

CHAPTER VII.

THE "BIGWIGS" OF ELTONHEAD MANOR: THE ROUSBY AND FITZHUGH FAMILIES

The integrity of the 5000-acre tract of **Eltonhead Manor** had actually been compromised in a major way as early as October of 1725 (Fig.12) when John Rousby Esq. had purchased 2,500 acres of it from Benjamin Bourne of England (Calvert Rent Rolls; Liber 3, folio 19). The new master of the western-most half of **Eltonhead Manor**, whom we will call John Rousby II, was the son of John Rousby I (see last chapter). From what we can ascertain the former was born near or at Oxford, in Talbot County, Maryland³⁴. However he was to grow up during troubled times. John Rousby II was still an infant when his father John Rousby I died suddenly at the mouth of the Patuxent River. John Rousby I had just inherited substantial holdings from his unmarried brother Christopher Rousby. Christopher Rousby was His Majesty's Customs collector for the Patuxent and was a thorn in the side of the Proprietary since he was not under Baltimore's jurisdiction. Tensions escalated after Lord Baltimore left the Province to defend himself against William Penn's usurpation of the northern borders of Maryland. Lord Baltimore had appointed George Talbot, a kinsman with a large manorial grant of his own on the Susquehanna River to oversee the Province.

Although there was considerable controversy about the incident, George Talbot, while drinking, stabbed and killed the un-armed Christopher Rousby. Hostilities between the Proprietary and Rousby had been brewing for several years and this seemed like a culmination of bitterness. It was especially strange that it happened aboard the Quaker Ketch, then moored at the mouth of the Patuxent River a few

³⁴ John Rousby I had married Barbara Morgan and settled in Talbot County, where he served as a Burgess to the Maryland Assembly from 1682-85. One of the plantations he acquired through his wife was **Plimhimmon**, near Oxford, which Henry Morgan had patented in 1658 (Tilghman 1915, Vol II, pp. 17, 323). Another was **Harridan** on the Miles River which the couple sold in 1682/3 (Talbot Land Records; Liber III, folio 108). John Rousby I was also listed as the owner of lot No. 2, when Oxford was laid out in 1685. John Rousby II eventually inherited **Plimhimmon** and sold it in 1718 (Tilghman 1915, Vol II, pp. 323, 340).

hundred yards off **Eltonhead Manor**.³⁵ Curiously, within a year John Rousby II also died apparently of normal causes on board another ship at the exact location, after returning from England. At the time of his death, John Rousby I had been administering his brother Christopher's estate. When the inventory was made there was no effort to separate John I and Christopher Rousby's property which went to his only child, John Rousby II. John Rousby I's widow Barbara then married Captain Richard Smith, who had a large plantation on the north side of St. Leonard's Creek (part of which is now Jefferson Patterson Park). When Capt. Smith married Barbara Morgan Rousby, he became administrator for John Rousby I's large estate. Capt. Smith must have been kept busy managing plantations in what is now St. Mary's, Talbot, and Calvert Counties so that John Rousby I's children would be well provided for. He not only managed to keep John Rousby II's legacy intact, but also must have seen to his education, quite possibly including law school in England, for he was designated Esquire by 1709, when he was not 25 years old (Papenfuse et al. 1978). The reason we give Capt. Richard Smith credit for bringing John Rousby II up, is that Barbara Rousby Smith had died by 1697, when her son was only twelve years old:

