certain land at Portobacco and several portions of the tract known as "Harrison's Gift", aggregating nearly 1000 acres and also the realty owned by the Baker heirs around Baker's Creek, later known as Pope's Creek. Besides slaves, silver plate and other personalty, he was willed one-half of his father's library.

His receiving a goodly portion of his father's law books, it was evident, though only fourteen at his father's death, that he had inclination for a legal career and was planning to carry on the traditional profession of the Dents. In one way, he excelled his distinguished father, inasmuch as he became the Chief Justice of Maryland, the highest judicial honour of the Province.

Upon his marriage he established his dwelling-plantation on the land which was his inheritance around Pope's Creek and adding other acreage from time to time, his estate increased until in his matured years he presided over hundred of acres. At his seat which bordered the Potomac the traditional gracious living was emulated which has made Maryland famous throughout the land, for at his death there were 60 gallons of "cyder" and 30 gallons of imported rum in his wine cellar. In feudal-Maryland splendour he had 23 slaves divided between house servants and field hands. He furthermore maintained like most Maryland planters of wealth a private river landing, and a boat was listed in his inventory.

He was intimate with the Washington and Fairfax families on the other side of the Potomac and there was apparently much visiting back and forth. His daughter, Elizabeth, was visiting in Virginia when George Washington returned from his campaign in Western Pennsylvania after the defeat of General Braddock. Colonel Fairfax dispatched a letter to him at Mount Vernon, but three maidens added an amusing postscript.

Dear Sir:

After thanking Heaven for your safe return, I must accuse you of great unkindness in refusing us the pleasure of seeing you this night. I do assure you nothing but our being satisfied that our Company would be disagreeable should prevent us from trying if our legs would not carry us to Mount Vernon this night; but if you will not come to us, tomorrow morning very early, we shall be at Mount Vernon.

(Signed) S. Fairfax  Ann Spearing  Eliz' th Dent

In 1711 his sister, Elizabeth Dent, of lawful age to select her own guardian came into court and made choice of him as her guardian. In 1713 he with Barton Smoot was bondsman for his cousins, William Stevens Howard and Thomas Howard, the executors of their father, Edmund Howard, who had married his aunt, Margaret Dent.
About 1713 he courted and wedded Ann Harbert, apparently the sole-heiress of Captain William Harbert, Gent., a distinguished planter in the lower portion of the county in William and Mary Parish, by his first wife Mary. His father-in-law was one of the early vestryman of the parish and had also served on the local bench in Charles County. He died in 1718, although his last will and testament had been written on May 9, 1715. His wife’s will, dated July 8, 1718, was probated the same day as his or on July 26, 1718.

To his daughter, Ann, then the wife of George Dent, he devised a 600-acre portion of “Clarke’s Purchase” during life and at her death it was entailed upon his granddaughter, Rebeckah Dent, and his daughter’s expectant child “and to the heirs of the said Rebeckah and the said child or either of them forever”. The personal estate was divided between his wife and his son-in-law Dent. His wife bequeathed her entire estate to her Douglass grandchildren, her issue by a previous marriage.

Inventories of his personal estate were taken “At the Great House” on the dwelling-plantation, at “The Quarters” which indicated another seated plantation other than the dwelling, and “At Quarters at Mattawoman”. The latter was well supplied with livestock and negro slaves. The total valuation was £869/14/7, at which time Joseph Douglass and Douglass Gifford of step-relationship approved as the next of kin. On July 8, 1719, an additional inventory was rendered the court appraised at £187/14/7 which brought the total value of the estate over £1000. Listed in the second inventory was a shallup and the mention of a runaway indentured servant.

The value of his wife’s personal estate was considerable, but was not passed at court until August 24, 1719. Among the chattels were five negro slaves and one white indentured servant.

