

The History of Ogle Hall

As one of the earliest Georgian style mansions constructed during the Colonial Era, Ogle Hall was referred to as Lot 108 and dwelling house in early Anne Arundel County deeds, wills and inventories. In later exchanges it is noted simply as the “mansion house”. Unlike places such as the Berkley Mansion in Virginia and Graceland in Tennessee which still maintain original names, the name “Ogle Hall” did not appear on a Deed of Exchange until 1923. The choice of name is interesting because the dwelling was not originally constructed by a member of the Ogle family. Instead, the name derives from one of its earliest inhabitants, noted politician and three term Provincial Governor of Maryland, Samuel Ogle.

The lot on which Ogle Hall sits was surveyed by James Stoddert in 1718, and designated as Lot 108 at the corner of King George Street and College Avenue (originally Tabernacle Street). The survey was completed for Amos Garrett, a merchant and extensive land owner. Following Garret’s death in 1727, his heirs sold lot 108 to John Beale in 1732. Beale died two years later, and in 1735 the property was then sold by his widow to Dr. William Stevenson, a surgeon living in Annapolis.¹

In September of the same year, Dr. Stevenson married Francina Augustina Frisby of Cecil County, and the couple set to building Ogle Hall and a family. They would have two sons, Frisby, born in 1736, and William, born in 1738 and their home was “apparently completed shortly before Dr. Stevenson’s death in 1739. Upon his death, a list of accounts show debts he owed to Richard Wilkins for building a vault and to Patrick Creagh for building stone steps. There are other debts listed for completing the house, kitchen and wash house.”²

The couple constructed a home that would prove a precursor to the regional model of architecture, known as the “Annapolis Plan. Ogle Hall is an elegant brick house built using the brick laying technique known as Flemish bond. Flemish bond is a technique that places one

¹ Eareckson, Jean Lee, Research Paper on Ogle Hall. Historic Annapolis, Inc., 1982.

² Eareckson, page 1

brick laid with the full length of the brick (stretchers) between a brick placed with the short end of the brick forward (headers), with the headers centered over the stretchers in the next course of bricks below. The building is covered in a steep gabled roof clad with wood shingles and buttressed at the ends by broad brick chimneys.³ Upon completion in 1739 Ogle Hall was 2 ½ stories, a simple box design, arranged symmetrically in what is known as a grand Georgian structure. The front façade on King George Street was 5 bays wide, one of which functioned as an entry way, and most likely was a central wood framed entrance door.

The house consisted of two entertaining rooms on the King George side, or front façade, with a longitudinal stair passage running behind these. All three interior spaces are interconnected through doorways. "Typically, the entertaining rooms were made to overlook a rear garden, but here the rooms are on the street side. However, the generous front yard, so atypical for these large town houses, may have been intended a space for a show garden."⁴

When Dr. Stevenson died in 1739 his will made no mention of his eldest son Frisby, suggesting that he might have died prior to 1739. Instead he left all of his real estate and two-thirds of his personal estate to William, and devised his widow, Francina, one-third of his personal estate."⁵

Three years later Francina married Daniel Cheston, a merchant, from Chestertown, Kent County. "In 1742 Daniel Cheston and his wife, Francina Stevenson Cheston cleared the title of the deed to lot 108 and paid off the list of accounts left by Dr. Stevenson by selling the property to James Calder, attorney of Chestertown. Included in the transfer were tenement houses, garden enclosures, fences and appurtenances situated on the same lot. Two weeks later, James Calder re-conveyed the title to Daniel Cheston."⁶ Also in 1742, Daniel Cheston leased the adjacent lot 89, which extended the property all the way to Prince George Street along

³ Maryland Historical Trust, Maryland Inventory of Historic Properties, Inventory No. AA-530, Maryland State Archives:http://msa.maryland.gov/megafile/msa/stagsere/se1/se5/001000/001600/001660/pdf/msa_se5_1660.pdf

⁴ Miller, Marcia M., and V. Orlando Ridout. "Architecture in Annapolis: A Field Guide." (1998): 109.

