first there is nothing insulting in any part.

In this connection there is expressed a determination to pursue the same course of argument I have done before with such alterations as I could make for the better, that is to better the argument and from what I had previously

\*The letter referred to is missing.

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stated that I had abstained from all wanton and personal asperity toward you and your Brother the literal interpretation of the last sentence is that I should still adhere to the same course of argument with such amendments as would give my argument more weight and influence with the jury. I therefore conclude that there was nothing insulting in my first note at least I assure you nothing of that kind was intended.

In your last having withdrawn the exceptionable expressions in your second letter I have no hesitation in saying as I before this have repeatedly done to every person with whom I have conversed on the subject that I do not recollect in the course of my argument that I made use of any argument or any language calculated either to injure the character or assail the feelings of either you or your Brother. It is now impossible for me to give even an outline of my speech upon that occasion I recollect Mr. Rowan and myself adopted nearly the same course of argument.

Respectfully yours &c      Ben Hardin

Cuthbert Bullitt Esq



### III.

#### TO THE VOTERS OF BEARGRASS

Without my knowledge or consent Mr. Burks and Tenbrook, or Burks alone, obtained an act of the Legislature, virtually confiscating my estate for five years, as I will clearly show, under the promise of building a Railroad from Louisville to Middletown.

Col. Taylor, a Revolutionary officer, and the father of ex-President Taylor, told me as a man of honor, as long as I could draw a trigger, never to ask of the law protection for my person—but for the protection of my property, the law always afforded the proper remedy. Now I appeal to you, as honest men for that protection. A Court of Equity requires that an applicant in that Court shall come in with clean hands, as I do.

As a matter of History to Foreigners, in the year '79-'80, Gen. George Rogers Clark wintered his regiment on Corn Island, and in the spring captured Vincennes.

In the Spring of 1780 the first house was built at Louisville. In the years 1784-'86 my maternal grandfather, Col. Christian, and my father, moved to Kentucky then Fincastle county of the State of Virginia. In 1786 a party of Indians who had stolen horses on Beargrass were pursued across the river, and two men and a boy were overtaken about a mile from Jeffersonville, the boy escaped—Col. Christian foremost, my father and Major O'Bannon next. As Col. Christian dismounted preparatory to firing, he was shot and killed by one of the Indians—at the same instant both of the Indians were shot and mortally wounded by Major O'Bannon and my father—Kelly run up to tomahawk the Indian, whose gun had not been discharged, and the Indian in a dying state rose and shot Kelly dead.

Two of the early settlers were Col. Floyd and Sam Wells. Floyd was a very large, powerful man; Wells was a small, but active and athletic man. They had had a violent quarrel the day before the battle, in which Wells had levelled his rifle at Floyd—but was prevented from firing.

On the next day a detachment of Indians was found to be in the neighborhood, and about thirty of the whites, under Floyd's command, started in pursuit. They came up with the Indians on Floyd's Fork, and at once found themselves in contact with an overwhelming force.

The whites were defeated and compelled to scatter and fly for their lives—the Indians pursuing.

Col. Floyd had lost his horse in the engagement, and Wells came upon him worn down and exhausted—the Indians just behind. Wells saw that his capture and death were inevitable. He did not hesitate, but said, "Floyd, take my horse, I am fresh." He dismounted, helped Floyd to mount; and then as he told my father, "left the Indians like chaff."\*

Such was the character of the men who settled the country and such the title to the lands which they acquired and gave to their children.

Major Sturgus, the grandfather of the Misses Speed, of Louisville, told me that Col. Floyd (who acquired 3000 acres of the best land on Beargrass, including what is now the Parks place) took him on the highest elevation to be found and observed: here is the greatest estate in Kentucky, but he expected his scalp would pay for it. In a few months after he was waylaid by an Indian

\*See Roosevelt's *Winning of the West*, Vol. II, p. 129.

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in this county, and shot dead. The main portion of my estate came by my mother, my father owning nothing but slaves—120 at his death. Thus you see my farm is literally the price of my grandfather's blood.