Like most men of the legal profession who acquired prominence in public service, the first office of note for George Dent was that of magistrate of the local bench in Charles County. The year 1717 was probably his initial appointment and he served virtually until he was elevated on October 20, 1728 to an Associate Justice of the Provincial Court, the highest court of the Province, and in 1732 he was made a member of the Quorum. He served continuously until he was appointed by the Proprietary Governor sitting in Council the Chief Justice of Maryland, an honour which he held at the time of his death.

While officiating as one of the Justices of the Court, he was appointed in 1737 the High Sheriff for Charles County and served in that capacity for about three years. Before entering the highest tribunal of Maryland
he was elected in 1719 a delegate from Charles County to the Lower House of the Assembly and remained in that body through 1727. With his many other duties he had time to serve in the provincial militia and in early records he was styled Captain, especially in 1726, and later Colonel, a grade which would indicate his commanding the provincial forces in the county. In the inventory of his estate was listed a silver-hilted sword which was certainly the symbol of his position and military honours.

Being one of the leading county squires, he was naturally placed on the commission "to erect schools for the encouragement of learning" and was made one of the "visitors" as trustees were called in that day. In 1728 he was on the commission for "better regulating" of the parishes in St. Mary's and Charles Counties. He was also a vestryman of William and Mary Parish at one-time and in 1751 there is a record of him as Colonel George Dent and his son George occupying pew no. 4 in the parish church at Wayside.

On February 23, 1750, he and Ann his wife made a deed of gift to their son, John, conveying to him for natural love and affections two plantations formerly in Prince Georges but by an readjustment of the boundaries fell into Charles County. One plantation was 500 acres of "Clarke's Purchase" and the other was the like acreage of "Clarke's Inheritance" on the Mattawoman. One of these was the tract entailed upon the unborn child of his wife at the time that her father executed his will, so it is evident that John was the eldest son and was born about 1713. The plantations were not to be enjoyed by their son until after their decease, but in the event of the son's death without issue or intestate, the plantations were to revert to the grantors' daughters—Elizabeth, the wife of William Penn, Sarah Dent, Rebecca Dent and Letty Dent and the heirs of their bodies.

His human sympathies were demonstrated in 1749 in his letter to Governor Ogle relative to a servant, Charles Eliot, of Nathaniel Folson, of Anne Arundel County, who was sentenced to death for horse stealing. It seems as if he was a servant first of a master of good standing who sold him to Folson, a man of evil character from whom Eliot frequently ran away. The last time he stole his master's horse in order to make a quick escape. Colonel Dent spoke of him as a young man not exceeding 21 and "in all probability if his life is spared take new and better courses".

Children of George and Ann (Herbert) Dent

1. Rebecca Dent, born 1714, died young.
2. George Dent married Eleanor Hawkins. q.v.


6. Rebecca Dent, the Younger, born 1735, married Thomas Hanson Marshall.

7. Letitia Dent married Kenelm Stoddert and Peter Dejean.


10. Margaret Dent married Kenelm Truman Greenfield.

11. Sarah Dent, spinster.

He drew up his last will and testament on April 28, 1754, it being probated on June 15, following, by Ignatius Doyne, Joseph Thompson and Richard Thompson.

To his wife Ann he devised one-half of the dwelling-plantation beginning at the river side near Mr. Richard Thompson to include the dwelling house, out houses, orchards and the tobacco house and to exterior of his land near James Latimer, but not to include the dwelling house where his son, George, was then living, on the proviso that she continued a widow and claimed no further dower in the other lands; 11 slaves to dispose by deed or will to his children and not otherwise; and one half of the personal estate.

To son George the other moiety or one half on the dwelling-plantation whereon the testator lived at Popes Creek with the dwelling house where George lived and also the other moiety at the decease of his mother; 10 negroes, and one half of the livestock on the plantation.

To son John Dent he confirmed the land at Mattawoman called "Clarke's Inheritance" and "Clarke's Purchase", each containing 500 acres which had been made over to him by deed of gift; also part of "Dent's Level" adjoining the other land given him of 280 acres, seven negroes then in his possession; livestock at Mattawoman and household furniture.

