

Caledonia

Resource History

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1774 – George [Cole] Briscoe, two sons (Geo. C. and John C.), and five slaves listed on Morgan Morgan’s tax list (Rice 2006: 9). Morgan Morgan’s taxing area was between North Mountain and Opeckon between Middle Creek and Tuscarora Creek.

George Cole Briscoe was born ca.1733, the son of Dr. Philip & Elizabeth (Cole) Briscoe of Charles County, Maryland. Dr. Philip Briscoe (Jr.), born 1680, was the son of Philip Briscoe, Sr., born 1647 in St. Mary’s County. Although there seems to be disagreement about who was the immigrant Briscoe (Dr. John Briscoe, said to have arrived with the Ark and Dove ships with the first settlers (1634), was apparently disproved), Philip Sr.’s early birth date indicates the Briscoes were among the earliest settlers in Maryland.

George Briscoe’s brother Dr. John Briscoe (Sr.), born 1717 in Maryland, also migrated to Berkeley County. According to the compiled “lost” John Aress tax list for 1774 (Rice 2006: 54), John Briscoe, Sr. served as a Berkeley Co. Justice in 1772; “took 1783 Tax List;” and owned 20 slaves. The John Aress tax district was described as the southern 1/3 of the county, including the area that would soon be Charles Town. Whether he was already at the Piedmont plantation, established by Robert Worthington ca.1736, west of Charles Town is not clear. The HABS documentation for St. George’s Chapel, located on Piedmont, notes: “In 1770 Piedmont Plantation was purchased by Mr. Nourse and from this owner was taken land for the church. As the Briscoes bought Piedmont from Nourse in 1780, the church was erected sometime between the dates of 1770 and 1780.” The 1809 Varle map shows John Briscoe (Jr., also a Dr.) on the Piedmont property. Dr. John Briscoe, Sr. died in 1788.

1777 – George Cole Briscoe & Frankey [Frances] Briscoe (his wife) sold to Richard Evans 378 acres of land on Middle Creek in Berkeley Co., Virginia in June (Briscoe genealogy: www.dishmanweb.com/wills.htm). In August they purchased two tracts in Berkeley County from Thomas Mason (Carol Mitchell’s Briscoe genealogy: <http://archiver.rootsweb.com/th/read/BRISCOE/1999-06/0930801330>).

These two properties are described in an 1807 deed: “the first of the tracts...[is part of the 3,000 acres] patented on the 5th day of October 1734 to Robert Worthington the Elder by patent from the King and afterwards...the 3rd and 4th days of June 1750 [?] by Deed of Lease and Release...to Robert Worthington the Younger being a part of the Land contained within the before mentioned grant...afterwards conveyed by the said Robert Worthington the Younger to Joseph Thomas Thompson...1760 & conveyed by the said Joseph Thompson to Thomas Mason by Deed of Lease & Release bearing date of the 1st & 2nd days of October 1765 & conveyed by the said Thomas Mason...to George C. Briscoe...375 acres...and the second Tract adjoining the forgoing Tract on the West side is part of a larger Tract of 400 acres granted to the said Thomas Mason by patent from Thomas Lord Fairfax...13th day of October

1765 & conveyed...by the said Thomas Mason to the said George Briscoe...149 acres..." (JC DB 4/215)

1798 – Berkeley County House and Slave Tax listed George Briscoe with a house in the country valued at 131.25. By comparison, William Morgan, whose “old log house, 28 x 18” was listed on the Jonathon Clark 1786 survey, had a house value of 131.25 as well. Abraham Vanmeter’s “framed, 30 x 16” house listed on the Clark survey was valued at 157.50 in 1798.

George’s brother John Briscoe at *Piedmont* had a house value of 2625.00, the highest valued house in the county in 1798.

1801 – George Briscoe wrote his will, describing his estate, “whereon I now live,” as “supposed to contain between five and six hundred acres, to be equally divided among them...to John Briscoe, George C. Briscoe, Cuthbert Briscoe, Philip Briscoe, Samuel Briscoe, Harrison Briscoe, and Edward Briscoe...” He also devised to his sons “and their sister Elizabeth Hedge, all my negroes, my horses, cattle, hogs, sheep, household, furniture & farming utensils...” (JC WB 1/207)

George Cole Briscoe (Sr.) died in July 1805 (probate July 9). The appraisement of his personal property included 24 slaves but what appeared to be a relatively modest household with only 3 beds, 2 tables, 6 chairs, a desk, “old chest of drawers,” and a cupboard, among smaller items. Crops included wheat and corn. The appraisement was done by John Griggs, Benjamin Kerchevel, and Smith Slaughter. (JC WB 1/277)

1807 – March, Geo. Briscoe’s sons began selling their interest in the two tracts, totaling 524 acres, to William Cameron of Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. The 1807 purchase by Cameron for \$9,432 was conveyed by John M. Briscoe, Cuthbert Briscoe, George Cole Briscoe [Jr.], Philip Briscoe, Samuel Briscoe, Harrison Briscoe, and Edward Briscoe “all of Jefferson County.”(JC DB 4/215)

The 375-acre tract was described as adjoining George [S.] Washington’s line and Smith Slaughter, while the 149-acre tract was “adjoining the foregoing Tract on the West side.” There is no indication on which tract George Briscoe’s house (ca.1777) was located, however, *Caledonia* is located on the larger 375-acre tract.

