

## CHAPTER X.

# ELTONHEAD IN THE REVOLUTIONARY AND EARLY FEDERAL PERIODS

When the British marched on Lexington and Concord in 1775, Col. William Fitzhugh was well entrenched in Maryland politics. His oldest son George was just beginning to make his way in the world. Through his fathers seat on the Council, George Fitzhugh was on especially good terms with Governor Eden. This may have been the reason that he had just secured a position as Clerk of the Court for the newly erected Caroline County, on the Eastern Shore. The new county seat was named "Edenton" in Governor Eden's honor. After the revolution the name would be shortened to "Denton" to avoid the association with the Proprietary. In August of 1775, George Fitzhugh was modestly building his own little empire. He had just managed to convince the justices of Caroline County that he needed a Deputy Clerk and James Gilchrest was sworn to uphold the government of Henry Harford, who though still a child, would be the last Absolute Lord and Proprietary of the Province of Maryland (Horsey 1981, p.170). Furthermore, Col. William Fitzhugh had his tentacles in Ann Arundel County. In the 1776 Census of Maryland (Carothers 1992, p. 20), Joseph Hutton is listed as the overseer of William Fitzhugh's plantation consisting of 11 slaves in St. James Parish. This was a fair amount of slaves for an out-plantation considering that the wealthiest man in the Parish at the time, Samuel Chew, had 105 slaves.

At the outbreak of the Revolution, Col. Fitzhugh was still receiving a pension of half-pay from the Crown for his service in the British Army, and "knowing his influence in the [i.e. Calvert] County, the British made an overture to continue his pay if he would remain neutral, but all overtures were rejected" (Williams 1968, p. 138). However, he was not entirely swayed toward the patriot side, either. He was still serving on Governor Eden's Council, who incidentally owed him a large amount of money (Papenfuse et al. 1978). As late as January 1775, Col. William Fitzhugh wrote a scathing letter to his friend James Russel, who by this time had set himself up as a London merchant specializing in the Chesapeake trade. The Colonel bitterly complained about the Revolutionary Committee in Charles County: "The Committee of Charles County I am told, Went to the Court when Setting & Ordered them to Adjourn, forbidding them to proceed to any Business Except Criminal. This the Magistrates thought most prudent to Obey. The Lord Grant a Speedy

End to this Democratic Confusion.” (Lee 1994, p. 117). To James Russell, Col. Fitzhugh further elaborated that: “Charles Carroll of Carrollton (a Papist) and Samuel Chase a Factious and Desperate Lower [house member], are the Ringleaders of Mischief in this Province...Some talk of the Moderate punishment of Tarring and feathering, but those too Mild--patriots, Humanely, Prescribe Jibbeting, House-burning etc.” (Haw et al. 1980, p. 47-48).

By this time many Marylanders were clearly distressed with Great Britain. The burning of the merchant vessel, Peggy Stewart, in Annapolis Harbor had occurred the previous fall. From all appearances, Col. Fitzhugh was not only committed to the Court Party which supported the Proprietary (Haw et al. 1980, p. 47-50), but also one of Governor Eden's most loyal friends. William Eddis (1792, p.161) reported in June, before the Peggy Stewart incident that:

“June 5 1774

The Governor left Annapolis on the twenty-eighth of last month, in order to embark for England; where his private concerns require, for a time, his presence. He is now with his friend, Colonel F-----, at the mouth of the Petuxent. His dispatches are to leave town this evening, as the ship will certainly sail in the course of the week.

You will observe, that the inclosed resolutions of the citizens of Annapolis took in consequence of the act of Parliament for blocking up the harbour of Boston...”

Although the situation in Maryland was tense when Governor Eden departed from **Rousby Hall**, it spun out of control soon after. Eden's absence over the summer seems pivotal. By Autumn Samuel Chase and others had whipped up the crowds in Annapolis to a high emotional peak and William Eddis would write in a subsequent letter (1792, p. 171):

“On Saturday the fifteenth instant (October, 1774), the brig Peggy Stewart, arrived from London with servants, and an inconsiderable quantity of goods, among which were seventeen packages, containing two thousand, three hundred and twenty pounds of tea, consigned to Charles Williams and company, merchants, in Annapolis. This intended for importation was immediately discovered, and the citizens were summoned to a general meeting...”