To daughter "Elizabeth now the wife of Mr. Richard Harrison" he confirmed the negroes given her at time of marriage; also the reversion in the land which he purchased of Newman Tomkins where Capt. Bates then lived during life and then the heirs "of me the said George Dent".

To four daughters Ann Ireland, Sarah Dent, Rebecca Dent and Letty Dent, the Upper Quarter at Mattawoman equally.

To daughter Sarah Dent three negroes and other personalty.
To daughter Rebecca Dent three negroes and other personalty.
To daughter Letty Dent three negroes and other personalty.
To daughters Mary Alexander, Eleanor Blackiston and Margaret Greenfield, having already provided for them on their marriage one gold ring each valued at 30 shillings to be ingraved "In memor of George Dent".

Executors—sons George and John Dent
At probate the widow, Madam Anne Dent, renounced the will and "would abide by what the Law would allow her". The bond of the executors was set at £2000, with Arthur Lee and Joseph Thompson as the sureties. The inventory taken on July 10, 1754 was approved by Rebecca Dent and Richard Harrison as the kinsmen.

His widow who rejected his dying wishes and demanded her thirds lived until 1764. Her last will and testament, dated May 4, 1764, was probated on June 20, following.

Her daughters, Elizabeth Harrison and Mary Alexander, were bequeathed wearing apparel and a mourning ring of "a Guinea price" each. To her daughter, Anne Ireland, she bequeathed Mulatto Tom, her riding chair and livestock. To her daughter, Eleanor McPharling [sic], she willed the negro wench called Moll then to said Eleanor's son, Herbert Blackiston. Margaret Greenfield, her daughter, received a slave, and Sarah Dent, an unmarried daughter, was willed negro girl Sarah, furniture and silver plate. Rebecca Marshall, another daughter, was bequeathed a negro wench called Cate, a pair of "white sating shoes and white silk stockings". Letty Stoddert, a daughter, was willed a slave, livestock and other personality.

To her son, George, she bequeathed the still, two new brass candle sticks, the Spy Glass and a mourning ring. To her son, John, she willed slaves, livestock and other personality.

She remembered several grandchildren—Ann Herbert Dent, Ann Dent, Anne Alexander, Anne Marshall, Anne Stoddert, William Herbert Ireland and Herbert Blackiston—with various articles of furniture, silver plate, table linen, feather beds and slaves. The residuary estate was devised to her son, John, whom she named executor.

Her daughter, Rebecca Marshall, is buried at Marshall Hall on the Potomac, and her headstone reads: "This stone is inscribed to the memory of Mrs. Rebecca Marshall daughter to Col. George Dent and Ann his wife who departed this life on ye 5 day of Dec. 1770 in the 33rd Year of her age by her loving husband Thomas Hanson Marshall".

JUDGE PETER DENT, GENT. ³
1694-1757

Peter Dent, youngest son of Colonel William Dent by his wife, Elizabeth Fowke, was baptized on January 13, 1694/5, so his birth probably occurred in 1694 at the Nanjemoy Plantation. By his father's will of 1704, he was devised 1569 acres of "Friendship" in Prince Georges County
and also a portion of "Gisborough", of about 400 acres, which fell to his father by the death of the latter's brother, George, without issue, and also slaves and other personality.

At the beginning of his public service, he continued to live perhaps at the parental dwelling with his brother, Thomas, but about the time of his marriage in 1726 he had settled on his plantation "Whitehaven", of 894 acres, on the Mattawoman in Piscataway Hundred, of Prince Georges County. He had purchased "Whitehaven" from his brother in 1715, and it became the traditional seat of his descendants for several generations.

