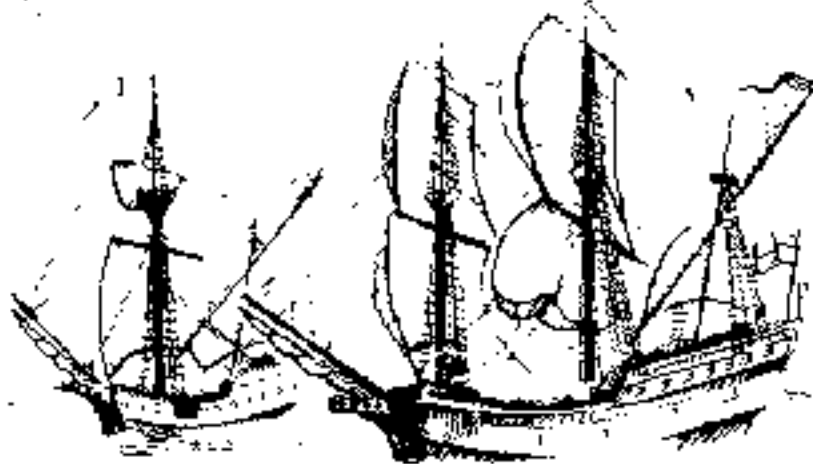


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A RELATION OF A VOYAGE MADE BY
MR. CYPRIAN THOROWGOOD
(FROM THE PATUXENT)
TO THE HEAD OF THE BAYE
April 24 - May 5, 1634

TRANSCRIBED AND ANNOTATED BY CLIFFORD LEWIS 3RD.

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE BY MR. LEWIS: I found this document more than 30 years ago in searching Dr. Hugh H. Young's Calvert Papers for data on Sir Edmund Plowden and the Province of New Albion, the charter for which was granted him by Charles I in 1634. I transcribed Thorowgood's "Relation" and found nothing bearing on Plowden, but my transcription brought out a number of facts and questions concerning Chesapeake Bay, as traveled by Thorowgood less than two months after the start of "St. Maries".

I believe an annotated "Relation" has never before been published.³⁸ I have tried to answer some of its questions and I hope my readers can answer more.

It refers for example to William Claiborne's activities and trading with the Indians in this Bay.^{X17} It states the "Susquasahannokes" cooked and ate their captives, a matter on which I got substantial corroboration.^{X19}

I am intrigued by Thorowgood's measurement of distance in the Bay--some quite accurate,^{X11} some very wrong.^{X7, X36} Just how did a ship captain in 1634 measure distance in the Chesapeake?

A storm blew Thorowgood's ship into a river in the northeastern part of the Bay.^{X21, 23} Am I right in believing it was the Elk River?^{X26} If so was his the first sighting of elk in that region? Would Iron Hill have affected his compass when in that area?^{X27}

Even with the "Elk River" episodes he makes no mention of spending nights on land, but he and his six companions were away 10 days. Just how big was a pinnace and how good for over night lodging, or would they have camped on shore?

There is the report of a rumored water passage between the Chesapeake and Delaware Bays.^{X24} This was in fact an Indian portage long before the Chesapeake and Delaware Canal.

I want to know more about the Indian "quartering house". Just what was it and

^{X17} See Thorowgood text preceding this footnote number, also see footnote. Same system other X footnote numbers.

how used?X34 How did Indians trap beaver?X33

For much of my footnote material I am deeply indebted to C. A. Weslager a notable historical writer for this period and location, and to John Witthoft, a well recognized archaeologist for this region on the staff of the University Museum in Philadelphia.

I know only a little about Cyprian Thorowgood. There is a report that he commanded one of Lord Baltimore's fighting ships in Baltimore's war against Claibourne in 1635. In the Maryland Archives there are also these two entries: In Vol. 4, p. 34, May 13, 1638, he enters a beaver trade item for Thomas Copley, and in Vol. 3, p. 96, he is appointed on April 8, 1641 high sheriff of St. Maries County (Weslager).

I would be grateful to my readers for more data. Please send it to the Editor of this magazine.