My estate has more acres and I believe brings a larger income than that of both Mr. Burks and Tenbrook. My income (for which I can show Bonds from the best tenants who never fail in prompt payment) \$6,300, besides a tenement in possession of my son Henry worth a thousand dollars more. Now I challenge a comparison. Under these circumstances Mr. Burks goes to the Legislature, procures this act, keeping it a profound secret from me and to be carried out by a secret vote—in contradiction to the spirit if not the letter of the Constitution. There will be found in the printed speeches of the Convention my remarks, "any man who had not the courage to vote openly could be justly compared only to a sheep-killing dog that could not look an honest man in the face."

I therefore call on all honest and brave men, when they give in their votes by ballot, to proclaim boldly how they vote. In all my voting I never gave a secret vote. Away with this cowardly Yankee system, only worthy of the Legislature which adopted it.

This Charter is drawn with great ability. These same gentlemen, without giving me any notice, will apply to the court, secretly from me, for the appointment of Assessors; who without doubt will honestly believe that Mr. Burks' little Dummy will raise my land to five hundred dollars an acre—making me a wonderfully rich man. This rich man will be compelled to pay to them five thousand dollars a year for five years—to this add \$700 taxes, State and Federal; \$300 farm expenses, and it leaves \$300 for support of my wife and myself. Now I believe if I had been one of Morgan's rebels, the Devil himself as my judge would not have punished me so severely. I forgot to state that I own besides Oxmoor farm, two ponies, a brace of pistols and a gold watch.

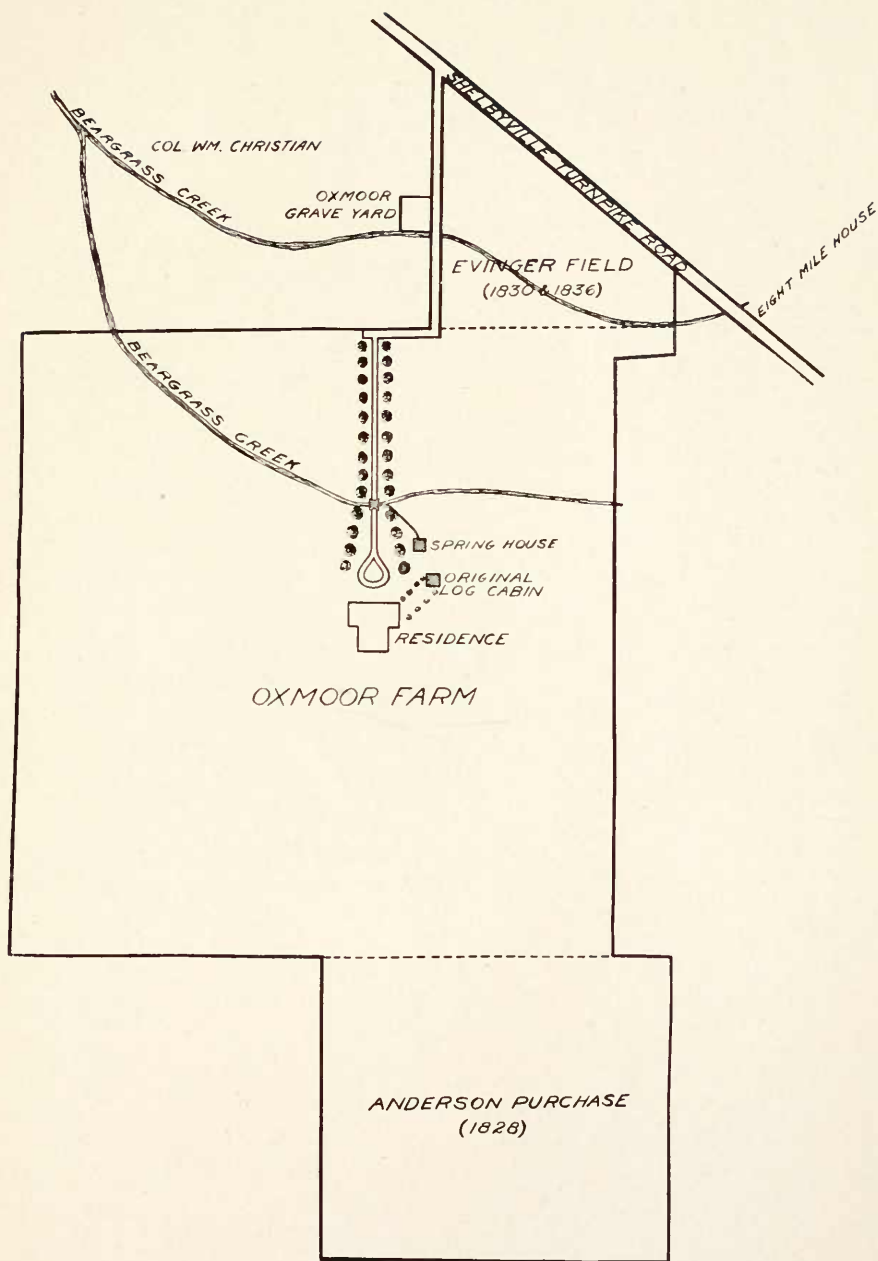
1. The act is unconstitutional, because it delegates Legislative power to the people in primary popular assemblies, and enables a wicked Legislature at any time by a vote of a small section of people to rob a rich or hang a poor man.