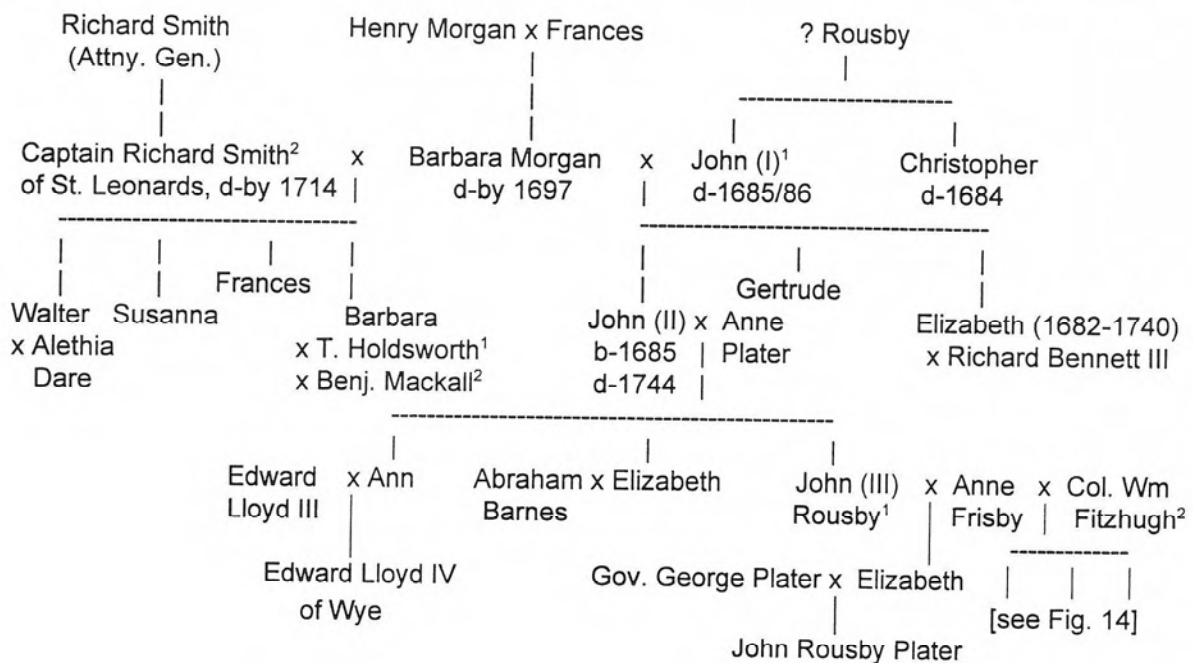


Figure 13. The Rousby Genealogy from mid-1600s to mid-1700s.

³⁵ The bicentennial edition of Stein's (1976) *History of Calvert County* presents both sides of Christopher Rousby's controversial death aboard the Quaker Ketch at the hands of George Talbot. The scene of this incident was well within sight of **Eltonhead Manor** in the mouth of the Patuxent River. It is interesting to note that two decades after this grisly event, members of the Council of Maryland felt that Christopher Rousby had indeed been murdered by the Calvert Family for his service to the crown (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXV, p. 116).

When John Rousby II was only about 22 years old he was a rising star in the Province. In 1707 he married Anne the widow of George Plater and was nominated by Royal Governor John Seymour Esq. to be "Naval Officer of Puttuxent" (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXV p. 227). What is remarkable is the fact that not only had John Rousby II married George Plater's widow, but he also managed to obtain the position Plater had held for the ten years before his death in 1707! Despite his youth John Rousby II was well connected even in his early twenties. In his quest for this post, John Rousby II was backed by Richard Bennett and Samuel Chew, men who would rise to become amongst the wealthiest in Maryland. John Rousby II's salary for his position as "His Majesty's Receiver for Patuxent" was £100 sterling a year (Archives of Maryland Vol XXV p. 322). That annual salary plus the rents earned on numerous plantations he had inherited in Calvert, St. Mary's, Kent, Queen Annes and Somerset Counties put him in the ranks of the elite. He was very active in land trading. In 1710 he bought **Susquehanna** and **Smiths Discovery** (both had been owned by his uncle and father) on the south side of the Patuxent from his stepfather Richard Smith (King 1989, p. 6). John Rousby II sometimes bought and sold the same tracts a number of times. For example he appears to have possessed several tracts near Parkers Creek (**Brantry**, **Miles End** and **Mill Run**) in partnership with George Young in the early 1700s, eventually selling them and re-purchasing them again in the 1720s (Rent Rolls; Liber 3, folio 11). In addition, in 1717 John Rousby purchased 70 acres of **Staffords Freehold** (also known as **Staffords Freshes**) adjacent to **Eltonhead Manor** from his stepson, George Plater (Rent Rolls; Liber 3, folio 21).

