

George Mason III of FALMOUTH in Rappahannock County

About this time there was considerable trade between the Northern Neck and both Ireland and Scotland. It has been said that Virginia tobacco helped Glasgow, Scotland, to prosperity. A street in that city was named for Virginia, and at one time Virginia merchants "thronged that street and were regarded with such respect that other men gave way that they might pass." Among these gentlemen were some of the planters from the Potomac. In 1720 George Mason III, was given the freedom of the city of Glasgow, in the form of a parchment "Burgess Ticket."

Falmouth, in Stafford County, was founded in 1727 by Scotch merchants. Boats from Scotland came directly to this trading village situated near the head of the Rappahannock River. Something of this once thriving trading center of the Neck is told in a letter written by a visitor by the name of Ellen Gray. The undated letter was written to her friend, Rose Douglas of Loch Lomond, Scotland. It says:

"Dear Rose:

"Falmouth is on a river that empties into Chesapeake Bay. The houses are perched on declivities and hills. There are mills. I love water wheels when they glisten.... We saw scenery much wilder than any in Scotland. It consisted of islands in the Rappahannock, lying above Falmouth. We gazed on them from a long plank bridge. What a pity the Virginians will span their streams with plank instead of stone! A stone bridge overgrown with moss is a bewitching sight. Several Scotch families have lived in Falmouth, tho the place is called Fal from a river in England. Among its most successful merchants was Basil Gordon. He arrived a poor boy in Falmouth. He died a millionaire after a life of patient industry."

Basil Gordon is believed to have been one of America's first millionaires.

Source: The Stronghold A Story of Historic Northern Neck of Virginia and Its People by Miriam Haynie