2. It is in direct violation of that provision of the Constitution, which provides "No man's property shall be taken without full compensation in money first made." My money is property, but my land condemned under a writ of *ad quod damnum* is to be paid for, but how, out of my own money raised in taxes?

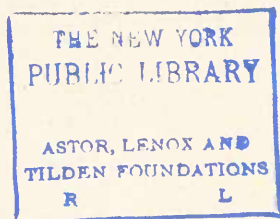
In addition to the above provision, it was moved in Convention "that Slaves should be protected like other property," which was added. Mr. Guthrie rose and objected to this last proposition as wholly unnecessary, inasmuch as the first gave such ample protection as could not be evaded. If Mr. Guthrie could now rise from the dead he would be amazed to find that a Legislature, all whose brains put together would not equal his, had undone his work. I do not believe one dollar of stock is subscribed, if it has I have not heard of it.

June 10th, 1869.

WM. C. BULLITT.







## IV.

### MEMORANDUM AS TO THE SCOTT-BAYLIS-BULLITT AFFAIR OF SEPTEMBER 4, 1765.

(From Hayden's "Virginia Genealogies," p. 605 et seq., and Meade's "Old Churches and Families in Virginia," Vol. II, pp. 208, 211-213.)

About September 1, 1765, John Scott, a mere boy eighteen years of age, the son of Reverend James Scott, had some dispute with Colonel John Baylis, a man of large physique. The next day Baylis issued an advertisement in the town of Dumfries, Va., as follows:

"This is to give notice that Thomas Blackburn and  
John Scott are arrant cowards.  
(Signed) John Baylis."

When Blackburn and Scott saw this advertisement they wrote at the bottom of it:

"The author of this is a —— liar which the sub-  
scribers are at any time ready to prove.  
Signed: Thomas Blackburn  
John Scott."

"I also add that he is a bully and dares not engage a  
gentleman on equal terms.  
(Signed) John Scott."

As soon as Baylis saw what had been added to his notice, he sent out another notice, as follows:

"The best proof of Blackburn's and Scott's assertion would be to present to Baylis a pair of pistols in private, and if he refuse them, then their veracity for the future would not be suspected. But such a proposition will never be made, for as Blackburn and the son (obliterated in the MS.) they dislike the smell of gunpowder.  
John Baylis."

As soon as Scott saw this he called on his brother-in-law Cuthbert Bullitt (who had married his sister Helen Scott) and asked him to carry a challenge to Baylis. He wrote to Bullitt as follows, enclosing the challenge:

[John Scott's letter to Cuthbert Bullitt containing the challenge to Baylis.]

"Dear Sir: Enclosed I have sent you my letter to Baylis, which I have not sealed. If you have any material objection to it you must come up with my Father to-night and between us we will write another. But I would not have it postponed any farther if it is possible to avoid it, because I am resolved to fight, nothing shall hinder me. I think we can't come together too soon, therefore you must not let a trifling objection prevent your giving him the enclosed.