His father had patented "Whitehaven" in 1695 at that time consisting of 890 acres in Prince Georges County, and why "Whitehaven" was selected as the name is a matter of some conjecture. Whitehaven is a town and port of considerable size in County Cumberland, England, where the Dents, according to present knowledge, had very little personal interest. The next year John Addison and William Hutchison patented jointly another tract which they called "Whitehaven", of 739 acres, in which is now the District of Columbia. Inasmuch as Cumberland was the ancestral home of the Addison family, some reason can be advanced why they selected that name for the second plantation bearing the name of "Whitehaven". Anyhow, "Whitehaven" became the dwelling-plantation of Judge Peter Dent and with resurveys and added vacant land, the plantation was brought up to 1330 acres. The name was also given to the Missouri Plantation of a cadet branch of the family some years later.

He married his cousin, Mary Brooke, born October 8, 1709, daughter of Major Thomas Brooke III and Lucy Smith his wife and the granddaughter of his great-aunt, Barbara Dent, by her husband, Colonel Thomas Brooke II, all of whom were active in the political and ultra-social life of Southern Maryland. It is well to assume that he constructed for his bride a spacious eighteenth-century dwelling on "Whitehaven", but apparently no vestige remains today.

As mentioned, his marriage was another union with the Brooke family. The arrival of the Rev. Robert Brooke, Esq., the progenitor in Maryland, is legion, and few if any American colonists could claim a more auspicious and spectacular entry into the English colonies. He came in a chartered ship, it is alleged, and it is definitely known through court records that a retinue of 21 man-servants and 7 maid-servants accompanied him "at his owne cost and charge". In his immediate family were his second wife, Mary Mainwaring, ten children and the first pack of full-blooded English fox hounds to arrive in America. The present blooded pedigree of American fox hounds are all acknowledged to claim canine ancestry to those
brought over by Robert Brooke. It has also been said that Lord Baltimore advised him that Maryland offered an excellent country for fox hunting which was the incentive for his leaving his London town house and his ancestral seat at Whitchurch in Hampshire. Then it is said that he was interested in the original voyage in 1633, but owing to the illness of his first wife, Mary Baker, at that time and her subsequent death prevented his accompanying the Adventurers in the Ark and the Dove.

But the most logical analysis of his leaving his native England is his loyalist sympathies and the rising power of the Cromwellians in Britain. Charles I on “Satterday [19th] October 1644. The King lay at Whitchurch at Mr. Brooke his howse that night”, a quotation from the English archives.

Robert Brooke had been ordained a priest of the Established Church, but there is no record of his officiating in that capacity in the Province, although the Anglican clothe was greatly needed at that time in Maryland. While his family espoused loyalist sympathies there is some inference of his becoming reconciled to the rule of the Puritans during their regime from about 1650-1658. He was immediately made a member of His Lordship’s Council by Lord Baltimore and held other honours until his death in 1658, including lordships on three baronial manors. His wife and all his children became converts in Maryland to the Roman Catholic Church, and his son and heir, Baker, married a niece of Cecilius, 2d Lord Baltimore.

Mary Brooke, the bride of Peter Dent, however, had been raised under the tenets of the Anglican Church, as her grandfather, Colonel Thomas Brooke II, had accepted the Established Church, although he had three brothers who were Jesuits. His wife, therefore, not only brought wealth but great service to the State, as her great-grandfather, Richard Smith, was the first Attorney-General of the Province, and her paternal grandfather, Colonel Thomas Brooke II, shared many honours, among which was a member of His Lordship’s Council of State.

Children of Peter and Mary (Brooke) Dent

1. Elizabeth Dent, born April 22, 1727, died testate 1796 unmarried.
2. Peter Dent, born Jan. 10, 1728, married twice but his wives can not be identified. q.v.
3. William Dent, born Aug. 8, 1730, married Verlinda Beall. q.v.
5. Lucy Dent married George Hardy on Feb. 11, 1753/4.
6. Anne Dent married ———— Clark.
7. Thomas Dent, born about 1735, married Elizabeth Edelen. q.v.


10. Barbara Dent.


As an infant, his godfather, William Hutchison, Gent., in November 1696, made him a deed of gift for love and affection of one-third of the undeveloped tract "Friendship" which had been patented for 1571 acres jointly by him and Colonel John Addison. It lay on the first falls of the Potomac, now known as Little Falls, and at that time far beyond any settlements in the Province.