In 1808 and 1810, Philip and Edward respectively, each again conveyed their 1/7th interest in the property for \$1,347. Presumably this was because they were under the age of 21 at the time of the first conveyance, even though they were named in that conveyance. In both of these deeds, William Cameron was described as “of Pennsylvania.” (JC DB 5/44, Philip to Cameron, 1808 and DB 6/20, Edward to Cameron, 1810)

On the 1800 census, William Cameron was listed in Hempfield Twp, Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania, age 26-44, with a wife 26-44, a daughter 10-15, and two sons 0-9 years.

1810 – U.S. Population Census listed William Cameron in Jefferson County, Virginia, over 45 years, with a wife (26-44), two other females (16-25), six males (16-25), and one male 0-9 years.

No slaves were listed in the household. A later deed dated 1829, after Cameron's death, indicates that he had only two adult sons, William and Samuel, and a daughter Elizabeth Whitehall (of Lancaster County), and the youngest male – who is listed in the Cameron household in 1820 – may have just been too young to mention in the deed or died. It is likely that the extra people in Cameron's household in 1810 were free laborers.

Neighbors Smith Slaughter at *Richwood Hall* had 24 slaves, Samuel Washington at *Harewood* had 21 slaves, and John Briscoe (Jr.) had 49 slaves.

1820 – Jefferson County Land Tax for William Cameron gave a value of \$2,500 to the buildings on his 528 [sic] acres. By comparison, Smith Slaughter's *Richwood Hall* was valued at \$3,500 and George S. Washington's *Harewood* was valued at \$4,000.

Although William Cameron hailed from Lancaster Co., Pennsylvania (a German enclave), the family name Cameron is Scottish. Caledonia being the Roman name for Scotland, it is possible that it was William Cameron who named the Virginia plantation *Caledonia*, although the name does not appear in any of the early records.

1820 census showed William Cameron's household reduced to just himself and his wife and one young male child. There were 7 slaves listed however, and two household members occupied in agriculture.

1823 – William Cameron (Sr.) died intestate. His personal property appraisement, done by Jonathon Grantham, John Mayer (Moyer?), and Joseph Grantham, revealed a higher level of domestic lifestyle. The inventory included a dozen Windsor chairs and 12 other chairs, 3 looking glasses, several tables, 6 framed pictures, 7 beds, a Mahogany sideboard full of China and Queens Ware, a desk and other furniture, stair carpet and floor carpet, a gun with bayonet, Cooper's tools and materials, and butchering supplies, 10 slaves (including 3 children), a beehive, pigs, cows and horses, 5 bear skins, hay, rye, corn, oats, and wheat. The appraisers noted that some of the acreage was sowed by tenants, Jonathon Smith, Jonathon (or Joseph) Grantham, and C. Willis.

1829 – November 19th, following the settlement of their father's estate, William (Jr.) and Samuel Cameron, with the consent of their sister Elizabeth and her husband John M. Whitehill, exchanged deeds dividing the land (no money exchanged):

- 1) Samuel's first parcel of 133 acres was bounded on the east by Dr. Samuel Washington, on the south by Thornton Washington, on the west by Smith Slaughter (deceased) and by brother William Cameron's half, and on the north by "the great road leading from Charles Town to Smithfield." This parcel had on it, judging by later tax records, the *Caledonia* house valued at \$2,500 since 1820. The second parcel was located on the north side of the road, containing 131 acres. The total amount of Samuel Cameron's land was 264 acres. (JC DB 16/270)
- 2) William's (Jr.) first parcel was 253 acres and an 11-acre woodlot. (JC DB 16/110)

The following year, in the 1830 tax record, Samuel Cameron was listed (under Wm Cameron Heirs) with 263 acres adjoining William Cameron with a building value of

\$2,500. William Cameron was listed with 265 acres with \$800 in improvements “added for Building.”

The 1832 Winchester & Potomac Railroad map clearly shows the location of the houses of each brother. The railroad took a sharp left southward on the Cameron property where a depot was placed and became known as Cameron’s Depot.

1847 – Samuel Cameron sold 266 acres to Andrew Aldridge for \$13,343.75; 133 acres were south of the road and included a right-of-way for the railroad, and 133 on the north side of the road. (JC DB 29/228)

The 1852 S. Howell Brown map shows Aldridge’s purchase and it appears he may have also purchased part of William Cameron’s property as well.

The August 21, 1864 Jed Hotchkiss “Sketch of Engagement at Charlestown, Va.” shows that Confederate troops marched across the Aldridge property as they advanced on the Union line west of Charles Town.

The 1883 S. Howell Brown map shows the property still under the Andrew Aldridge ownership.

The 1925 Map of Jefferson County it is still under the Aldridge name and for the first time the title *Caladonia* [sic] is given to the house.