A RELATION OF A VOYAGE MADE BY MR. CYPRIAN THOROWGOOD
TO THE
HEAD OF THE BAYE¹

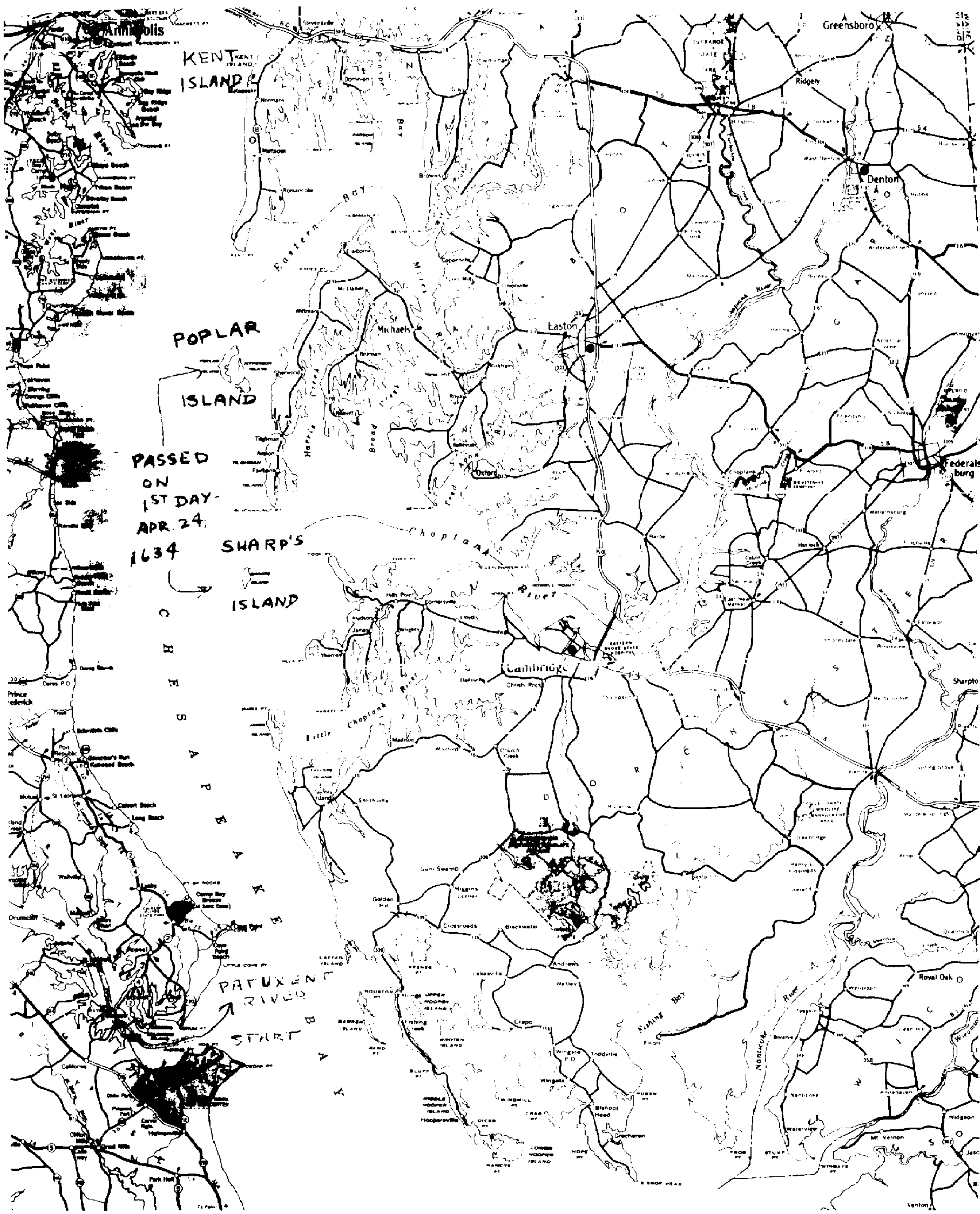
Upon the 24th of Aprill 1634 wee sett saile from the mouth of Patuxent², (a river about seven miles from St. Maries, the place where our Colonie is seated) a tradeinge, in a small pinnace manned with seven men, with a nation at the head of the baye called the Sasquasahannokes:³ Haveinge a faire winde, wee passed that day by two Ilands in the baye neere to the Easterne shore, the one called Clabornes Iland,⁴ the other Poples Iland,⁵ both which Captaine Claborne hath stored with hogges.⁶ the next to these is the Ile of Kent where Captaine Claiborne is seated, toward the Southend thereof, these three are not above a league⁷ and halfe distant from each other; the two former are but small but that of Kent is about twentie miles longe, haveing a necke of land running Eastward 2 or 3 miles⁸ all along this necke there is not above 3 roode⁹ of water betwixt it and the maine land, and at either end thereof about 3 foote deep when the tyde is out; Some seven leagues higher is a small Iland some two miles long calles Pooles Iland¹⁰ about a mile from the northerne shore it hath a creeke in the side of it with a marsh crossing the Iland, where the water begins to be fresh: Some 5 leagues¹¹ higher the baye is not above a league over, and divides itselfe into two branches, the one bending Northeast,¹² and the other Northwest,¹³ the latter opening itselfe to the Northeast¹⁴ and Southwest maketh a very large baye into which fall many small rivers, the northwest from the entering is the river which comes from the Sasquasahannokes¹⁵ at the entering whereof is a little Iland some 2 mile about called Pallmers Iland;¹⁶ whereof the Southeast end is very good land, and at the Northwest end there is a high rocke, toward the water it is very steep, but on the other side it ascends by degrees by this Iland boates use (to omitted? - CLrd) ride being in trade with the Sasquasahannokes: here we found a boat of Clabornes in trade with the Indians which had gather about 100 skins and 40 men loaden with beaver were sent a little afore to the Dutch plantation,¹⁷ but so soone as they see us a comeing Clabornes men persuaded the Indians to take part with them against us if we did happily! offer to take their boat, but the Indians refused saying the English had never harmed them, neither would they fight soe neere home, whereupon they weighed their anchour and went away, and what skins the Indians had left, they brought to us, and went home to fetch what more they had at home, which made in all 230, this was on the second day of Maye -- this nation is a very valourous and stout people liveing in pallizaded townes about 40 miles from this Iland,¹⁸ they are commonly 2 daies in going home in their canowes but can come downe in halfe a day because of many falls which as (sic) in the river, when these men take any prisoners in warre, they bring to their towne and there keepe them: Their great feast, at which times they bring them forth, and binde them to trees, makeing a soft fire about them at first and still bigger by degrees, until they be dead, in the meane while they use to cut out peeces of their flesh, and boil it and eat it before them from whom they cut it:¹⁹ this relation I had from a Negroe which lived among them for to learne the language,²⁰ In the time of our tradeing we had a little falling out with them which made (us omitted? - CLrd) more carefully to stand upon our guard, haveing done our trade, and now being in returne homeward the winde took us short