In 1715 he conveyed his moiety of 400 acres in "Gisborough" to Colonel Thomas Addison at which time Philip Lee and Sarah his wife, being his step-mother and her second husband, released all title and interest of dower in the land under the conditions that Peter Dent discharged him and his heirs from all rents.

In October 1718, his grandmother, Rebecca Addison, Widow, assigned him a negro called Will then in his possession, but formerly mortgaged to her by Thomas Dent, brother of Peter, and afterwards delivered to Peter by the said Thomas Dent in part of his filial portion of his father's estate.

After 1721 he was no longer styled "of Charles County, Gent.", but he had established himself firmly as a gentlemen planter of Prince Georges County. In 1727 he was commissioned the Deputy Commissary for Prince Georges and was holding that office as late as 1749. On November 28, 1749, his son, Peter Jr., was appointed to the former office of his father as Deputy Commissary "in room of Mr. Peter Dent Sr.", but his father resumed the office on May 28, 1751 "in room of Peter Dent Jr." In 1730 Peter Dent Sr. was commissioned by the Governor and the Council upon the approval of Lord Baltimore, a Magistrate of the County, later made one of the Quorum, and at the time of his death he was the Chief Justice of the County. In 1743 he was the Deputy Surveyor for Prince Georges.

In February 1743/4, he surveyed according to warrant "Grubby Street", of 100 acres, which was patented by his son, Peter Dent Jr., the tract being described as near Rockey Branch on the north side of the said branch falling into Middle Seneca Creek, and was to be part of the Proprietary Manor of Calvert.

In 1748 a certain portion of Prince Georges in the southeastern part of the County was ceded to Charles County in response to a petition of certain freeholders, stating that "they labor under many inconveniences by being
obliged to attend Prince Georges County Court at so great a distance... such hardships would be removed were they separated from Prince Georges County and made a part of Charles County". The new line separating the two counties was drawn "through the lower part of Mr. Peter Dent's Dwelling Plantation" until it struck the Potomac River. Thus Judge Peter Dent after 1748 found part of his land in Prince Georges and part in Charles.

In January 1749, he and his wife deeded to their son, Peter, 180 acres of land on the Mattawoman in Charles County on which their son was already seated.

Judge Peter Dent died in the autumn of 1757. The following item appeared in the _Maryland Gazette_ of Annapolis as of October 20, 1757: "Sunday last died in Prince Georges County, Mr. Peter Dent who had been Deputy Commissary of that County upward of 20 years and for many years and at the time of his death Chief Justice of County".

By his last will and testament, dated October 5, 1757, he gave most affectionate advice to his children—"It is my earnest desire... my dear children that they be dutiful to their mother during her life and loving and obliging to each other the youngest always Submitting to the Oldest in Reason and the Oldest bearing with the Infirmity of the Youngest and advising them in the best manner they can that they live in unity and concord all their lives".

The instrument was admitted for probation in Prince Georges County on November 23, 1757, with his son, Thomas, as the executor whose bond was accepted in the amount of £1000.

To wife Mary the house and plantation whereon he lived, four negroes and other personality; the plantation included the land up and down the swamp—up as far as Joseph Marlow and down as far as the dividing line of Thomas Tennant.

To daughter Elizabeth the choice of four negroes not otherwise willed, and right to live with her mother until marriage, and personality.

To son Peter 10 shillings, having already deeded land to him and given him livestock and negroes.

To son William all land in Frederick County and also all land then in his possession.

To daughters Mary Beall and Lucy Hardye five shillings and what they had in their possession.

To daughter Anne a slave, personality and right to live with her mother till marriage.

To sons Thomas and Walter slaves and one-half of the land between the house where Joseph Marlow lived and upper end thereof and land taken up as part of the original tract Whitehaven equally; Thomas to have the first choice.
To daughter Eleanor negro at marriage and right to live with mother at home and same use of the plantation as her sisters Elizabeth and Anne.