John Rousby II became a member of the Council in October of 1731 with the Proprietary himself, Charles Calvert Esq. presiding as Governor (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXV, p. 369). Therefore, he unquestionably was the most important man in Calvert County at the time, mingling not only with the elite families of the colony, but also on terms with Lord Baltimore himself as the latter attempted to regain the power his predecessors had maintained in Maryland society. Because of his increased provincial responsibilities, John Rousby II must have spent considerable time in Annapolis as well as in Calvert County building **Rousby Hall**. By 1733 in addition to owning numerous properties, John Rousby II was listed as possessing 33 slaves (Papenfuse et al. 1978, p. 706). This number compares to that of someone the stature of Captain Calvert whose 1734-inventory lists 55 slaves (Yentsch 1994 p. 173-174). Another indication of the social status of John Rousby II is suggested by his accumulation of almost 200 pieces of Chinese porcelain listed in his inventory in 1747 (Prerogative Court Inventories; Liber 35, folio 83). By this time his first wife had died and although there are indications he remarried, we are not sure to whom and how long she lived. At any rate John Rousby II had by this time three children of his own and two of the George Plater's's to look after.

As John Rousby II became more influential, one letter to Daniel Dulaney, the elder, written in 1737, shows that he could be quite irritable. However, cantankerous disposition might have been aggravated by an attack of gout (Steiner 1909, p.388):

To Daniel Dulaney, Esq., at Annapolis.

Sir

As it was at your request I Appointed Mr. Macnemara to be my Deputy at Annapolis so now I take the Liberty of Informing you that I Cannot Keep him any Longer in that Imployment you Very well Know that ye Collector is Obliged to follow the Instructions which he receives from the Commrs So of Course A Deputy ought to Observe Carefully wt Instructions he receives from the Principall officer but Mr. Macnemara will not mind any Instructions which he has had at times from me In fine he will Do Just what he pleases I Cannot gett from him any Lists of Shipping nor Accounts nor Hospitall Money & I assure you that his Negligence in the Office has been A Very Great prejudice to me in my office & I have been Blamed more on his account at home at the Custome house & then in all my Other Affairs I have Some thoughts of putting [Blank] in that office If you think he would be a proper person, If Sr you would please to favour me with Advice herein I should Esteem it a Very Great favour.

I Sincerely am with Very Great Respects

Dr. Sr.

Yr Most Obedt Humbe Servant

J. Rousby

October ye 26th 1737

I have the Gout in my Right
hand that I can Scarcely Write

Some indication of John Rousby II's prominence was the fact that this letter was followed up by a petition from Thomas Bordley (Steiner 1909, p.390). Bordley and Daniel Dulaney were the most powerful men in the lower house and set the foundation of what became the "Country Party" (Land 1981, p. 134). In his last years, John Rousby II was attended by Dr. John Hamilton, a Scot repudiated to be the best physician in Maryland at the time (Breslaw 1988). Dr. Hamilton was a testator of John Rousby II's last will in 1744. In it the latter bequeathed to his underage son, John Rousby III, 2,500 acres of **Gt. Elken Head Manor** which he had purchased from "Benjamin Brown of Great Britain" (this was Benjamin Bourne discussed earlier). John Rousby II's will provides fascinating insight into what might be regarded as scandalous activities at **Eltonhead Manor**.

As might be expected, in his last will (Appendix A) John Rousby II divided his extensive holdings between his son and daughters (he does not mention a wife, so we assume that he was a widower at his death). Moreover, he also set up a trust for Mrs. Mary Thompson. The trust was administered by three "gentlemen". One, Dr. James Somervell, a scot, (and the father of Alexander Somervell) was from Calvert County.

The other two gentlemen were from St. Mary's County: Charles King and Thomas Case. What is particularly unusual in this will is that John Rousby II provided for Mrs. Mary Thompson's daughters Araminta and Mary in the event of their mother's death, and made elaborate efforts to keep Mary's husband from having a part of the bequest. Mary Thompson was even allowed to live on in the "white room" of **Rousby Hall** for six months after John Rousby II's death. What is of particular interest to us here is the fact that Mary Thompson's children were to end up with 100 acres of land near Drum Point which John Rousby II specified he had purchased earlier from Charles Crowson. What happened to this land is obscure, but it very might be that Araminta Thompson eventually married John Miller and lived at **Busseys Orchard** in Hunting Creek Hundred (Hutchins 1992, p. 139-142).