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"Pray dont talk to me any more about prudence, forbearance, and the consequences of what I have undertaken, for I am resolved to be deaf to all you say. If you are so unkind as to refuse to attend me, rather than submit to such insults as Baylis has offered me, I will engage him in private and run the risk of his taking advantage of his strength.

Your ever affectionate brother,                      John Scott."

Scott's challenge to Baylis was as follows:

[Scott's challenge to Baylis.]

"Sir: Your scurrility to me the other day, when you so manfully drew your sword upon a naked man, I should have passed by as unworthy of my resentment, nor should I have paid more regard to so palpable a falsehood as was contained in the advertisement you first set up at Tyler's, because I regard it as below the resentment of any gentleman. But as soon as I heard that you had dared cast aspersions on the character of my Father (whose sacred function would have protected him from any but a wretch dead to every sentiment of virtue and honor), I no longer hesitate to call you to that account which your repeated insults to the best of men so loudly called for.

"I shall therefore expect you next Wednesday morning at the back part of Quantico church, armed with pistols and attended by some gentleman, furnished with a pair of the same instruments.

"I think it necessary that we should each come accompanied by some gentleman in whose honor we can confide, not only as it may be serviceable to the survivor to produce proof that he killed his antagonist in an honorable way, but because the great disparity in our strength might lay me open to advantage which I have too much reason to think you would very readily make use of. I therefore insist upon seconds, and I would have them to be of reputation. You are at liberty to choose whom you please for your attendant, and I shall endeavor to get one to attend me to whom you can have no exception.

Your humble servant,                      John Scott."

Bullitt, who did not believe in duelling, then wrote back to his brother-in-law as follows:

[Cuthbert Bullitt's reply to John Scott.]

"Dear Sir: I received yours. You request me not to dissuade you from your intentions. Did I not, from cool reflection, think they were better left alone, I would not. The danger I shall say nothing of, tho' much might be urged upon that head. Do you get anything by putting it in his power to take your life? Has he not an equal chance to prove fortunate? If so, the only thing you can gain is loss of life. If you kill him what great advantage do you get? You deprive a fellow creature of his life; you render his wife miserable; you ruin his innocent babes who have never injured you. Think! Oh think how heavy it will be on your conscience to have the curses of the widow and the orphan attending you to your grave. Sure to any man who is a Christian it will be a dreadful thought to take away the life of another deliberately and in cold blood. And what do you get by the victory? Nothing, believe me, dear Johnny. No man will think the better of you. If you kill Baylis, you must fly your country, give up your promising fortunes, and become an exile in a foreign land far from your friends and relations. What must I say to your father? What can I answer to your mother when, in the utmost distraction, she reproaches me with your death

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and asks her son at my hands. Dear Johnny, let me advise, let me entreat you to give over this rash enterprise. What you have yet done is unknown to every one but myself. No one will accuse you of want of courage, but all will of rashness. This one step will ever put it out of your power to pursue the vocation you are intended for. Let me know to-morrow what you intend. I shall not deliver yours until I receive an answer to this. If nothing can divert your purpose you must bring powder and bullets for the pistols you have with you. I shall only add that the consequences of the duel, that is Baylis' or your death, will be as fatal to me as to you. We shall both by the law forfeit our lives; this I do not mention by way of excuse. If you fight, by all that is holy I will go with you, nor shall anything hinder me. I shall await your answer to-morrow impatiently.

"I am, dear Johnny, your attached C. Bullitt."

Bullitt's letter to Scott had no effect in dissuading him, as he was bent on fighting the duel, and accordingly Bullitt then delivered to Baylis the challenge and Baylis immediately wrote back as follows:

"To Mr. John Scott,

"Dumfries, Sept. 3d, 1765.

"Sir: I received yours this day by the hands of Mr. Bullitt. I shall forbear to use that low, base scurrility that you do, but tell you at once I shall meet you according to your desire armed with a pair of pistols and a small sword to give that satisfaction you have demanded.

