

DAMERONS OF NORTHUMBERLAND COUNTY.

Contributed by Mrs. O. A. Keach, Wichita, Kansas.

The original plantation of Lawrence Dameron, the immigrant, seated in 1652, and situated in parish of Wicomico,* in Northumberland County, Virginia, came to be known as "Guarding Point".

This name was due to the situation of the plantation at the lower end of Chesapeake Bay; and a certain observation point on the shore served as a lookout post for lower Northumberland from the time of Bacon's Rebellion, through all the wars down to the present time.

But after the war of the Revolution, in course of time, "Guarding Point" became "Garden Point", and that name significantly describes this beautiful setting of the old brick manor house on that stretch of Virginia shore.

"Guarding Point" was the heritage of Lawrence Dameron's second son, George Dameron, and some of his descendants successively held this seat of land from 1652 until 1849.

George, second son of Lawrence and Dorothy Dameron, was born in England in 164-. He married Elizabeth Dennis, widow of John Dennis, about 1680. Elizabeth had an infant daughter Sarah, described as "daughter and heir of John Dennis", who married Philip Tignor in 1699, as a later record shows.

*Northumberland County was originally divided into two parishes. The upper part of the county was called Chicacone and the lower part Wicocomoco, from the two small groups of Indians living in these sections.

On February 4, 1664, a member of the Court proposed that the name of the parish of Chicacone be changed to "Fairfields" and that of Wicocomoco to "Lee Parish". Colonel Richard Lee had lately seated a plantation on the Dividing Creek and the change proposed may have been in his honor, or it may have been in honor of Hugh Lee "clerke".

The name "Fairfields" was substituted for Chicacone, but Wicocomoco was retained, though it was later shortened to Wicomico, and both of these old names remain to the present time.

The brothers, Bartholomew and George **Dameron**, were prominent in county and church affairs and in organizing and shaping the life of this early community.

The **Dameron** family, through its long history, though seldom holding political office, always maintained its prominence and distinction in social, civic and church life in this historic center of old Virginia.

There are many glimpses of George **Dameron** in the ancient court-books of Northumberland Co., and an interesting example of the serious regard in which the courts held grand jury duty is shown in a record of April 17, 1689, ordering the Sheriff "to summon to the next Court at least eighteen of the most able and fitting men inhabiting this county to be sworn on the Grand Inquest of the County". The list included both Bartholomew and George **Dameron**. Some time before this George **Dameron** had brought suit against his neighbor, Major **John** Harris, over the boundary lines of his land. Settlement was made by the official survey of Capt. **John** Haynie.

During September, 1696, Bartholomew and George **Dameron** helped to appraise the estate of Capt. William Lee, a son of Col. Richard Lee of the Dividing Creek.

3. Mr. George **Dameron** died intestate early in 1698. On May 19 of that year, Bartholomew was appointed administrator of the estate of his brother, and, as no mention is made of his wife Elizabeth either at that time or later, her death doubtless occurred before that of her husband.

GEORGE² **DAMERON** (*Lawrence*¹) and Elizabeth, his wife, had four children, identified by court records. They were:

4 Elizabeth, 5 Thomas, 6 George, and 7 Lazarus.

1702, April 15—Upon petition of Charles Ingram, the Court appointed Mr. Hancock Lee, Mr. **John** Harris, Mr. James Waddy, and Mr. Bartholomew Schrever to divide the estate of Mr. George **Dameron**, deceased, into four equal parts and possess the said Charles Ingram, who married one of the said **Dameron's** daughters with her part of said deceased's estate. This daughter was Elizabeth. Mr. **Dameron's** step-daughter, Sarah Dennis, asked

for her estate on October 19, 1699, soon after her marriage with Philip Tignor.

1702, July 15, George Dameron, orphan son of Mr. George Dameron, made choice of Mr. Christopher Garlington as his guardian, and Thomas Dameron, orphan, son of George Dameron, chose his Uncle Bartholomew his guardian.

On September 20, 1704, Lazarus, son of George Dameron, also made choice of his Uncle Bartholomew as his guardian.