By mid-18th century John Rousby III had come of age, inherited much of his fathers estate and married Anne Frisby, a great-granddaughter of Henry Sewell, who had once owned **Eltonhead Manor**. The future appeared propitious in every way, for the young couple had just had their first child, a daughter they named Elizabeth. But in the fall of 1750 there were definite signs of crisis in Calvert County which would cut short the lives of many regardless of their wealth and status. On October 31, 1750, the Maryland Gazette reported that "there has been much disease in Calvert County and many have died" (Green 1989, p. 79). The epidemic lasted into the winter. On Feb. 6, 1751, the Maryland Gazette carried notice that "John Rousby died last week of a violent fever, aged about 25, at his seat on Patuxent River in Calvert County; eldest son of the late Hon. John Rousby, Esq. Collector of His Majesty's Customs for the District of Patuxent. He leaves a widow and one child." (Barnes 1973, p.158).

John Rousby III's last will left most of his estate to his daughter Elizabeth (MD Wills; 27, folio 538), but her mother received one-half of his personal estate and was allowed to live on the land he had recently inherited from his uncle, Richard Bennett of Queen Annes' County on the Eastern Shore. Richard Bennett, at his death was "supposed to be the richest man in America" according to the Annapolis Gazette on October 18, 1749 (Barnes 1973, p.10). The two men must have been close despite the age difference (the Gazette mentioned that Richard Bennett died at the age of 83). Indeed, John Rousby III appears to have been Bennett's most trusted kin. Bennett's will, drawn the 26th of September, 1749, stipulated that John Rousby III should receive many slaves and cattle, stock of all kinds, his dwelling plantation called **Morgan's Neck** (now Bennett Point), and land near **The Wading Place**³⁶ called **Bluff Point** which he had

³⁶ **The Wading Place** was situated on the shore of what is now Kent Narrows and the name suggests that it may have been possible to wade from Kent Island to the mainland of the Eastern Shore of Maryland during the mid-17th century. Now there is a navigable channel between these locations and a large bridge conducting heavy vehicular traffic between the two shores on U.S. 50. **The Wading Place** was first patented by Phillip Conner in 1658 at the head of Piney Creek and was mentioned as a ferry site in 1671 and 1723 (Emory 1981, p.44).

recently resurveyed because the original patent was defective. Some of this property had actually been left by John Rousby II to his sister. In a codicil Richard Bennett added within a day or two of the main body of the will, he gave John Rousby III £250 toward the erection of a house over his and his wife's gravesite at Bennet Point.

Thus, it is clear that John Rousby III had just come into a substantial fortune and land holdings, not only from his father's will, but also from the recent death Richard Bennett.³⁷ After John Rousby III's death, his wife Ann was the executrix in control of **Eltonhead Manor** and the rest of his estate. It is impossible to tell how well equipped the 24-year old Ann Rousby was to deal with the responsibilities of a large complicated estate after her husband's early death. Ann Rousby was the second youngest daughter of Peregrine Frisby (1688-1739) who had represented Cecil County in the Lower House and owned 2,100 acres and 21 slaves at the time of his death (Papenfuse et al. 1978 Vol I, p. 332). Her mother was the daughter of Major Nicholas Sewell. He was born in England in 1655, the son of Henry Sewell who had owned **Eltonhead Manor** in the early 1660s (see Chap. VI). After Henry Sewell's death, Nicholas's mother, Dame Jane, married Charles Calvert who became the third Lord Baltimore. The latter commissioned Nicholas Sewell as Secretary of the Province (along with John Darnell) in 1682. Major Nicholas Sewell lost his provincial office in the revolution of 1689, but stayed on in St. Mary's County at **Little Eltonhead Manor** until his death in 1737 (Johnston, 1909 p. 292). With her aristocratic background, Ann Frisby Rousby may have felt comfortable in her role as a mistress of a large plantation which had been in the family previously, and seems not have been in a hurry to remarry. Lee (1994) has elaborated on the advantages of "feme sole" status in late colonial society. As a single female, Ann Rousby would have considerable more freedom and property at her discretion, than if she remarried. Upon her marriage, her husband would be solely entitled to all real estate that she possessed. This was one of the reasons that John Rousby III had to set up a trust for Mary Thompson -- to stop her husband from exercising his legal right in attaching property that Rousby wanted her and her children to have. Unlike the 17th century, when widows quickly remarried, by the mid-18th century an increasing number of widows chose to remain single.