⁵ Eareckson, page 1

⁶ Eareckson, page 2

College Avenue. There is no evidence to indicate that the Cheston's occupied Ogle Hall during this time period.

In 1747, second term Governor Samuel Ogle, rented Ogle Hall from the Cheston's, and used the property as the family town residence. "Samuel Ogle was born in England in 1694. As a friend of the Calvert family, Ogle was sent to Maryland as Governor, arriving in December of 1731. One year later, Charles Calvert, the fifth Lord of Baltimore, arrived and assumed the Governorship and Ogle stepped down as Colonial Governor. This period of personal government by Calvert lasted seven months, after which Ogle was returned to the chief executive office, and became governor once again. Where he was living at this time has not been ascertained. There was no official residence of the governor during that time period."⁷

"During his early years in Maryland Samuel Ogle became a close friend of Benjamin Tasker, Sr. and helped to secure for him important appointments."⁸ Benjamin Tasker Sr., born 1690, was the son of Thomas Tasker of Calvert County. Benjamin inherited substantial wealth from his father, came to Annapolis, and in 1711 married Anne Bladen, daughter of William Bladen who served as Attorney General (1704-1718) and Commissary General (1708-1718). Benjamin Tasker was prominent in the political life of Annapolis and of the Provinces of Maryland until his death. The Tasker's had five children, Benjamin Tasker, Jr. born in 1720, followed by four daughters born in quick succession."⁹

"In 1737 Ogle and Tasker jointly purchased property in Prince George's County. Four months later, Ogle Paid Tasker for his half of the vast estate on which he would build the family country estate Belair."¹⁰

"In 1741 Governor Samuel Ogle married Tasker's daughter, Anne. He was forty-seven at the time, and she was eighteen. His term as Governor lasted until 1742 when Thomas Bladen,

⁷ Eareckson, page 2

⁸ Eareckson, page 2

⁹ Eareckson, page 2

¹⁰ Eareckson, page 3

Anne's Uncle, returned to Maryland with his wife, a sister of Lady Baltimore, and a commission from Lord Baltimore designating Bladen as Governor of the Province."¹¹

In 1742 "the Ogles departed for London, leaving Benjamin Tasker Sr. and a trusted friend with power of attorney to handle business affairs during which time, Tasker supervised the construction of Belair. While in London (1742-1747) two daughters were born to the Ogles, Anne in 1743 and Mary in 1746."¹²

As governor of the Province of Maryland, Bladen proved so tactless and quarrelsome that he had to be dismissed. Samuel Ogle was appointed governor once again, and succeeded Bladen. The Maryland Gazette of March 17, 1747 recorded "On Thursday last arrived within our Capes, his Majesty's Ship, the FOULSTONE, Captain Gregory, with Samuel Ogle, Esquire, and Lady on Board."¹³

Upon their return, the couple leased Ogle Hall from Daniel Cheston and used the dwelling as their town residence. They spent their time between Ogle Hall and Belair. Samuel Ogle turned Belair into an American thoroughbred horse racing stable and breeding farm. Horse racing was an integral part of Annapolis culture, and was often the featured event at the biannual city fairs. Ogle proved a major contributor to the evolution of the sport when "he imported the first pair of English-bred Thoroughbred horses to the Province of Maryland, Queen Mab and Spark. Spark was given to him by Frederick Calvert, 6th Baron Baltimore during a trip to England in 1740 and was presented to him by the Prince of Wales. These two horses would establish the Belair Stud legacy. Later, Benjamin Tasker, Jr. brought a Thoroughbred horse named Selima to Belair, where she became a prominent producer."¹⁴

"During the year 1747 the Ogle's daughter Anne died. A son, Samuel was born on July 17th, but he died of the measles in the following year"¹⁵ In 1749 and 1750 two more children were born, Benjamin and Meliora.