The man actually behind the surreptitious shipment of tea on the Peggy Stewart was none other than Col. Fitzhugh's friend, James Russell in England. However, it was the owner of the ship, Anthony Stewart, that had to face the mob. “From an anxious desire to preserve the public tranquility, as well as to ensure his own personal safety”, Anthony Stewart proposed to burn the ship himself. By the end of the evening on October 19th 1774, he had torched his own vessel and she burned to the waterline (Land 1981, p. 301-303).

Needless to say, William Eddis' letters from America thereafter reflect a stunning change in attitudes on the part of colonials towards the Crown and the Proprietary. The days of extended Christmas parties and merriment he experienced with Governor Eden in 1770 were now well behind them and it was with no lack of irony that William Eddis would write simply (Eddis 1792, p.187):

"Annapolis, Nov. 8th [1774]

The Governor is returned to the land of trouble."

One further consideration about a potential conflict with Great Britain may have been influencing Colonel Fitzhugh to remain with the status quo. He had spent some of his formative years on board warships of the British Navy in the Caribbean during the Cartagena campaign (see footnote #38). This opportunity had allowed him to see close-up the awesome firepower of His Majesties "ships of the line" as they shelled their targets. It no doubt crossed his mind that the deep water less than a thousand yards from **Rousby Hall**, in the mouth of the Patuxent, could accommodate the entire British Navy. His plantation would be among the most vulnerable in Maryland to an attack by sea. Indeed, Lord Dunsmore, the ex-Governor of Virginia, had already concocted a plan where he would savage the Chesapeake shoreline with a fleet of forty vessels including some square rigged ships with ample numbers of cannon to carry out such a task. Col. Fitzhugh must have had a strong premonition that siding with the rebel cause could inevitably lead to **Rousby Hall** being reduced to rubble by naval gunners and marines.

Despite these odds, by 1776 Col. Fitzhugh would finally make a dramatic shift in allegiance. Governor Robert Eden's last Council meeting was on June 12, but he had already given up hope of actually governing the Province. By the late spring of 1776, Lord Dunsmore's fleet was heading up Chesapeake Bay and raiding parties were canvassing the surrounding shoreline for provisions. Calvert and St. Mary's Counties were put on alert. General Charles Lee of Virginia, the commander of the Southern Army, and John Hancock, President of the Continental Congress meeting in Philadelphia wanted to seize "the person and papers of Governor Eden" (Land 1981, p. 312). Gen. Lee was outraged. He had just captured dispatches from Gov. Eden which supplied Lord Dunsmore information concerning possible landing sites for the British fleet in Maryland. A group of militia under Capt. Samuel Smith was ordered by John Hancock and Gen. Lee to arrest Gov. Eden. For a time they thought the Governor was at the house of his friend Col. Fitzhugh and marched there to search the premises, but to no avail. Before he found the Governor, the Maryland Council of Safety sent Capt. Smith packing, and a message of rebuke was sent to John Hancock and the Continental Congress for overstepping their bounds (Land 1981, p. 312). On June 21, a group of gentlemen managed to accompany the Governor to the H.M.S. Fowey in Annapolis Harbor to bid him leave of the Province. However the event was not without

incident. When the skiff carrying the Governor reached the Fowey, a dispute broke out about the return of persons who had taken refuge aboard the vessel. In consequence the Governor's baggage was withheld from being loaded and he was forced to sail from Maryland without it (Land 1981, p. 314).

The timing of Gov. Eden's departure was propitious. Three days later Matthew Tilghman took the chair of the Maryland Convention that formulated a formal declaration of independence for Maryland. Soon after Gov. Eden departed, Col. Fitzhugh rose briefly to the forefront of the rebellion. By this time a deep split had divided the whigs (the old Country Party) into two factions. One was for radical change and was energetically headed by Mathias and Rezin Hammond and John Hall. They advocated broad suffrage whereby the ballot be extended to all men who would bear arms for the cause. The other more conservative faction called the patriots wished to maintain a less representative government where the elite (themselves) would be in firm control. The patriots wanted suffrage to be limited to those men who had 50 acres of land or 40 lbs sterling assessed value. Remarkably, after Gov. Eden left, Col. Fitzhugh had not only joined the Convention in August, but also had sided with the Hammond-Hall radical faction of revolutionaries(Land 1981, 312-318)!