Legend has it that Col. William Fitzhugh was not about to let Anne Rousby do that. According to an old story, he unrelentlessly pursued her until she agreed to marry him (Earle 1922). Although certainly not the earliest account, it was retold perhaps

³⁷ It is curious that John Rousby's sister Anne perhaps benefitted the most from Richard Bennett's estate. She had married Edward Lloyd (the nephew of Richard Bennet) and lived at Wye House until her death at the age of 48 in 1769. Her husband Edward Lloyd died the next year at age 59. Their graves are marked by elaborately carved urns at Wye House which are reputed to be the most beautiful monuments created during the colonial period (Howard 1922). This is in contrast to Richard Bennett's simple gravesite. The mausoleum he had requested was never erected before John Rousby died III.

most compellingly by Don Swan Jr. who wrote up vignettes from local sources (Swan 1975, p. 30):

“When John Rousby died, he left a young wife and a small child. Colonel William Fitzhugh of Virginia fell violently in love with the fair widow and wooed her with all his heart, and with great perseverance. However, she refused him so often that Fitzhugh determined to bring her to reason or desert her forever. As he left Rousby Hall to board his boat, which would take him across the river to his home in Virginia, a nurse with the child came into sight. The Colonel seized the baby girl and ran to his boat, not heeding the cries of the nurse or the frantic mother. Commanding his men to row out into the river, he stood up in the boat and held the baby over the water, swearing that he would carry out his threat, the lovely widow gave her word and became the wife of as determined a lover as ever lived.”

This story above may sour some modern students of history on Col. Fitzhugh, but we are not at all sure of its accuracy. In fact, unlike the other historical accounts we have of him -- this seems to be of twentieth century origin. The first place we have found this vignette is from Annie Sioussat's short book (1913) written fully 150 years after the events took place. Although the setting is undoubtedly accurate, hyperbole may be at work. More research needs to be done to unearth how far Col. Fitzhugh went in the wooing of Ann Rousby. Despite the fact that Col. Fitzhugh played jokes and could display poor taste, the above seems bizarre for someone who prided himself on being a gentlemen.

It is remarkable that after his wife Martha died, Col. Fitzhugh courted Ann Rousby, who was living quite a distance from his home in Virginia. It would be interesting to know just how Col. Fitzhugh came to meet her. Perhaps the Virginia Gentry of the Northern Neck decided that after several generations of inbreeding, they needed some new blood. After all, there was some precedent for this. In 1750, George Mason IV had crossed the Potomac River to court and marry William Eilbeck's daughter Ann, at **Mattawoman** in Charles County (Miller 1975, 39-42). However, **Rousby Hall** was even more removed from the northern Neck of Virginia. Their marriage notice appeared in the Maryland Gazette dated in January 16, 1752. At that time, William Fitzhugh was designated as Esquire and she was described as “the widow of John Rousby, deceased and a gentlewoman of excellent accomplishments”. When the wedding occurred, however, William Fitzhugh's ardor may have been cooled a bit by the winter weather. Although George Washington arrived by ship to the Norfolk area from Barbados (see below) with no problem, ice clogged the Maryland portion of the Chesapeake Bay.

The issue of the Maryland Gazette which carried the wedding announcement of William Fitzhugh and Ann Rousby focused primarily on the severe cold snap in January and February: “Our Rivers have all Bridges of ice, over which Horses and Carriages pass with

safety; and the Bay as low down as this place [i.e. Annapolis] which is about seven miles wide, appears to be frozen quite across. In the late very hard Weather, two Negroe near *Elk Ridge*, being away from their Masters House in the Night, were froze to Death on their return home.” William Fitzhugh might have found it useful to have the Potomac River frozen over enough to drive a carriage across, since he was presumably living in the Northern Neck of Virginia. The day before St. Valentine’s day, the Maryland Gazette finally reported that “the Kent Island Ferry boats are again crossing the Bay since the ice is gone”. Although the break in the weather was welcome relief the thaw of the ice on the rivers had some dire consequences: “a man drowned when he broke through the ice near Madam Holiday’s on Chester River. He and another man were playing on the ice when it happened” (Green 1989, p. 97).