¹¹ Eareckson, page 3

¹² Eareckson, page 3

¹³ Eareckson, page 3

¹⁴ Baltz, Shirley Vlasak (1984). A Chronicle of Belair. Bowie, Maryland: Bowie Heritage Committee. pp. 9, 14-19

¹⁵ Eareckson, page 3

Samuel Ogle's lease of Ogle Hall and term as governor ended with his death in 1752. "By the terms of his will, the Taskers, Sr. and Jr. were the executors of the Ogle estate and guardians of his son, Benjamin, who was to be sent to England for his education."¹⁶ Benjamin also inherited Belair. A bequest was made to his daughters, Mary and Meliora as well as his wife Anne. Because Ogle did not own the house at 247 King George Street, Anne was obliged to move to Belair.

On Oct 1, 1753, Anne Ogles' brother Benjamin Tasker purchased Ogle Hall from Daniel Cheston. The two men worked out a payment plan over the course of one year, with a final payment of seventy tons of Baltimore pig iron. Anne then moved back into the house, and in 1760 Benjamin Tasker sold Ogle Hall to her. In 1761 Anne added lot 89 to her holdings. With this acquisition the property now extended to Prince George Street, and passed this way from owner to owner until part of lot 89 was divided by Margaret A. Mason in 1873."¹⁷

In 1761 Anne Ogles' son Benjamin, and primary heir to his father's estate was sent to school in England, where he attended Eton. He returned to Annapolis in 1767. In 1770, at the age of 21, Benjamin Ogle married Henrietta Margret Hill, a young lady whose grandfather owned a vast amount of property in the area of present Annapolis Neck Peninsula. In 1773 Anne Ogle sold Ogle Hall to the young couple before she set sail to England to accompany her grandson to school. Anne Ogle stayed in Great Britain during the revolutionary period, but would return to Annapolis sometime after, where she lived until her death in 1817. We do not know where she lived, but some speculate that it was in a house on Duke of Gloucester street.

"The years between the French and Indian War (1763), and the American Revolution (1775) have been called the golden age of Annapolis, a lustrous time of richness and promise, the fulfillment of New World dreams."¹⁸ The economy thrived and a building boom characterized by the construction of several large homes and new public buildings provided opportunity for members of all classes. "Demand for workers in the building and furnishing

¹⁶ Eareckson page 4

¹⁷ Eareckson, page 4

¹⁸ McWilliams, Jane Wilson, Annapolis City on the Severn. 2011 Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, MD. Page 73.

trades energized local craftsmen and brought artisans and tradesmen to Annapolis from other colonies and across the Atlantic."¹⁹ The city now boasted multiple Georgian style brick mansions and it was in this atmosphere that "Benjamin and Henrietta Ogle took to improve and embellish their new home. A 'party wall' to separate the Lloyd and Ogle Property was built in 1774. The two owners agreed to share the cost."²⁰ The Ogles also added a polygonal ballroom wing to the house. On what was the original back side of the house, behind the longitudinal stair passage, they built a grand ballroom wing, two stories high, that projects off of the main building. The addition was worked into the original 5 bay design of the back of the house (identical to how the front of the house was constructed) redefining 3 of the 5 bay areas, one of which became the interior entry way into the ballroom. One original window remains in the entry way of the College Avenue side entrance. The ballroom wing is "finely trimmed with a delicate and ornate plaster cornice. This ornate plaster remains in original form and has been restored to its original grandeur. The room features a fire place and mantel against the southeast end wall and paired French doors leading to the garden side of the house, across from the door that leads into the longitudinal stair passage." The fire place mantel found in this space today is a replica, based on the original 1776 design maintained in the fireplace mantel of the second story of the ballroom addition/wing.