It was clear that somewhere along the line Col. Fitzhugh had chosen the Revolutionary path. As with most things in which he took an interest, he devoted much energy to it. Although now well over 50, he too old to serve in the army (Archives of Maryland Vol. XVIII, p.685), but eventually supported the Revolution through several means. He was a member of the Maryland Convention in August of 1776 (Motsinger 1966, p. 310) representing Calvert County along with Charles Grahame, John Mackall and Benjamin Mackall of **Hollowing Point** (Archives of Maryland Vol. XII, p. 186) Col. Fitzhugh also served as a recruiting officer for Calvert County (Archives of Maryland XLIII, p. 202).

Col. Fitzhugh's sons, Peregrine and William Jr. who were born at **Rousby Hall** in 1759 and 1761, respectively, and no doubt roamed the acreage of **Eltonhead Manor** as boys, both enlisted in the militia. The younger, William Fitzhugh Jr., was commissioned as an Ensign in Capt. J. Grahame's company in April of 1778 (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXI, p. 37) and would rise to the rank of Captain by the end of the War. Peregrine Fitzhugh was commissioned as First Lieutenant in the same company in September of 1777 (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXVI, p. 384). Shortly thereafter, Peregrine assumed the rank of Cornet in Baylor's Company of the Continental Army and was captured by the British and later exchanged on 24th of March 1777 (Archives of Maryland Vol XXVIII, p. 6161). By the end of the war, Peregrine Fitzhugh attained the rank of Colonel in the Continental Army and served as an aide-de-Camp to General Washington (Motsinger 1966, p. 310; Papenfuse et al. 1978, p. 322). Besides attending to the serious business of War, Peregrine Fitzhugh's pursuits during the Revolution included the daughter of the wealthy Samuel Chew (1734-1786). In

December of 1781, following the surrender at Yorktown, Peregrine Fitzhugh married Elizabeth Chew (b-1765), a 16-years old from Ann Arundel County.

During the Revolution, Col. Fitzhugh contributed to the war effort by helping to collect silver in Southern Maryland for the rebels and in supplying gunpowder to the militia (Archives of Maryland Vol. XII, p.350). His gristmill was manufacturing flour to send north to the head of the Elk River (now Elkton) for General Washington's troops during the very hard year of 1780 (Archives of Maryland Vol. XLIII, p. 266). The timing could not have been more propitious. The winter of 1779-80 was one of the bitterest on record (perhaps reminding Col. Fitzhugh of that severe January of 1752 when he and his wife were married). The Harbor at New York was frozen so solid by January of 1780 that British troops were able to march across the ice with artillery to Staten Island and eventually to New Jersey to harass Washington's encampment at Morris Town (Carrington 1973 p. 484-491). The Revolutionary Army was near starvation that winter and spring due to the bad weather which prohibited food shipments from distant places. To make things worse, the local inhabitants were loathe to provide food for out-of-state troops passing through their lands. Not surprisingly, there were imminent threats of mutiny among the soldiers. Only the arrival of provisions from the south in the summer and Marquis de Lafayette from France (with the French fleet) kept the war effort from completely collapsing. It is significant that Col. William Fitzhugh's mill was functional at this time. Presumably this is the same mill that is indicated on the Griffith Map of 1794 (Fig. 17) and the one enumerated on the 1783 tax assessment along with a fullery and distillery. The presence of a gristmill suggests that grain may have at least temporarily replaced tobacco in the fields at **Eltonhead Manor** during the Revolution. The reasons for the switch from tobacco were undoubtedly the lack of access to foreign markets during the war due to the blockade of the mouth of the Bay by the British fleet, and a pressing need for grain to feed the Continental troops and livestock.

Late in August 1780 the British fleet began extensive operations in the Maryland portion of Chesapeake Bay to harass the plantations which provided rations for the Continental Army (Shomette 1995, pp. 44-45). When it became obvious that Gov. Sim Lee could do little to help defend Calvert County, Col. Fitzhugh tried to organize a locally funded fleet of shallow water craft to defend Southern Maryland. Eventually

Figure 17. Portion of Map of the State of Maryland by Dennis Griffith, 1795 (from: Papenfuse and Choale 1982, p. 52).



Rousby Hall became a target on the Patuxent River as evidenced by a letter he wrote to Gov. Thomas Sim Lee<sup>44</sup> (Peabody 1954, p. 129-130):

Low'r Marlborough, 28 Augt. 1780  
Sunday

Dear Sir

I had the Honor to address you yesterday by Mr. Smith on the subject of Depredations committed by the Enemy at the Mouth of Patuxent & Potomack Rivers; Since which I have advice by a Flatt immediately from Rousby Hall, that two Schooners & a Large Sloop of the Enemy came into the River & went to Town Creek, where there is a Public Warehouse, & yesterday about 3 o'clock in the afternoon Fir'd several guns, & there Remained whilst my Flatt pass'd up the River; My Skipper says that He heard more firing of guns about 10 o'clock at Night, which he supposes were at the same place-

I think it is Probable that the Enemy have taken the Tob<sup>o</sup> out of Town Creek Warehouse, & that two of the above mention'd vessells were carried up for that Purpose.