Col. William Fitzhugh had inherited real estate in the Northern Neck of Virginia from his father George Fitzhugh, who died shortly after his only son’s birth in 1722:

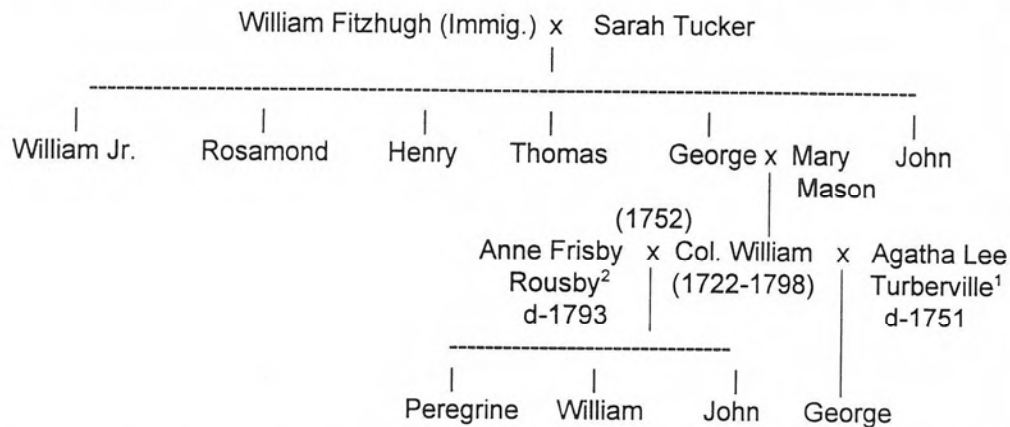


Figure 14. The Genealogy of Col. William Fitzhugh of Virginia and Maryland.

George Fitzhugh was one of the younger of five sons of William Fitzhugh, the immigrant. William Fitzhugh and George Brent acted as the first land agents for the Proprietor, Lord Fairfax. Using the land office, he assembled **Bedford**, one of the largest tracts in the Northern Neck, which at one point extended almost unbroken between the Potomac and Rappahannock Rivers. His grandson, Col. William Fitzhugh, retained a portion of his Virginia real estate for the rest of his life, and traveled there often. One plantation he leased to tenants was situated on Dogue Neck where George Mason IV would build **Gunston Hall** from 1755-59. Mason was his younger cousin with whom he would keep up a correspondence throughout his lifetime. Another neighbor was Lawrence Washington, with whom Col. Fitzhugh had served under Admiral Vernon

in the Caribbean (1740-42) in the ill-fated campaign to subjugate the Spanish stronghold of Cartagena.³⁸

The Cartagena expedition must have been a formative experience for both William Fitzhugh and Lawrence Washington. Indeed they maintained a correspondence after their return to Virginia, of which at least two letters from William Fitzhugh to Lawrence Washington still survive in the Havermeyer papers of the Lloyd W. Smith Collection (Freeman 1948, Vol. I, p. 231). In 1743, the year after Lawrence Washington returned from the Caribbean, both futures seemed bright. Both had lost their fathers but gained substantial inheritances and both married well. In July of 1743, Lawrence wedded Anne Fairfax called Nancy, the daughter of Col. William Fairfax, agent and cousin of Lord Fairfax, the Proprietor of the Northern Neck (Freeman 1848 Vol. i, p. 70). William Fitzhugh's first marriage had been to Agatha Lee Turberville (the third wife of George Turberville), who was daughter of Richard Lee of London. At Agatha's, death William Fitzhugh ended up with a legacy derived from George Turberville, who early in life had inherited **Hickory Hill** at the death of his first wife Frances Ashton. George Turberville's second wife was Lettice Fitzhugh, daughter of the venerable Ann Lee Fitzhugh McCarty (Freeman Vol I, p. 525). Thus, a propitious marriage along with his own inheritance, had made Col. Fitzhugh quite wealthy before he was yet thirty years of age. In view of their status, both William Fitzhugh and Lawrence Washington were elected to the Virginia House of Burgesses. In honor of their previous commander, when Lawrence Washington enlarged the plantation at Hunting Creek on the Potomac he named it **Mt. Vernon**.