"That changes were made in the house is made clear by a letter dated February 5, 1776 from Henrietta Ogle to her mother-in-law. It reads in part:

"I have not yet seen the Miss Anderson's- our House near being in Confusion and litter with Workmen and most of our Furniture sent to Bell Air has prevented me from inviting them over and Mr. and Mrs. Ridout have spent this winter at White Hall, so they have not been able to have them either.....Miserably afraid of a Man of War coming here and destroying our Town. It would be horrid provoking to have our house beat down now we have almost finished it²¹"

¹⁹ McWilliams, page 74

²⁰ Eareckson, page 6

²¹ Eareckson, page 7

On October 1, 1773, George Washington entered in his diary, "Still at Annapolis, dined with Mr. Ogle. Spent the evening at the Governors." There has been some debate that the location Washington references here was Ogle Hall. At the time Robert Eden was the last Provincial Governor who resided at the "Capital Mansion House, with its waterside vistas from each room, a small mount overlooking the city, and maintained, if not installed, an extensive ornamental garden."²² Benjamin Ogle Jr. would not serve as Governor of Maryland until after the revolutionary period, from 1789 to 1801.

"After serving his third term as governor, Benjamin Ogle retired from public life, dividing his time between his town house in Annapolis and the country estate Belair. He died in Annapolis on July 6, 1809 after a long and painful illness, leaving his wife Henrietta Ogle all his real and personal estate.

Henrietta Ogle lived on in the house until her death in 1815. Her will named her son Benjamin Ogle, Jr. as one of the executors. It provided for the disposition of some of her most treasured possessions. "On October 23, 1815 Benjamin Ogle, Jr., trustee for the Chancery Court sold lots 108 and 89 to James Steele of Dorchester County for \$6,760."²³

The house sold to James Steele was very different from the house originally constructed by Dr. Stevenson. The house that James Steels purchased was enlarged by the addition of the Ballroom added on by Benjamin and Henrietta. The structure expanded not only the downstairs, but added an additional wing to the upstairs as well. "The second story is reached via the grand stair in longitudinal stair passage. At the top of the stairs, to the west, a set of stairs provides access to the room above the ballroom addition. The arched opening features recessed side panels and fluted impostes from which spring a wide arch. A central keystone caps the center of the arch. Pairs of paneled wood doors were added to the arched opening in the 1841's. The room itself is finished with crossetted windows surrounds, a chair rail, and six paneled interior doors. This room also features an original 1775-1776 mantel, with scrolled and

²² Yentz, Anne Elizabeth, Hunter, Julie: *A Chesapeake Family and Their Slaves: A Study in Historical Archaeology*. Cambridge University Press, 1994. Page 264

²³ Anne Arundel County Deeds, Liber WSG 4, folio 65, 1815.

fluted consoles supporting a mantel shelf with dentils. A central and unadorned raised panel projects from the plain freeze board below the mantel shelf. The mantel has a quirked backbone that is clearly original to the 1775-1776 construction of the addition. As the date of construction for this addition has been documented, the quirked backbanding on the mantel is believed to be earliest known use of such detailing in the region.”²⁴

“The history of Ogle Hall for the next thirty-two years is really a family history that began not on King George Street, but at the corner of Randall and Prince George Streets (present 148 Prince George Street) at the home of Dr. James Murray and his wife, Sarah Maynadier (Nevett) Murray. Sarah’s first husband, John Rider Nevett, had died in 1772, leaving behind his widow and one daughter, Mary. Sarah then married Dr. James Murray of Annapolis, and they had seven children. Sarah’s daughter, Mary Nevett, must have grown up in the Murray household with six Murray children, her half-brothers and sisters.”²⁵

“At the age of twenty, Mary Nevett married James Steele of Dorchester County, and ten children were born to them. “James Steele was born on Mar 16, 1760 in Dorchester County. As the eldest and only surviving son, he inherited a large fortune in land and slaves from his father and was one of the wealthiest men in Dorchester County, Maryland. Shortly after his marriage, he purchased "The Point" near Cambridge, Maryland, and resided there until he moved to Cambridge itself. He lived in Annapolis the last three years of his life and is buried in St. Anne's Cemetery there with his wife.”²⁶²⁷

When James Steele purchased Ogle Hall, “Mrs. Steel’s half-sister, Sally Scott Murray Lloyd was living next door at the Chase-Lloyd House. The Ogle Hall property was listed as containing a brick dwelling with offices, coach house, stable, ice house, and a garden with fruit trees. It included lots 108 and 89, the latter being undeveloped.”²⁸

²⁴ Inventory No. AA-530, Section 7 Page 8

²⁵ Eareckson, page 11

²⁶ Elias Jones. Revised History of Dorchester County. Baltimore, Maryland: The Read-Taylor Press, 1925. pp. 458-467.