When the Enemy surrounded my House on the 15th ult<sup>o</sup>, they went off in Hast, Expressing Apprehensions of Danger from the Militia.

But if in many Instances they should meet no Opposition, as has been too much the case, I should not be surprised if they were to proceed up & Plunder every Warehouse on the River at least as far as Benedict.

I wish the Extraordinary success they have had, may not Encourage a more considerable number of Privateers to come out from N. York. Indeed by the number of Vessells they take, and the men who enter into their Service, they will themselves soon be Formidable.

I have the Honor to be

with very sincere Regard

Yr Excellency's Affec & Obe<sup>t</sup>. Ser<sup>t</sup>.

William Fitzhugh

Col Fitzhugh's worst fears were realized several months later. On November 5, 1780, when John Parran Jr's plantation was raided by three British sloops at Point Patience where "they took several Negroes & what stock they could collect & two vessels

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Sim Lee was the second elected Governor of Maryland serving from November of 1779 until November of 1782. He was from Prince Georges County. The Lee family had its start there when in 1700 his grandfather Phillip Lee moved to a tract of land his father Richard Lee of Westmoreland County Virginia had given him. A packet of forty letters to T.S. Lee from his two cousins with the same name (i.e. William Fitzhugh of **Chatham** and William Fitzhugh of **Rousby Hall**) were found in an old trunk at **Needwood** in Frederick County and are now part of the T.S. Lee Collection. In five of the letters William Fitzhugh waxes eloquently about his favorite passion--the racing of blooded horses (Peabody 1954 p. 3-4).

loaded with 8 hogsheads of Tobacco". Soon after they were downstream at Col. Fitzhugh's, where they dispatched a flag ashore and demanded provisions. When their flag was refused "they Cannonaded and burnt the Colonel's House" (Archives of Maryland Vol ILV, p.173). According to tradition this was not the only raid at **Rousby Hall** during the Revolution (Williams 1968, p. 139): "one of these was repelled during the absence of Col. Fitzhugh by Mrs. Fitzhugh, who armed her slaves. The enemy retired without a shot. Gaining information of a proposed night assault, Fitzhugh and his family left the house, and that night it was burnt by the invaders. Upon another occasion, a raid was made upon Col. Fitzhugh's residence when the whole family, including two young officers and Miss Plater, the granddaughter of Mrs. Fitzhugh, were at home. The young men had barely time to escape from the back door as the British soldiers entered the front. The old Colonel was arrested and carried through the rain and mud, accompanied by his devoted wife, who had not taken the time to dress herself and had no other protection from the falling rain than a military cloak which one of the officers threw around her. Just as the river bank was reached, a half mile distant, it was decided to release the prisoner on parole. They returned home and found that all the negroes had been enticed away, and that Miss Plater had preserved the house from destruction by her excellent conduct." According to Stein (1976), after **Rousby Hall** was burned, Col. Fitzhugh retired to a nearby plantation known as **Mount Mill**. We assume this is the same tract as **Mill Mount** in the 1882 Calvert County Land Records (Liber S.S. #5, folio 288). It was situated between Mill Creek and Purgatory Swamp (Appendix D).

Although Col. Fitzhugh was to later complain bitterly about the losses he suffered during the Revolution, his social position among the Calvert gentry remained intact. We have a vignette of the old Colonel and his wife which was passed down to James Hungerford (1859, p. 43) from his grandfather:

"Old Colonel Fitzhugh was a singular genius, and entertained some whimsical notions. Descended from a cadet of the noble English house of that name, one who had emigrated to Maryland as secretary to the lord proprietary, he was proud of his family, and held a high opinion of his own personal consequences as head of that family in his native state. His ideas of magnificence, however, were very remarkable, as his ceremonious manner of visiting the few of his neighbors whom he considered aristocratic stock will show. Among those few my grandfather had credit of being numbered. The colonel, at the period alluded to, owned a very large estate in the southern part of the county, at the head of St. John's Creek, now more familiarly known in the neighborhood as Mill Creek. The latter name was derived from a flour making establishment situated on the principal branch of the creek, from which the colonel exported annually, in his own ships large quantities of flour direct to London. The place is still occupied by a grist mill, the operations of which are confined to the use of neighboring plantations. On the summit of a beautiful hill, and two or three miles from my grandfathers residence, stood Millmount, the dwelling of Colonel Fitzhugh. Only the blackened ruins of the foundation walls of this house now exist, an emblem of the decayed fortunes of the family.