Thomas Dameron came of age in 1704, and after Bartholomew's death, Lazarus Dameron moved the court to appoint his brother Thomas his guardian.

These records then prove that George and Elizabeth Dameron had issue:

4. (a) Elizabeth, born about 1681, married Charles Ingram, probably in 1701. One of their daughters married Capt. Ellis Gill and had Taylor, Betty and Ellis.

5. (b) Thomas, born 1683, according to a deposition.

6. (c) George, born about 1685, married Margaret Taylor, daughter of Lazarus Taylor and a sister of Argail. They had two daughters: Elizabeth and Judith.

Elizabeth married John Waddy.

Judith married Richard Howson, grandson of Capt. Leonard and Elizabeth Lee Howson.

George Dameron died in 1720, and his widow married Thomas Winters.

7. (d) Lazarus, born about 1690, married Elizabeth Smith, daughter of Richard Smith, mentioned in his will dated November 20, 1721.

Lazarus Dameron was the first member of the family to leave Northumberland County. On October 18, 1726, he was grantee for 838 acres of land in King George County. This land after 1730 lay in Prince William County.

In 1749, a Richard and Lazarus Dameron died in Albemarle County, according to a note in the *Richmond Times-Dispatch* for April 22, 1906.

It will be remembered that Lazarus Dameron, son of George, married a daughter of Richard Smith, so that it would seem probable that Richard and Lazarus Dameron belonged to the

family of Lazarus, grandson of Lawrence **Dameron** of Northumberland.

This information may prove valuable to the historians of the **Dameron** families in the western and southern counties of Virginia.

Col. Thomas Dameron.

5. THOMAS³ DAMERON (*George², Lawrence¹*) made a deposition March 16, 1726, in which he stated that he was 43 years of age. Thus he came of age in 1704. Until the death of his Uncle Thomas, he appears in the records as Thomas **Dameron, Jr.**

In local history, Thomas **Dameron** is known as Colonel **Dameron**. He was probably an officer in the County Militia, and drills were held in Fairfields not far from what is now the post-office called Burgess Store. His care in bequeathing his "pistols, holsters and sword" to his son George confirms the neighbors history.

Thomas **Dameron** married, probably in 1705, Katherine Hughlett, daughter of Thomas Hughlett, one of the Justices of the County Court. In June 1706, Mr. Hughlett and his wife, Margaret, made a deed of gift of 100 acres of land to Thomas **Dameron, Jr.** and Katherine, his wife.

On February 19, 1706, Thomas **Dameron, Jr.**, of Wicomico parish, "son and heir to George **Dameron** deceased", and his wife Katherine, conveyed to his Uncle Bartholomew, "one-half the land where I now live, being 100 acres which land my grandfather, Lawrence **Dameron**, bought of Capt. Peter Knight, situated in Great Wicomico parish—which is part of 500 acres, part land and part marsh—the corners agreed on to divide the land I still hold from the land of my Uncle Bartholomew **Dameron**".

This record establishes clearly that Thomas **Dameron, Jr.**, was the son of George, grandson of Lawrence, and nephew of Bartholomew **Dameron**.

This part of Wicomico parish was now known as Dameron's Neck. On February 17, 1709, and also the following year, the Court appointed Mr. James Waddy overseer of the highways in Dameron's Neck.

Thomas and Katherine Hughlett **Dameron** had two children, Elizabeth and Thomas, both named in Thomas Hughlett's will dated November 7, 1724, and to whom he left a large estate in lands, dwellings, and personal property in St. Stephens' parish.

Katherine Hughlett **Dameron** died about 1716. Thomas **Dameron**, Jr. married second Winifred Conway Fielding, widow of Edward Fielding and daughter of Dennis Conway. There was much litigation over the Fielding property. On February 19, 1718, Ambrose Fielding brought suit against Thomas **Dameron** and Winifred, his wife, the executrix of Edward Fielding. This was one of a succession of suits, all of which were finally settled.