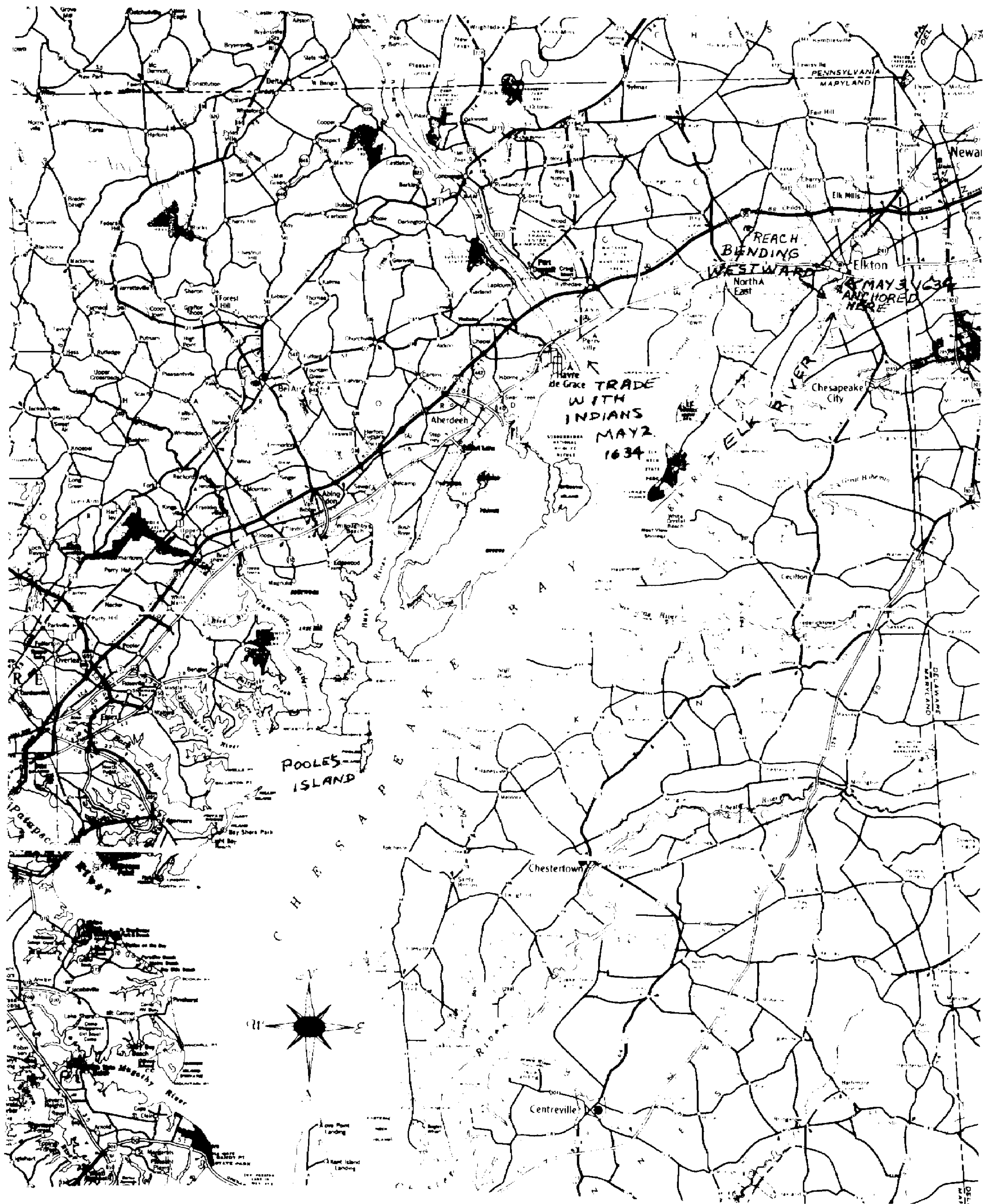
that we could not get downe wherefore we bent our course to the Northeast River:²¹ There is a necke of high land betweene this river and the baye some two miles long and not a quarter broad, upon the Easterne side of it are 3 or 4 point of low marsh land,²² Some two leagues up the river there is a river east²³ the head whereof wee veyly (sic) believe joineth upon Delaware baye:^{24, 25} Thus keeping our course some 2 leagues up the Northeast river we came to a reach bending westward,²⁶ and then northward, and then again northwest²⁷ (sic) with marshes on each side, entering into this reach and findeing it very shallow we came to an anchour;²⁸ the (river omitted? - CL3rd) kept still his former breadth some quarter of a mile upward, The next morning fower of us went ashore and left the three other with our pinnace, there we see many deere, yelkes²⁹ (sic) and turkies but caught none, beinge indeed more intent to discover the head of the river, or some Indian towne thereabout, wherefore we held our course some 7 or 8 miles on the Southeast side of the river³⁰ where passing many low places and heade of springs at length we came to the head thereof, where it is not above 2 rodes over with a gravell bottome and a swift streame fallinge downe betwixt two high lande,³¹ and in wadinge over it was not above our knees, being over the water we returned back on the northwest side thinking not to move any less in our way but in halfe way to our pinnace there was a branch runninge west somewhat bending on this south which forced us 3 or 4 miles to the head of it,³² where wee waded it under knee, so within an hour of sunsetting we came unto our pinnace. In all this way wee see noe signe of Indians, save certaine beaver traps.³³ and one quarteringe house, where the Indians use to bee in time of hunting³⁴ the country we judged to bee a very rich soile, with a gravell bottom in some places, and in others a deepe read clay, and towarde the water very marshie: The next morning our men being ashore right over against our pinnace by scraping in the ground found it mixed with a glistering oare,³⁵ whereof some little they brought to St. Maries; from the Capes to the head of the baye we guesse it to be neere upon 100 leagues;³⁶ Soe it pleases God that on the 5th³⁷ of Maye were safely arrived at St. Maries.