In those earlier days of the Republic the visits of neighbors were always day-long. I have often heard my father say that whenever Colonel Fitzhugh's family visited grandfather's, a negro boy, dressed in homely livery and mounted on horseback, would appear at the gate of Old Delight before breakfast (and the breakfast hour was very early in those days) with a message or note to the effect that "Colonel and Mrs. Fitzhugh would do themselves the honor of spending the day with Mr. and Mrs. Weatherby." Then, the hospitable answer being given that "Mr. and Mrs. Weatherby would be very happy to see Colonel and Mrs. Fitzhugh," accompanied by an intimation that the weir had yielded a three "foot" rock, or (if in season) that a brace of canvas-backs were on hand (for the colonel was something of an epicure), the "servant in livery" would without farther halt, turn and speed homeward.

Then would begin the note of preparation. If the season was spring or summer, Meshach or Jim were sent to the fields to select a fat lamb, and Jack was off to the river flats to catch crabs. No matter what the season was, Will was hurried away to rake the creek for oysters, and Sam had to slaughter a pig. The commotion among the poultry, also, was great upon such occasions. As for the finny tribe, the weir had already secured a sufficient quantity of them.

About nine o'clock the wild notes of a bugle, heard afar off sounding along the forest road, would announce the approach of the magnificent colonel; and at length the lumbering old family carriage (imported from England) would make its appearance, drawn by four stout horses and attended by a couple of negro out-riders, with coachman and footman of the same sable color, all in their rude homespun livery, and their leather caps and brass buckles and well-greased faces glistening in the morning sun. Then would follow the ceremonious reception of the host, who accompanied by his wife, always on such occasion met their visitors at the yard gate. And cordial, though stately, were greetings that ensued."

The passage above reveals that Col. Fitzhugh must have been a local legend in Calvert county. Of equal significance for us, is the mention of the culinary habitats of the times. The reference to lamb suggest again the reliance on sheep as a grazing animal, which as we saw earlier was one of Col. Fitzhugh's favorite items. Particularly interesting is the reference to sending one of the slaves to rake for oysters in creeks on the northeastern side of the Patuxent River near Point Patience. This suggests that there was considerable interest in oyster stocks in shallow waters as early as the 18th century in southern Calvert County. This is in opposition to the notion that oysters were not palatable for the colonists and that they left the stocks intact until the next century (R. Newell pers. com.).

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By the 1782 Tax Assessment, **Eltonhead Manor** had nineteen separate land owners on over 6,000 acres of land (Table 4). The reason for the upward adjustment in acreage from the original patent was obvious when we first plotted out the tract. It

**Table 4. Owners of Eltonhead Manor Listed in the Tax Assessment of 1782  
(from: Stein 1976)**

Owner	# of Acres	Land Val.	# of Slave	oz. Plate	# Horse	# Cattle	Tot. Ass.	# free
David Avis	143	71	4	0	3	6	193	4
John Avis, Jr.	50	25	1	0	3	5	57	5
Isaac Baker	50	25	1	0	3	10	75	1
Isaac Royster Baker	50	25	0	0	2	4	44	6
Jesse Bourne	967	1250	18	0	7	30	1717	5
Margaret Bourne	200	150	8	0	7	16	735	4
Joseph Breeden	100	50	0	0	3	12	84	6
Jeremia Catterton	50	28	0	0	3	7	43	5
John Clare, Jr.	107	40	1	0	2	10	189	6
Benjamin Elt	336	168	19	12	6	25	1200	3
Col. Wm.. Fitzhugh	2500	1875	15	0	1	44	3159	4
Robert Grieves	100	50	0	0	3	7	72	4
David Hunter, Jr.	200	225	0	0	3	6	248	3
Mary Ireland	200	200	9	8	3	11	610	4
Daniel Rawlings	200	200	19	32	6	25	1066	6
John Rawlings	300	300	15	3	8	22	938	10
Walter Wm.. Smith	33	24	0	0	0	0	24	1
Thomas Stallings	50	50	0	0	2	9	46	5
William Stallings	100	50	1	0	4	9	100	5
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,736</b>	<b>4,806</b>	<b>110</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>69</b>	<b>258</b>	<b>10,600</b>	<b>86</b>

clearly contained more than the original 5,000 acres in the patent. In fact we calculated that the original patent may have been closer to 8,500 acres!