Thomas and Winifred Conway **Dameron** had a daughter Winifred, born in 1719.

Thomas **Dameron**, Jr. and Winifred were witnesses to a will March 20, 1726. Winifred died shortly after this and Thomas **Dameron** married about 1730, his third wife, Ann, widow of **John** Pope and daughter of Capt. George Ball.

Capt. George Ball, son of Capt. William Ball, was born about 1680. According to family history, he was twice married. The surname of his first wife is unknown. By this first marriage there were two or three children, among them Ann, born probably in 1702 or 3. The court records clearly prove that George Ball was married to Grace Haynie, daughter of Anthony and Sarah Harris Haynie before 1709, as Anthony Haynie in his will dated June 31, 1709, mentions his daughter Grace Ball.

Hayden's statement that Geo. Ball probably later married Grace Waddy is due to the fact that Sarah, the mother of Grace Haynie Ball, and widow of Anthony Haynie, m. 2nd Francis Waddy, and in her will Sarah Waddy names her daughter Grace Ball.

Sarah, the mother of Grace Ball, was daughter and heir of Major **John** Harris.

1713, June 18, Will of **John** Harris dec'd presented in Court by Sarah Haynie and George Ball, executors.

1715, Feb. 17, Mrs. Sarah Haynie acknowledges a deed of Indenture for land unto Geo. Ball gent. Order Book, 1713 to 1719, p. 98. Shortly thereafter Sarah Haynie married Francis Waddy, for on March 16, 1715, Mr. Francis Waddy and Sarah,

his wife, acknowledge a deed of Indenture of lease for land unto George Ball, gent.

The land inherited by Mrs. Sarah Haynie Waddy from her father, Major John Harris, is the famous "Bayview" plantation, given to her daughter Grace Haynie Ball, which has remained in the possession of some of the descendants of Capt. George and Grace Haynie Ball to this present time. This land was adjacent to the Dameron plantation and, in 178-- , George Dameron brought suit against Major Harris over their boundary lines, and a final settlement was made by the official survey of Capt. John Haynie.

Capt. George Ball's daughter Sarah married Christopher Dameron, son of Bartholomew, and Ann, wife of Thomas Dameron is the mother of George Dameron, named in the will of Geo. Ball as "my grandson George Dameron".

In Captain Ball's will, dated April 14, 1746, he mentions his grandson George Dameron as follows: "My will is that £30 current money be raised out of my estate to be layed out by my executors to buy land for my grandson George Dameron and his heirs forever."

Christopher and Sarah Dameron had no son George, and no mention is made, in any of the records of their family, of Captain Ball's bequest, as would have been the case on the death of the devisee. Shortly after the settlement of Captain Ball's estate, Thomas Dameron, the father of George Dameron, purchased a tract of land from John Nickles, and in his will, 1750 he specifically names this tract of land as the heritage of his son George. He also names as one of his executors, "My friend Capt. George Ball", (son of Capt. George Ball).

This Nickles tract is supposed to have been purchased with the money left by Captain Ball to buy land for his grandson George Dameron.

Some years ago, Capt. Thomas Ball, now deceased, former assistant Attorney General, in Grover Cleveland's administration, who was born at "Bayview", a neighboring plantation to "Guarding Point", and ancestral home of the Balls since the time of Captain George Ball, wrote to the author of this chronicle that

Ann, wife of Thomas Dameron and mistress of the manor, was a member of his family.

Capt. Thomas Ball was a recognized authority on the histories of Northumberland County families, with a marvelous memory for relationships and interesting events and traditions of the past.

5. Col. Thomas Dameron built a brick manor house on the "Guarding Point" plantation, probably about 1735, as a brick in the chimney bore that date.

As this old manor house was the largest and finest dwelling at that time in Wicomico parish, and a center of the social life of the day, it has not only a local interest, but a wider historic interest to the students of colonial days.

The mansion was of red "English brick", two full stories and wider than it was long.

It stood some distance back from the thorofare, and the entrance was through double doors, up two or three steps from what might be called a brick terrace.