However, Lawrence Washington's luck would soon run out. We have the first public indication that he was in ill health, when he requested a leave from the Virginia House of Burgesses in December of 1748. In the spring of the next year his symptoms of a stubborn cough suggested consumption and though he initially took up his duties

³⁸ The Cartagena expedition was mounted after October of 1739 when England declared war against Spain in what became known as "The War of Jenkins' Ear". The curious name arose because Capt. Robert Jenkins had inflamed Parliament with an account of how savagely he had been treated when the Spanish had taken and pillaged his ship in the Caribbean, amputated his ear, and set him adrift in a small skiff. The British mobilized a naval force plus 12,000 land troops in the Caribbean under Admiral Vernon, who managed at first to take Porto Bello (a small fortified seaport in on the isthmus of Panama, where gold was collected to be shipped to Spain). However, Admiral Vernon met with great resistance at the Spanish strongholds of Cartagena (now in Colombia) and Santiago de Cuba in a campaign that lasted until 1742. The 3,000 colonials raised from the Chesapeake colonies never saw much action because they were regarded as too undisciplined by the regular officers. However, casualties from the conflict were high because of tropical diseases of malaria and dysentery. One the reasons traditionally cited for the British failure at Cartagena (where the well built fortress of San Felipe de Barajas guarded the city) was the intense quarreling between naval and army commanders. According to Mahon (1890, p. 261): "The army thought that the navy might have beaten down stone ramparts ten feet thick; and the navy wondered why the army had not walked up the same ramparts, which were thirty feet perpendicular."

when the Legislature convened in May, he again had to be excused and left Williamsburg for the Northern Neck (Freeman 1948, Vol. I, p. 230-231). In desperation Lawrence Washington attempted to restore his health by making a trip to Barbados with his younger half brother George. However, in a letter from Barbados to his father-in-law, Col. William Fairfax, he complained: "this climate has not afforded the relief I expected from it, so that I have almost determined to try the Bermudas on my return, and if it does not do, the dry air of Frederick (Abbot and Twohig 1990, Vol. I, 53). Not only was the trip to Barbados not helpful to Lawrence Washington, it was almost catastrophic for his brother George who was exposed to tuberculosis bacilli when he was very weak from small pox. Lawrence Washington's vitality continued to decline in Bermuda and he decided to return to Virginia to try to put his affairs in order. He died at **Mount Vernon**, on June 26th 1752. Soon after, George Washington too came down with acute pleurisy, and he was to suffer several months before recovering (Marx 1955, p. 45).

The death of Lawrence Washington created a dilemma for William Fitzhugh. Because of his military rank and service, he was in line to replace Lawrence Washington as Adjutant. The post of Adjutant was awarded an annual salary of £100 sterling and was responsible for reviewing militia troops throughout the colony and making sure they were drilling and in general fighting condition. When Lawrence held the post, he was supposed to oversee the entire state of Virginia. Due to his ill health and travels, this had been impossible. It was decided that it would be more realistic to create four districts with the Northern Neck and Eastern Shore of Virginia having its own Adjutant. Although Col. Fitzhugh would have been the natural choice to replace Lawrence in the post, he had married Ann Rousby and was actually living in Maryland. There were some questions about his intentions to remain a Virginia resident and no doubt about his ability to serve "long distance". George Washington had taken a keen interest in military affairs in Barbados and was also anxious for the same position. Since it was clear that Lawrence Washington was dying when he returned from Bermuda, George anxiously wrote to Governor Dinwiddie (Abbot and Twohig 1990, Vol.1, p. 50) :

"King George Coty June 10th 1752

Hon Sir,

Being impatient to know Colo. Fitzhugh's result: I went to Maryland as I returned Home He is willing to accept of the Adjutancy of the Northern Neck, if he can obtain it on terms he proposes; which he hardly expects will be granted Him. The inclosed is his Letter, wherein I believe he inform's of his intention. He told Me, he would, when conveniency admitted, build a house in Virginia, at which he should sometimes reside...