Although Col. William Fitzhugh had more land than any of the others, he only had 15 slaves. Indeed a quarter of his work force would have been engaged in shuffling him about the county in his coach! Daniel Rawlings and Benjamin Elt, who had much less land in **Eltonhead Manor**, each held more slaves. At first this was

puzzling. Later we learned that during the Revolution the British had carried off 30 of the Colonel's slaves in a raid at **Rousby Hall** (see below). In addition he also had made use of convict labor imported from England (Ekirch 1987, p. 100). Presumably, the convicts were impressed into the British Navy during the raid. Furthermore, Col. Fitzhugh had considerable numbers of slaves at other plantations in Calvert and Ann Arundel Counties. No doubt many had been moved there from **Rousby Hall** to avoid British depredations.

After the Revolution, all evidence points to the fact that Col. William and Ann Fitzhugh did not return to **Rousby Hall**. This may have been because the British had left the manor house at **Rousby Hall** in such a shamble that rebuilding it would have been a sizeable investment. By the terms of John Rousby III's will, **Rousby Hall** (including **Eltonhead Manor**) was to be inherited by Elizabeth Rousby who had married George Plater. As guardians of Elizabeth, her step-father Col. Fitzhugh had the legal right to administer her property while she was underage. However, by the terms of the will, when his step daughter reached maturity and married in 1764, Col. Fitzhugh no longer had legal possession of the entire estate left by John Rousby III. The latter's will stipulated that Ann Rousby could have possession during her lifetime, of the plantation where Richard Bennett Esq. had lately dwelled in Queen Anne County. This undoubtedly was a splendid plantation since Bennett was touted in the **Gazette** as the wealthiest man in Maryland. However, there is no evidence that the Fitzhughs ever lived there. Instead, it was viewed by Col. Fitzhugh as his stepdaughter's. It is possible that the Fitzhugh's managed to swap tenancy of **Rousby Hall** for the dwelling plantation at Bennett Point with George Plater after the latter's marriage to Elizabeth Rousby in July of 1764 (Hollowak 1980, p.286). The other more likely possibility is that after 1764, Col. Fitzhugh bought **Rousby Hall** including, **Eltonhead Manor** and other properties left to Elizabeth from George Plater. This could have been one of the motivations for the slave deals he got into in the early 1760s with Charles Grahame. Col. Fitzhugh may have been pressed to raise some cash to pay for **Rousby Hall**! It is clear that George Plater now had a right to some of the land in Calvert County that had been left to Elizabeth by her father from a 1787-indenture (see Appendix D) that George and Elizabeth (Rousby) Plater made to their son John Rousby Plater, who had just turned 20 years old (Provincial Court Land Records TBH#2; folio 417-420). Unfortunately, the list of tract names which had been sealed inside the deed was not recorded by the clerk (Appendix D), so we may never know if **Eltonhead Manor** was among those plantations mentioned.

In addition to the complications involved in **Rousby Hall**, a move out of Calvert County seems to have made sense for the Fitzhughs from a number of viewpoints. Lee (1994) suggests that the gentry of neighboring Charles County suffered after the Revolution as the main focus of the nation inevitably shifted westward. The post road running along the East Coast originally ran through Charles County. After the Revolution, it was routed through the nation's new capital, Washington D.C. In the 17th

century, Calvert County had benefited from its geographic position between Annapolis and St Mary's. As the latter had faded into oblivion prior to 1700 and the former began to falter after the Revolution in favor of Baltimore, Calvert County too became increasingly isolated. Steiner (1904) commented that we have few descriptions of out-of-the-way places like Calvert County after the Revolution because travelers coming through Maryland simply would not be drawn to locations which were so far off the beaten path. At the same time, western Maryland was very attractive. The fields were not yet nutrient depleted as were the old tobacco plantations in the Tidewater region, and it was closer to the lands of the Ohio Valley which were then just opening up for settlement after the Treaty of Paris in 1783. Col. Fitzhugh was among those who grasped this new post-war reality and started to extricate himself from Calvert County. Also his son William Jr., had married Anne Hughes, a daughter of Daniel Hughes of Hagerstown. Her family attachments appear to have been strong and this may have been the reason that William Jr. wanted to move. By this time William Jr. seems to have been managing his father's lands and the Colonel and his wife were resigned to move with his son to a new area. It is probable that most of the Fitzhugh family stayed in Calvert County until at least 1790. That was the year of the first federal census and only one of Col. Fitzhugh's sons, Peregrine, is listed elsewhere in Maryland (Queen Anne County). Since Calvert County was one of the few counties in which the 1790 Census schedules were destroyed, we presume most of Col. Fitzhugh's family were still residing at **Mount Mill** or possibly Upper Marlborough prior to their move to Washington County.