FOOTNOTES

- 1 Original spelling and punctuation strictly followed. Commas are the usual equivalent of our periods and colons indicate paragraphs.
- 2 Unless otherwise noted all current geographical references are from the U. S. Geological Survey maps.
- 3 Susquehannocks.
- 4 Today called Sharp's Island, and so shown on Augustine Herrman's Map of Maryland in 1673.
- 5 Today called Poplar Island, also so shown on Herrman's map in 1673.
- 6 This verifies a statement in Virginia Venturer, by Nathaniel C. Hale (1952) p. 164.
- 7 A league is three miles. Actually Poplar Island is 8 miles north of Sharp's Island, which in turn is 4 1/2 miles south of Kent Island. Did wind, tide or current make Thorowgood's measurements of distance inaccurate?
- 8 Kent Island is about 15 miles long, otherwise this description is good.
- 9 A rod (roode) is 16 1/2 feet.
- 10 A good description of Poole's Island, so named on Augustine Herrman's map of 1673, and still so called, about 17 miles north of Kent Island.
- 11 15 miles is quite close to the point where Elk River enters the Bay. Here and at note 37 the numeral is preceded by a squiggle resembling the numeral 1, but a check of all numerals in the document shows the squiggle is not a numeral.
- 12 Mouth of the Elk River.
- 13 Mouth of the Susquehanna River.
- 14 Mouth of the Northeast River.
- 15 Susquehanna River.
- 16 Now called Garrett Island. Crossing it is Route 40 and the tracks of the former Baltimore and Ohio Railroad.
- 17 "Claborne's" fur trade from here with the "Dutch Plantation" was of course New Amsterdam (Weslager).
- 18 Identification not certain, there being several Indian towns "about 40 miles from this island" (upstream). (Weslager)
- 19 "Although there are a number of historical references to cannibalism in warfare for the Northeastern Indians, actual instances seem to have been exceptional excesses. ...Among the Susquehannock sites of the lower Susquehanna Valley, only

Map continues at bottom of page 205.