²⁷ Edward C. Papenfuse, et al. A Biographical Dictionary of the Maryland Legislature, 1635-1789. Baltimore, Maryland: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979, 1985

²⁸ Eareckson, page 11

Eight of the ten Steele children married. One of their sons, John Nevett Steele married Anne Ogle Buchanan, a great-granddaughter of Anne and Samuel Ogle. In 1823 Henry Maynadier Steele married Maria Lloyd Key, daughter of Francis Scott Key. Between 1856 and 1860 he built the Victorian house directly across the street from Ogle Hall, at 248 King George Street. One of their daughters, Catherine S.M. Steele married Dr. Hyde Ray and owned the Paca House from 1864 to 1870.

James Steele died one year after purchasing Ogle Hall. His wife, Mary Nevette Steele lived on in Ogle Hall until her death in 1836. Both are buried in St. Anne's cemetery.

In 1839 the property was sold to Mrs. Steele's half-sister, Sally Scott Murray Lloyd. "Sally is a legend in Annapolis history, and must have been the toast of the town when she married the eighteen year old son of Edward Lloyd IV, recently deceased. Heir to one of the wealthiest families of Maryland, Edward Lloyd V now owned the house on Maryland Avenue, which had been begun by Samuel Chase in 1769 and completed by his father after purchasing the residence in 1770. He assumed his father's role as leader in the political life of the federal and state governments, as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives, a judge of the Maryland Court of Appeals, Governor of Maryland 1809-1811, a member of the Maryland Senate, and a United States Senator. In 1828 Edward Lloyd V sold the Maryland Avenue home to his brother-in-law, Henry Hall Harwood. Former governor Lloyd died at the home of his mother-in-law at the age of 55 in 1834. Sally Scott Murray Lloyd had been a widow for five years when she purchased the Ogle Hall property."²⁹

"Seven children were born to the Lloyds. One daughter, Sarah Scott married Lieutenant Charles Lowndes, USN in 1826. Another daughter, Anne Catherine, "had married Franklin Buchanan, USN. By the time that Commander Franklin Buchanan became the first Superintendent of the U.S. Naval School (soon to be renamed the Naval Academy) in 1845, Sally Scott Lloyd had purchased Ogle Hall. The Buchanan's lived nearby in the Superintendent's

²⁹ Eareckson, page 12

quarters.”³⁰ Sally Scott Murray Lloyd lived in Ogle Hall until she sold the property to then Governor Thomas Pratt in 1847.

The advertisement placed in a daily advertiser describes the property the following way:

“House for sale in Annapolis. Occupied by Mrs. Lloyd, formerly the residence of Mrs. Steele, containing 10 rooms and many conveniences for the accommodations of a large family. A good back building which includes a pantry, store rooms, etc., a large and good kitchen and laundry adjoining with excellent accommodations for servants. A paved yard with a pump of fine water, smoke house, ash house, coal house, stable and carriage house.

A delightful Garden, well stocked with an abundance of choice fruit, now in full bearing, the House yard and garden, includes a half square, it is divided from the next residence by a substantial brick wall 8 or 10 feet in height, and is well calculated to train grapes, etc. on as the house presents two fronts. It is surrounded by a large court yard, and is decidedly one of the most desirable residences in the City. The terms will be made accommodating to the purchaser and possession given immediately.”