Peregrine Fitzhugh left Calvert County shortly after his marriage to Elizabeth Chew. The couple initially stayed on the Western Shore, living Anne Arundel County. Most likely this was at or near **Herring Bay**, his father-in-law, Samuel Chew's plantation. Peregrine Fitzhugh became one of the first members of the Society of Cincinnati<sup>45</sup> in Annapolis. Samuel Chew had died in 1786 after mortgaging his Anne Arundel plantation to Charles Carroll of Carrollton and buying another 2,150 acres on Kent Island. Peregrine and his wife Elizabeth then went to live in Queen Anne's County (Emory 1981, p. 355), most likely at or near **Kent Fort Manor**, which Mrs. Chew had inherited at her husband's death. Peregrine Fitzhugh is listed in the 1790 Census as living in Queen Anne County with eight others in his household and 46 slaves. Nearby, his mother-in-law, Elizabeth Chew had a household consisting of two females and 105 slaves. For perspective, the wealthiest planter on the Eastern Shore of Maryland, Edward Lloyd IV of Wye, was listed with about 300 slaves in the same 1790 Census. Thus, between he and his mother-in-law, Peregrine Fitzhugh controlled enough property to rank comfortably among the local elite. Of course, they were related to most of the local gentry. Elizabeth Chew Fitzhugh's grandmother was Anna Maria Lloyd Dorsey, the daughter of Philemon Lloyd (1674-1732/33). Her Aunt Margaret (Chew) had married John Beale Bordley (1726/27-1804) of Wye Island, and

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<sup>45</sup> This Society was formed exclusively for and by officers who served in the Revolutionary War, for support of war orphans and widows, as much as for comradeship.

her Aunt Ann Mary (Chew) was married to William Paca, signer of the declaration of Independence (Papenfuse et al. 1979 p.218).

Peregrine Fitzhugh would soon forsake Chesapeake Bay and the local Eastern Shore gentry and move to Washington County, where his wife had inherited over a thousand acres from her father (Papenfuse et al. 1979 p.218). This was known as Chew's Farm below Williamsport. Her sister, Mrs. Benjamin Galloway, had also settled there (Williams 1906, p. 140).

In 1783 Col. Fitzhugh had apparently vacated **Eltonhead Manor**, although he was still listed with 2100 acres of it. A sign of absentee ownership was that only a few slaves were listed as living there. By 1785, Col. William Fitzhugh began buying land in Washington County, Maryland (Papenfuse et al. 1978, p. 322). About the same time he dispatched his son William to Kentucky to buy land there. However William did not leave Calvert County permanently since he represented it in the General Assemblies of 1786-1787 (Papenfuse et al. Vol. I, p. 92). In February of 1787 we have an indication that Col. Fitzhugh was very anxious to obtain clear title to 500 acres of land he owned along Pohick Creek in Virginia, where he was engaged in a boundary dispute with William Steptoe. Since the land was located on Doege Neck, near George Mason IV's of **Gunston Hall**, Col. Fitzhugh prevailed upon his younger cousin for legal advice. In early February of 1787 the Colonel sent him a letter to try to straighten the matter out and Mason's reply to him at "Montmill" is instructive for us because it shows the careful tracking of patents that was taking place even in the 18th century (Rutland 1970, p. 868-874):

"To William Fitzhugh

Gunston-Hall, February 23 1787

Dear Sir

In Answer to your Favour of the 9th, by your Son, respecting your Pohick Land, I can truly say that no Man is more disinterested in the Business, personally, than I am; having no other Motive for the Concern I have taken in it, but Desire of doing you Service. I have little more than a common Acquaintance with Mr. Wm. Steptoe; nor have I ever considered his, or his Brother's Interest, on this Occasion, further than as they appear'd concerned with yours.