Map continued from top of page 204

(continued from page 3)

- 19 the Washingtonboro Site, believed to date between 1600 and 1620 A.D., has loose adult human teeth and fragments of human soup bones included with animal garbage bone in the middens." (John Witthoft and W. Fred Kinsey, III, Susquehannock Miscellany, Harrisburg, 1959, pp. 36, 100.)
- At the Sheep Rock on the Raystown Branch of the Susquehanna River, Witthoft found a dry midden deposit from a Susquehannock occupation believed to date about 1560 A.D. Because this midden has never been damp, all sorts of organic debris has survived. ...The garbage bone from this site includes a number of loose human teeth and highly-broken and thoroughly boiled-out bone fragments from at least three humans (Witthoft). This note from Weslager: ..."You must understand however, that eating the flesh of a brave enemy had ceremonial overtones and perhaps religious connotations. (This is a deep subject about which much has been written.)"
- 20 This verifies a statement by N. C. Hale in his book Virginia Venturer, p. 183.
- 21 Judging by the description that follows, this is the Elk River.
- 22 Elk Neck.
- 23 Meaning flowing from the east?
- 24 6 miles up Elk River, the Bohemia River comes in from the east. At about this time the Indians had a trail from Bohemia Mills, on Great Bohemia Creek, a tributary of Bohemia River, running east about 5 miles to the Appoquinimink River, which flowed into the Delaware. (Weslager)
- 25 This may be the first English use of the current spelling of Delaware baye; earlier spelling being De la Warre.
- 26 This reach is 8 miles above the Bohemia River.
- 27 If my geography is right, this should be northeast. Furthermore, this agrees with the southeast side of the river, mentioned later. See map. Was this a slip of the pen or was his compass affected by Iron Hill?
- 28 Elkton Landing.
- 29 To my question is this the earliest reference to elk in this neighborhood, Weslager had this response: "A Relation of Maryland-1634" in Narratives of Early Md. ed. Hall, p. 80 refers to "Bufeloes, Elkes, Lions, Beares, Wolves, and Deare" in the "upper parts of the Countrey." I do not recall any earlier specific reference to Elks on the Elk River than Thorowgood's, but I would hesitate to say his was the earliest. You might check George Johnston's History of Cecil County also J. L. Bozman's History of Maryland, both generally reputable sources.
- 30 Big Elk Creek.
- 31 Probably Big Elk Chapel, about 9 miles above Elkton Landing.
- 32 An inaccurate description of Gramies Run? or is it the creek on the west just above Elk Mills?
- 33 How did the Indians trap beavers? (Weslager) Can any reader supply data?
- 34 What was a quartering house? How was it built and how used? Was this its first use by the English? Note that some years ago the Northeastern Chapter of Maryland Archaeological Society, under the leadership of George Reynolds, excavated a rock shelter on the Big Elk Creek near Elk Mills, apparently on the route of this walk. Weslager notes that a tract of land in the area of Elk-Bohemia Rivers was known as "Indian Range".
- 35 Still so?
- 36 The distance is considerably less, being about 190 miles.
- 37 Before the 5 of May 5 is a squiggle, similar to that mentioned in Note 11.
- 38 I have just learned that an unannotated Thorowgood text was included in a book of documents of Cecil County Maryland, 1608-1850, assembled by G. E. Gifford, Jr. and published in 1974. Publication was sponsored by the Calvert Elementary School Parent-Teachers Association and The Calvert School Alumni Association as a memorial to George E. Gifford, Sr., Rising Sun, Md. CLrd (Weslager).

Clifford Lewis, 3rd is a direct descendant of George Plowden (1663-1713) who settled in St. Mary's County in 1684 and bought "Resurrection Manor". Mr. Lewis's connection with St. Mary's County continues through George's grandson, Capt. Edmund Plowden (1751-1804), owner of "Bushwood" and whose daughter Mary Ann Plowden married John Joseph Jenkins (1786-1845). A granddaughter of this marriage, Harriet Ann Jenkins of Baltimore, married Nicholas E. Kernan of Utica, N. Y., and were Mr. Lewis's grandparents.