In the grounds were lilac bushes, roses and hollyhocks, all those flowers, according to tradition, with a "long human history".

At the rear overlooking the Chesapeake Bay, which was perhaps three-quarters of a mile distant, was laid out the garden which came to be the pleasure and pride of the ladies of the manor, with brick walks edged with box and all the old fashioned flowers, and shrubs, and sweet smelling herbs.

Lower down the slope, toward the sea, was the orchard, and so late as twenty years ago, an aged pear tree picturesquely twisted and gnarled still clung to its place in the sun. Close by was the burying ground where the Damerons of many generations were to "commit their bodies to the earth".

A glimpse of the old place and the social life of later days is offered in two or three letters in my possession.

Mrs. Louisa Hurst Ball, born September 29, 1817, daughter of Capt. James Hurst, an officer in the Revolutionary War; and wife of Thomas Ball, lived all her married life at "Bayview" and died about 1910. Her mind was clear, and she retained a wonderful memory until she died.

The last owner of the manor house was Mr. Robert J. Dameron,

a great-grandson of Col. Thomas Dameron. In his later years he was quite generally called "Unble Robert".

Mrs. Ball wrote, "Uncle Robert's house was called, after it was sold, the 'Brick Walls'. I remember two very large high-pitched rooms, with a wide entrance hall between. The entrance doors to the hall were double, large and tall. The whole house had the effect of spaciousness, and the windows were unusually large and deep, with seats in them. The staircase was wide and, as it opened on the second floor, a more extensive apartment or hall spread out, giving an idea of airiness and space. On this hall opened the sleeping chambers. In the old days there was much gaiety here and tradition tells of the candle lighted 'great hall', where the minuet was danced, while the negro fiddlers played and a generous hospitality was dispensed, with laughing colored servants looking on and serving thee guests, with genuine enjoyment. The negroes were treated indulgently always among Virginians.

"Mrs. Sarah Wooters raised in this old house and a ward of her great-uncle, Mr. Robert Dameron, mentioned above, writes, "The front of the dwelling faced toward the highway, and the back to the sea. As I remember, the 'house' had ten rooms,—including the big halls. There was a kitchen away from the house, and the little colored children used to come running across the yard with the dishes of food. This was always a source of great pleasure and excitement to them.

"I remember best the old fire place at the end of the hall, so large that you could put a fence rail in it. Uncle Robert used to have family prayers in the hall, with all the negroes gathered in. His prayers were long and the youngsters always went to sleep. There were fruits of all kinds on the place."

After the death of Uncle Robert Dameron, as he was called, the place passed into the possession of John H. Harding. A new home was built on another site and the old brick manor house that had stood for about 125 years was pulled down, though it remains a landmark in the affectionate memory of all the countryside now called Ball's Neck.

Col. Thomas Dameron died in 1750 at the age of sixty-seven. His will dated March 27, 1750, and proved March 11, 1751. He

gave to his son George, "all the land I now live on with the appurtenances and also the land I bought of John Nickels". (This land bought of John Nickels is supposed to have been purchased with the bequest in money provided in the will of Capt. George Ball, "for land for my grandson George Dameron".)

To his son George, Colonel Dameron gave furniture, stock, negroes, "and also my pistols, holsters, sword and my new Duty of Man, to be paid to him when he shall attain the age of twenty-one or be married".

In case of the death of George without heirs, the land was to become the property of his son Thomas. It should be remembered that his son Thomas had been left a large estate by his grandfather, Thomas Hughlett, and was a wealthy planter living in St. Stephens parish.

Colonel Dameron provided generously for his wife Ann, bequeathed money and also property to daughters Elizabeth Dameron, Winifred Dameron, and Ann Dameron. He gave his brother Lazarus Dameron twenty shillings.

The will is long and disposes of much property and concludes. "I do appoint my said wife, Ann Dameron executrix with my friend Capt. George Ball and my son George Dameron.