To little daughter Barbara slave and right to live at home with her mother.

To youngest son Richard slave and other personality and the other one-half of "Whitehaven" and the adjacent land taken up from Joseph Marlow to the land made over to son Peter.

Executrix—wife Mary Dent.

The will was proved by William T. Stoddert, Kenelm Trueman Stoddert and Richard Trueman Stoddert. While he gave fatherly advice to his children, he failed to leave any for his widow who on the day of probation expressed her displeasure with the provisions and issued a formal renunciation to the court.

The value of the personal estate was filed at court on April 20, 1758, by his son, Thomas Dent, manifesting a value of £627/12/7½. Peter Dent Jr. and William Dent approved as the next of kin. His wearing apparel was appraised at £12/4/6 exclusive of a wide collection of silver buttons, silver clasps, knee and shoe buckles. There were many law books in his library as well as "one large Bible", four books of Common Prayer and a dictionary. There were also considerable quality of silver plate and fourteen negro slaves.

On December 12, 1758, his son and executor, Thomas Dent, rendered an account to the court and accounted for legacies delivered to the following heirs: Elizabeth Dent £44/16/8; Peter Dent Jr. 10 shillings; Mary Beall and Lucy Hardy five shillings each; Anne Dent £44/16/--; Eleanor Dent £29; and Mary Dent £191/10/--.

At the census of St. John's Parish in 1776, his son, Richard Dent, was the head of a family being aged 28, and in his household were: Mary Dent, his mother, aged 67; Elizabeth Dent his unmarried sister, aged 49; Elizabeth Hardy, aged 13 years; Elizabeth Welch, aged 16 years; and 15 slaves.

The last will and testament of his widow, Mary Dent, was proved in Prince Georges County on December 11, 1781, having been written on January 10, 1779. She provided for her two unmarried children—Richard and Elizabeth.

The unmarried daughter, Elizabeth, died testate in 1796, although her will was written in 1791. A number of negro slaves were bequeathed to her relatives, namely, brothers William and Walter, sister Mary Beall, niece Martha Dent, nephew John Burrell, sister Anne Clark, niece Mary Burrell, and Agnes B. Dent of no stated relationship. The witnesses were
Walter Dent Guy and Anne Guy. Her brother, Richard Dent, was named the executor.

The will of the unmarried son, Richard Dent, was dated December 12, 1808, and probated some ten years later on January 31, 1818. To William Dent Beall, son of his sister, Mary Beall, he devised all realty and named him as the executor. He bequeathed $500.00 to Walter Dent, son of his brother, Walter, and the same amount to Samuel B. Dent, son of his brother William, and $400.00 to Theodore Dent, son of his brother Peter. To Martha Tubman he bequeathed a negro boy which he had purchased from Charles Tubman and some silver spoons. And to Polly Magruder, daughter of Colonel John H. Beanes, he bequeathed $400.00 and silver spoons.

**William Dent**

1706-1757

William Dent, son and heir of Captain Thomas Dent and Ann Bayne his wife, was born at the Nanjemoy Plantation in the early part of the eighteenth century or about 1706. The personal estate of his parents which he inherited was rather negligible, owing to his father's misfortune, but through the gratitude of the courts he received the entailed estate "Guyther" and was the fourth generation to reside at the home plantation. By right of primogeniture he was duly acknowledged as the senior branch of the Dent family.

His wife was Ann, one of the two daughters and coheiresses of John Warren, Gent., of the Wicomico, by his wife, Judith Townley. The Warren was an ancient family of Cheshire, England, which goes back unbroken to the days of the Conqueror when the de Warenne scions were the most powerful barons of Britain. She was the great-granddaughter of Humphrey Warren, Esq., who was in Maryland as early as 1657, and who gave much service to the Province.

*Children of William and Anne (Warren) Dent*