

First Land Grants in Loudoun County

Captain Daniel McCarty. The first specific grant of land in the later Loudoun appears long before the treaty of 1722. Under date of the 2nd February, 1709, Captain Daniel McCarty "of the Parish of Cople in the County of Westmoreland, Esq." obtained title to 2,993 acres "above the falls of the Potowmack River, beginning on said River side at the lower end of the Sugar Land Island opposite to the upper part of the rocks in said River," apparently for speculation or investment rather than for immediate occupation; the number and character of the Indians still to be encountered thereabout made settlement on isolated plantations or farms far too risky to be inviting to rich or poor. This Daniel McCarty was the founder of another eminent family of the Northern Neck which intermarried in early days with many of the best known of the early Potomac gentry. He subsequently married, as her second husband, Ann, sister to Thomas Lee already mentioned, and widow of Colonel William Fitzhugh of Eagle's Nest in King George County. The joining together of the prominent families of the lower peninsula began very early and by the closing years of the eighteenth century had gone so far that almost all were in very truth "Virginia cousins" of various degrees and through numerous alliances. Indeed this became so general that the social status of any family, tracing back to that period and locality, can generally be determined merely by the test of its affinities.

It is remarkable that the literature of romance has concerned itself so little with Daniel McCarty. His ancestry, his own life and that of his descendants unite in offering the richest material but, save in the traditions of Virginia, he is today all but unknown. He was the son of Donal, the son of Donough, Earl of Clancarty. Donal was an officer in the Irish Army that fought against King William and was ruined with its defeat. The Earl and his descendants were exiled and Daniel came to Virginia as a youth and settled in Westmoreland County. The Earls of Clancarty were the heads of a family descended from Cormac who was King of Munster in 483; and Burke, the great authority on the British peerage, declares that "few pedigrees in the British Empire, if any, can be traced to a more remote or more exalted source" than theirs; while another authority asseverates that "long before the founders of the oldest royal families of Europe, before Rudolph acquired the empire of Germany, or a Bourbon ascended the throne of France, Cormac McCarty ruled over Munster and the title of King was at least continued in name in his posterity down to the reign of Elizabeth." [17] Daniel's eldest son and heir, Colonel Dennis, married Sarah Ball, first cousin to Mary Ball, mother of General Washington; and Augustine Washington, the general's father, named him as one of the executors of his will. It was another descendant of Captain Daniel who was surviving principal in the famous McCarty-Mason duel over a century later—an event that so profoundly stirred the country and cost the life of one of the most prominent and beloved citizens of the Loudoun of that day.

Francis Aubrey became a large purchaser of Loudoun land soon after the Iroquois evacuation, first obtaining a grant at the mouth of Broad Run about 1725. Among the tracts he later acquired was a grant of about 962 acres purchased on the 19th December, 1728 from Lord

Fairfax on or near which later he built a home and lived. Nothing of this early house has survived; but we know that it was near the "Big Spring" then as now a conspicuous landmark on the old Carolina Road and about two miles north of the present Leesburg.[39] Probably "the Chappel above Goose Creek" of the Truro Vestry books, the Chapel of Ease or convenient neighbourhood church, the building of which was supervised by him for the Parish, was immediately adjacent to his home and the location of that structure, the first church edifice of any kind to be erected within the bounds of present Loudoun, is known within a fair degree of accuracy and in 1926 with appropriate ceremonies, waA few years after the death, in 1741, of Francis Aubrey, much of his great estate lying between the old Ridge Road (where it now[75] passes through Leesburg under the name of Loudoun Street) north to the Limestone Branch and from the Potomac westerly to the Catoctin Hills, came into the possession of Mrs. Ann Thomson Mason, widow of the third George of that ilk; thus introducing to our frontier of that day another of the most prominent of the Tidewater families and one which also was to play a very notable rôle in Loudoun for at least a century. This George Mason, at the age of forty-five, had been drowned while attempting to cross the Potomac in a sailboat in the year 1735. In 1721 he had married, as his second wife, Ann Thomson, daughter of Stevens Thomson of Hollins Hall, Staffordshire, England, who had served as Attorney-General of Virginia for some years during Queen Anne's reign. He, in turn, was the son of Sir William Thomson of the Middle Temple, a Sergeant at Law who, to his credit, in 1680 had had the courage to act as counsel for the defendants Tasborough and Price in the malodorous Popish Plot trials of disgraceful memory. By this second wife, Mason had six or seven children, of whom only three were to survive him: George his eldest son (for his first wife had been childless) who later was to build Gunston Hall and become the author of the famous Bill of Rights; Thomson, later to become at least a part-time resident of Loudoun and a famous lawyer in his day; and Mary, who, on the 11th April, 1751, was to marry Samuel Selden of Salvington in Stafford County, near Fredericksburg. She died at her mother's plantation Chipawamsic, on the 5th day of January, 1758, leaving two children, Samuel and Mary Mason Selden, the latter inheriting her Loudoun lands.s marked with a stone monument.

Source: Legends of Loudoun. An account of the history and homes of a border county of Virginia's Northern Neck by Harrison Williams.