The Difficultys occurring in securing your Land, & ascertaining the Bounds of it, are not created, or increased, by the Survey I have presented you; which by laying down the Meanders of the Creek, & the Lines of all the adjacent Lands accurately, only shows the Situation of the Lands, as they really are, with exact Shape & Quantity of the Land left by adjacent Patents for you and & Mr. Steptoe; and consequently affords the best Means of enabling you to judge of the most safe & proper Mode of securing your Land, and preventing present, as well as future Disputes. There was no Occasion, in drawing the Plat I sent you, for running the Line laid down in it as the proposed Division between you and Mr. Steptoe; because after an actual Survey of the Creek and of all the surrounding Lines, that or any other dividing Line therefore, not having been run, remains unknown to any one, and is at present, nothing more than an imaginary Line, laid down to make you more fully Master of the Subject, and of the Principles upon which I

recommended surveying Gosnell's old Patent for 500 Acres, in the Manner I have done; in order to obtain new Grant of Confirmation for it, in your own Name, describing the Bounds, so as not to interfere with adjacent patents.

You will find some Circumstances in this Affair too difficult & mysterious to be unraveled, or accounted for, without better Lights or Evidence, than is possible, at this time of Day, to procure; they can only be guessed at

There are three different patents, for 500 Acres each, granted on the same Day, to three different people (which I sent you Copyes of) each of them describing the same Course & Distance upon Pohick Creek, & the same Courses & Distance upon Pohick Creek, & the same Courses and Distances from the Creek, and binding respectively upon each other: one to John Gosnell<sup>46</sup>, one to Peter Smith, & one to Thomas Moulton; of these three patents (tho' dated on the same Day) it is evident that Gosnell's patent (under which you claim) is the eldest, Smith's the next, & Moulton's the last; because Gosnell's Patent has no Reference to either of the others, Smiths has reference to Gosnells, & Moulton's to Smiths: It is also evident from the Descriptions contain'd in these patents, that Gosnell's is lowest down the Creek, Smith's in the Middle, & Moulton's the uppermost; as it will be demonstrated, by comparing these Patents with each other with the courses of the Creek upon the Plat...

Impressed with these Ideas, I thought it best to resurvey Gosnell's Patent so as to interfere with Nobody, nor leave Mr. Stetpoe any Cause to dispute it, or enter a Caveat against such Resurvey; and it was therefore I proposed laying off Gosnell's Patent so as to include your ancient Settlement (Christmass's Tenement) and the 500 Acres at the upper End, giving it only its original Distance upon the Creek, & from thence binding with the Lines of the adjacent Lands; which was conforming more nearly to the original Patent, than any other Method I cou'd devise; and left for Steptoe 460 Acres below; tho' it wou'd leave out the Pocorson, with one of your new Settlements, where John Saxton lives; and tho' that Part of the Land, upon Normansell's Line, near Pohick old church & the main Road, is less valuable, from having been pillaged of its timber, than the Land lower down. Had Gosnell's Patent been my own, I shou'd not withstanding these disadvantages, have preferred this method to Risque of any Dispute...

I have deler'd your Son a Hogshead of Tobo. I lately received from your tenant, Saml. Athie. When I saw our Kinsman George Mason last (about Christmass) and spoke to him on the Subject of his Bond to you, he told me he did not think he shou'd be able to pay it, before he received a Sum of Money from Mr. Daniel Brent, due to him on Account his Father in Law, old Roan's Estate, upon a late Compromise & Settlement; for which he had taken Mr. Brent's bond, payable in two Years. I shall therefore, when Mr. Fitzhugh (i.e. the Col's son) calls here, on his

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<sup>46</sup> The original patent under which William Fitzhugh derived his Pohick Creek land is as follows: "JOHN GOSNELL, 500 acres, beyond land of Col. Speake in Petowmeck freshes, above the doegs Land & C East-ly upon land called Newberry's. 15 July 1657, VA Patent Book #4, p. 118, (175). Transport of 10 persons \* The rights by assignment of Nich. Merywether being part of a patent of 550 acres purchased of John Williams, dec'd. This land was given by will of John Gosnell to Elizabeth Ireland & renewed in her name 18 Mar. 1662." Elizabeth Ireland had been transported to Virginia by Wm. Dennison before 1657 (Nugent 1992, p. 352&356). Most likely, Col. Fitzhugh's grandfather had acquired this tract before his death from Elizabeth Ireland's heir(s) or assign(s) and passed it to his son George Fitzhugh (the Col.'s father), but we have not pursued this further.