John Baylis."

The remaining history of this curious affair is shown in the following extract from a newspaper of the time:

### EXTRACT FROM A NEWSPAPER OF THE DAY.

"It also appeared from the course of evidence that Bullitt did not enter into this affair without reluctance, but he had great expectation of compromising it at the place appointed for this dreadful business.

"On Tuesday evening, after dark, Mr. Scott came out of the country to Mr. Bullitt's lodging in town, and Wednesday, before sunrise, they repaired to the place appointed armed with a case of pistols each.

"In a short time Baylis, accompanied by one Nathan Skipwith White, as his second, came on the field armed with pistols and a small sword. Baylis and Scott directly threw off their coats. Baylis cocked one of his pistols, presented it at Scott and bade him measure the distance. Scott instantly cocked and presented his pistol, calling to Baylis to put off his sword, and here probably the quarrel would have ended had not Bullitt, agreeably to the plan he had preconcerted to bring about a reconciliation, rushed between them and entered into an expostulation with Baylis as well with regard to his second who was a man of no worth or reputation.

"The behavior of Bullitt, however, had not the desired effect for Baylis, resenting his interposition, proceeded to give him abusive language, asking him if he would take it upon himself, adding he would fight him any way. Bullitt, irritated at this treatment, too hastily accepted the proposal.

"Baylis threw off his sword and bade him follow. Bullitt, recollecting that Scott's pistols were not only a better pair but much surer fire, exchanged with him, and followed Baylis. Baylis, at about thirteen yards distance, stopped, asked Bullitt if they were far enough, rested his pistol on his left arm, took aim

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and snapt. He then called to Bullitt, whose pistol was cocked, not to take advantage of him. Bullitt replied that he would not and dropped the muzzle of his pistol.

"Baylis again rectified his pistol, presented it at Bullitt, fired, but missed. Bullitt immediately returned the fire and wounded Baylis in the thigh groin. Baylis fell, calling to Bullitt that he had broken his thigh. Bullitt replied that he was sorry for it and advanced some steps to his assistance, but observing Baylis to be getting up with his second pistol in his hand, stopt.

"Baylis, as soon as he was on his feet, again fired at Bullitt, drew a third pistol which was concealed under his jacket, discharged it and then threw it at Bullitt, who, with a loaded pistol in his hand, generously refused to take the life of a man who had already received a wound of which, in about five hours, he expired.

"Upon this testimony the examining Court, which consisted of seven gentlemen of character who sat upon the trial of Mr. Bullitt, was unanimously of the opinion that he killed Mr. Baylis in his own defense, and dismissed him from any farther prosecution.

"Poor Baylis has left a wife and children to lament his illtimes courage, and Mr. Bullitt has a wife and three small children who share with him this great calamity. The pistols Mr. Bullitt fought with were about eight inches by the barrel, and the report of his having threatened Baylis, preceding the duel, was altogether groundless."

There was naturally a great deal of excitement about it, and Scott was in more trouble for having prepared to fight the duel than Bullitt was for having killed Baylis in self-defense.

Scott then wrote to his brother-in-law Bullitt as follows:

[John Scott's letter to Cuthbert Bullitt after the duel.]

"Mr. Douglas', Thursday Night.

"My Dear Sir: The gentlemen all advised me to provide for my safety immediately—and there is a writ out against me—three or four scoundrels are resolved to plague me. I have been prevailed with to go down to Mrs. Moncure's, but am resolved to go no further 'till I hear from you. For Heaven's sake! My dear sir, if you think my remaining here can be of the least service to you, let me hear by Mr. Graham and I will immediately go up to Westwood. I gave my deposition without endeavoring to soften matters in the least, as you may see, and swore to Messrs. Douglass and Carr. Let me hear from you as soon as possible, and pray consult your own safety more than mine, for by Heaven it is dearest to your ever affectionate

John Scott."

It appeared afterward that Baylis had determined all along to force a fight with Bullitt, whom he said he disliked more than he did young Scott; he succeeded in his purpose to force a fight with Bullitt, but instead of killing Bullitt got killed himself.









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