I am Yr Honours most Hble Sert
G: Washington "

Thus, it would seem that at least initially, Col. Fitzhugh intended to maintain two residences- one in Maryland the other in Virginia. This also explains why he continued to retain his seat in the Virginia House of Burgesses. However, in December of 1754 Col. Fitzhugh seemed to have been swayed towards residing in Maryland. In that month he took an Assembly seat of the Maryland lower House representing Calvert County (Archives of Maryland Vol. L, p. 587). Col. Fitzhugh must have spent a substantial amount of his time at **Rousby Hall**, as indicated by a deposition of Robert Chesly of St. Mary's County who testified in October of 1753 that he had attended a ball where Col. William Fitzhugh had made several jokes and disagreeable remarks about the Catholic Church (Archives of Maryland Vol. L, p. 204&205). He must have been a dandy!

After his marriage to Ann Rousby, Col. Fitzhugh was an irregular attendee of the famous "Tuesday Club" in Annapolis where he was assigned the nickname of "Col. Comico Butman" reflecting his comical lighthearted nature (Brugger 1988 p.79). Records of the "Tuesday Club" show that Col. Fitzhugh first visited one of the meetings on the evening of May 26, 1752 at the house of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, the Scottish founder of the Club. Quite possibly Col. Fitzhugh became familiar with the latter through his older brother Dr. John Hamilton from Calvert County and one of the witnesses of John Rousby II's will mentioned earlier (Appendix A). Col. Fitzhugh was evidently a hit with Alexander Hamilton and his circle, and was made an Honorary member of the "Tuesday Club" when they met at the house of Beale Bordley on November 20, 1753. He didn't attend another meeting until December 16, 1754 when they met at the house of Samuel Middleton. At the next meeting, which fell on New Years Eve of 1754 at Walter Dulaney Esq.'s house, Col. Fitzhugh seems to have been so intrigued with the idea of a men's social club that he petitioned them to start a branch of it in Virginia called the "Hickory Club". In an elaborate charade, they granted him his petition. According to the records it appears that Col. Fitzhugh did not go to any more of their meetings in 1755. The Tuesday Club disbanded the next year after the death of Dr. Alexander Hamilton, its founder (Breslaw 1988,0 p. 346, 440, 519-523, 526-528 and 589). However, what is of interest to us here is that as late as 1755, Col. Fitzhugh was spending enough time in Virginia to think about starting a club for gentlemen there where light comedy and parody were the main venue. This suggests Col. Fitzhugh had an active social life in both Virginia and Maryland after marrying Ann and moving to **Rousby Hall**.³⁹

Col. Fitzhugh also had a serious side. By 1755 he was outfitting his plantation at the mouth of the Patuxent River with a shipment of earthenware from England

³⁹ In fact, Col. Fitzhugh still had major land holdings in Virginia on Pohick Creek as late as 1787 when George Mason of Gunston Hall was advising him on a land dispute with one of his neighbors, William Streptoe (Rutland, 1970 p. 868-874). Indeed Col. Fitzhugh continued to have several small properties in Virginia at his death in 1798 (see: Appendix A)

(Maryland Gazette Aug. 14, 1755). In 1756 Col. Fitzhugh and Mr. Charles Carroll were appointed by the Maryland legislature to negotiate a treaty with southern Indians (Archives of Maryland Vol. XXXI, p.121). Like several other prominent Virginians from the northern neck (including George Washington), William Fitzhugh would be drawn into the French and Indian War (Papenfuse 1978 p. 322). As the French began their campaign to erect a series of forts along the Ohio River to contain English expansion in 1754, Governor Horatio Sharpe appointed Col. Fitzhugh to command the militia forces for Maryland when the latter left Annapolis to visit the frontier and reinforce Fort Cumberland.

Gov. Sharpe, who was then acting not only as Governor of Maryland, but also as Commander in Chief of his Majesties forces in North America, engaged against the French. Sharpe implored Col. Fitzhugh to use his influence to convince George Washington not to resign from the army (Scharf 1879, Vol. I, p.450). At that point, Washington had been deeply offended by a policy which essentially put him as a Colonel, nearer the rank of Captain in the regular British Army. Although Col. Fitzhugh was not totally successful in bringing Washington immediately back into the fold, he nonetheless convinced him not to burn all his bridges with the established leadership, and not entirely resign his commission. This action proved to be pivotal in George Washington's military career with his comeback in the ensuing years after General Braddock's death at Fort Duquesne on July 9, 1755. All evidence points to the fact that George Washington was very grateful for Col. Fitzhugh's timely advice, and is one of the reasons the latter had considerable currency with the man who would be first President of the United States.