5. COL. THOMAS¹ DAMERON (*George², Lawrence¹*) and his first wife, Katherine Hughlett, had two children (heirs to their grandfather, Thomas Hughlett), will dated November 7, 1724 and proved February 18, 1727. They were:

8a. Thomas born about 1708. Inherited Thomas Hughlett's plantation in St. Stephen's parish, and was active in the public life of this parish. Appears frequently in the court records as Thomas Dameron, Jr. Died 1757 unmarried. His sister, Elizabeth Downing, was his administratrix, and, under their grandfather's will, inherited the large estate as next heir. Among his effects is mentioned "one fiddle".

9b. Elizabeth born 170--. She married Samuel Downing, Sr. They had

1. Thomas Downing born May 23, 1744. Captain of Militia July 4, 1771. Sheriff of County for several years. He married Sarah Ann Rogers, and they had issue (not named in order of age):

I. Thomas **Dameron** married Betty Cox.

II. Edward married Hannah Ball.

III. Samuel married Mary Edwards.

IV. Katherine married Capt. Wm. Blackwell.

V. Elizabeth married—Cox.

VI. Sallie married—Cundiff.

2. **John** Downing born May 1, 1775. Married Elizabeth Nutt, daughter of Col. Wm. Nutt.

Colonel **Dameron** by his marriage with Winifred Conway had a daughter.

10c. Winifred, born 1719. She married 1st. Samuel Downing, Jr., nephew of Samuel Downing, Sr. They had issue.

1. William moved to Accomac County.

2. Anne married Thomas Shearman. Their children were Thomas, Samuel, Winifred, Alice Chinn married September 14, 1795, her cousin Robert J. **Dameron**. Winifred **Dameron** Downing married, the second time about 1754, Captain **John Williams**, and they had a daughter Pattie.

Colonel **Dameron's** third wife was Ann Ball. She died about 1764. Their children were:

11a. George born 1731. Died 1801. Married about 1762 or 1763 Mary Ann Jones, daughter of Mr. Chas. Jones. See *Wm. and Mary Quarterly*.

12b. Ann born 173--. Married 1764, Thomas Waddy, her second cousin, a son of **John** and Elizabeth **Dameron** Waddy. They had issue, **John**, Thomas, Walter, Betty, Nancy, Margaret. **John** Waddy's will dated 1794.

12. GEORGE⁴ **DAMERON** (*Thomas³, George², Lawrence¹*) born 1731, the second son of Colonel **Dameron**, inherited "the Guarding Point" plantation and a considerable part of the land first patented by his great-grandfather, Lawrence **Dameron**.

With his mother Ann **Dameron**, and Capt. Geo. Ball, he was "executor" of Colonel **Dameron's** will. He was a "Processioner" in 1751, and also in 1755, for Wicomico parish, according to the Vestry Book at Alexandria Theological Seminary.

In Johns Hopkins' Historical Studies, it is stated, "Once in every four years (in Virginia Colony), the Vestry, by order of the County Court, divided the parish into precincts and ap-

pointed two persons in every precinct to procession the lands. These surveyors assisted by the neighbors examined and renewed by blazing trees or other artificial devices the old landmarks of their fathers and reported the results to the Vestry, who recorded the same in the parish books". (Cent. Dictionary.)

George Dameron was a vestryman of Wicomico parish Church in 1770, and for several years thereafter. He is mentioned among the churchmen in Bishop Meade's "Old Churches and Families of Virginia".

In 1752, Feb. 8, Moses James of Wicomico parish sold land to Haines Nickles, bounded on land lately conveyed by John Nickles to Mr. Thomas Dameron dec'd. This land is mentioned in Col. Dameron's will as noted above.

In 1753, Sept. 14, George Dameron bought additional land of Haines Nickles, along the meanders of the Dividing Creek. Also in 1753 he bought a "Parcel of land" from Samuel Garlington along the meanders of the Dividing Creek. According to the old English custom, on Sept. 15, 1753, "Quiet and peaceful possession of the within land was this day given unto the within named George Dameron by the delivery of turf and twigg and the latch of the door of the Mansion house".