“Based on historic maps and the Sache Birds Eye View of Annapolis, it appears that during the period prior to the Civil War, the dwelling was substantially enlarged to the southeast by a one-and-a-half story brick addition with a wood framed roof. The rectangular wing was connected to the main dwelling by a two story brick hyphen with wood frame on the first story. The construction of the addition coincides with the increase in assessments, which charged Pratt in 1860 for a single dwelling on King George Street, valued at \$6000. This evaluation shows a \$2000 increase from the previous thirty years of assessments.”³¹

It is thought that Governor Pratt purchased Ogle Hall in anticipation of leaving the gubernatorial position. In January of 1850 Pratt was elected to the United States Senate and did not return to his Annapolis home until 1857 where he lived until 1864.

³⁰ Eareckson, page 13

³¹ Inventory No., AA-530, Section 8, Page 5

In 1865 John Thomson Mason and his wife Margaret A. Cowan Mason leased Ogle Hall from the Pratt's. Two years later they purchased the property. The Mason's moved into Ogle Hall with their two daughters, 19/21 year old Louisa and 16/17 year old Betty (Elizabeth). Both daughters married naval officers. Betty married Theodoric Porter (son of Admiral David Dixon Porter) and Louisa married Silas Wright Terry who would go on to obtain the rank of Rear Admiral.

It is assumed that Betty Porter lived at Ogle Hall with her children, while Theodoric Porter served his forty-three year career in the Navy.

"By the 1870's, the Masons had begun to subdivide and sell portions of Lots 89 and 108, while retaining the property at 247 King George Street, referred to as the Mansion House in the land records."³²

Upon the death of Margaret Mason in 1900, Betty Porter received Ogle Hall in the division of property.

"The Sanborn Fire Insurance Map show that the rectangular brick addition erected on the southeast elevation in the mid-19th century was removed between 1903 and 1908. The property was subdivided, establishing what is presently designated as 243-245 King George Street. By 1908, an imposing brick structure that consisted of two family residences was constructed on the site. Based on the deed of sale that followed the death of Betty Porter, it appears that the building was erected for her daughters Margaret Mason Cusachs and Rosalie Porter Van Ness."³³

Upon the death of Betty Porter, Ogle Hall passed to the Porter daughters Rosalie Porter Van Ness and Marguerite Porter Cusachs. The Porter sisters owned Ogle Hall jointly from 1914 to 1923.

In 1923 Marguerite Porter Cusachs assumed sole ownership of Ogle Hall. Marguerite sold Ogle Hall and a small brick dwelling house behind it to the United States Naval Academy in

³² Inventory No., AA-530, Section 8, Page 5

³³ Inventory No. AA-530, Section 8, Page 6

1944, reserving a life estate for herself in the small brick dwelling, where she lived until her death. Ogle Hall has served as the Alumni Association headquarters since then.

On October 5, 1944 Governor Herbert E. O'Connor sent the following letter to the Alumni Association:

Dear Gentlemen,

It is with a great deal of pleasure that I take this means of expressing to the Naval Academy Alumni Association the sincere gratitude and commendation of the citizens of Maryland on your recent acquisition of the Ogle House in Annapolis.

Maryland, as one of the original thirteen Colonies, is abundantly rich in folklore and famous for outstanding examples of Colonial architecture which, happily, are still in excellent state of preservation. It is natural that we, of this present generation, appreciate the inestimable value of these things and seek to preserve them for posterity. Once gone, they cannot be replaced - of this, we cannot help but be certain.

The Ogle House, erected in 1737 by Dr. William Stevenson of Annapolis, and so called because of having once belonged to Samuel Ogle, one of Maryland's illustrious Provincial Governors, is one of our most renowned Colonial homes. Certainly in view of its historic and colorful background, it deserves a better fate than to fall into unappreciative hands.

The admirable action of the members of your Association in this connection will not be forgotten, and it is my belief that all who know of it must, of necessity, feel pride and not a little obligation.

Yours very sincerely,

*Herbert R. O'Connor
Governor of Maryland*

The United States Naval Academy Alumni House was dedicated on 13 October 1945.