

HON. ROBERT GOLDSBOROUGH,

BARRISTER, 1733-1788.

Member Continental Congress, 1774-1776.

A sketch begun by the late Henry F. Thompson and completed by
A. S. Dandridge

Hon. Robert Goldsborough of Dorchester Co., Maryland, son of Charles Goldsborough I. and his first wife Elizabeth Ennalls, was born in Cambridge, Dec. 3, 1733, and died there Dec. 22, 1788.

After receiving the best education then attainable in America he went to England when about twenty years of age, studied law in the Temple and became a barrister. On the 27th of March, 1755, he married Sarah Yerbury, daughter of Richard Yerbury of Bassinghall Street, London, and for four years after his marriage continued to live in London. His return to Maryland is mentioned in the *Maryland Gazette*, July 12, 1759.

"Sunday last came up the Bay the Charming Nancy, Capt. Ridgely, the Peggy, Elizabeth, Thetis, Betsy, and several others of the fleet. . . . In the fleet came Passengers William Hunter Esq., Postmaster General of Virginia; Messrs. Samuel Galloway and Hancock Lee, Merchants; Robert Goldsborough, Barrister, and his Lady, of this Province, and others."

From Annapolis the short sail across the Bay was soon made, and after an absence of about six years Robert Goldsborough was again at home, in Cambridge. He was at this time between twenty-five and twenty-six years of age, a handsome young man, tall and dignified, somewhat grave and reserved in temperament and manner, strong and self-reliant in character, and with a superior mind which had received the most thorough scholarly and legal training.

His family consisted of his young English wife and their two little daughters: Rebecca, two years old; and Sarah, an

infant, nine months old. Charles, the eldest child, three years of age, died shortly before the little family left England. It is not now known whether Robert Goldsborough made his home at "The Point" immediately upon returning to Cambridge, or whether he lived elsewhere in or near the town until (upon the death of his father, Charles, in 1767) "The Point" became his own property.

No mention of him has been found in public or private papers during the first few months following his return at midsummer, 1759. In the Autumn of that year he is mentioned in several letters from Gov. Sharpe to Lord Baltimore: "a well disposed and sensible young man who is lately come from the Temple. . . ." "a Young Gentleman of Good Abilities and Character who lately studied at the Temple. . . ." "a very promising Young Man. . . ." and the suggestion is made that he might be a valuable member of the Lower House were his father removed to the Council. It was not however until 1763 that Charles Goldsborough's removal to the Upper House left his seat in the Lower House vacant; and at the ensuing election Henry Steele was put in this place, qualifying on the 16th of Nov. 1763.¹ The session was stormy and short, and ended on Nov. 26th, being prorogued to May, 1764; and at the latter date, finding the temper of the Burgesses still "determined," Gov. Sharpe refused to meet them.

In Nov., 1764, Writs were issued for a General Election, and the result was announced as follows: ²

"Election Returns . . . Dorchester County.

Messrs. Daniel Sulivane

Philemon Lecompte

Henry Travers, and

Robert Goldsborough III^d.

Of the above 4 gentlemen one is elected in place of Col. Henry Hooper who with little intermission has been a Representative for above 40 years."

¹ *L. H. Jour.*, 1762-68.

² *Maryland Gazette*, Dec. 13, 1764.

The Assembly in which Robert Goldsborough took his seat at its opening on the 23d of September, 1765, is known as "The Stamp Act Assembly," and his position (as shown by his votes on various measures) was, while firm against unjust aggression and oppression, respectful and loyal to the Crown and gave indication of his future course of action. On the 25th of September, 1761, he had been appointed High Sheriff of Dorchester Co.³ and retained this office (an important one in Colonial times) until his election to the Assembly.

On the 4th of June, 1766, Robert Goldsborough was commissioned Attorney General of Maryland; ⁴ in October, 1768, he resigned this position, and for several years devoted himself to his law practice and the care of his estates, and did not take part in public matters again until the rapid advance of the troubles immediately preceding the Revolution obliged him to do so.

In 1767 Lord Baltimore gave particular command that Mr. Goldsborough should "be directly called to the Council Board, as of his Lordship's immediate appointment, with every mark of regard and confidence," but a letter from Gov. Sharpe (22nd of June, 1768), states that he "declined to qualify . . . for the Reason he has or will himself offer to his Ldp." ⁵

On the 22nd of June, 1774, the committees appointed by the several counties of the Province met in convention in Annapolis. This Convention took into its hands the government of the Province, and by it five Delegates were appointed to represent Maryland in a Continental Congress to be held in Philadelphia on the 5th of September, 1774. Three of them were present on the morning of assembling, as is shown by the following: ⁶

"Monday, Sept 5th, 1774. A number of the delegates chosen and appointed by the several colonies and provinces in North

³ *Commissions Record*, 1726-1736, p. 145.

⁴ Lib. J. R. 177, Hist. Soc.; Lib. D. D. 4, Annapolis.

⁵ *Correspondence Gov. Sharpe*, 1761-71, p. 509.

⁶ *Journal of Congress*, 1774.

America to meet and hold a Congress at Philadelphia assembled at the Carpenter's Hall. . . .

Members from Maryland:

Robert Goldsborough, esq.

William Paca, esq.

Samuel Chase, esq. . . ."

This Congress passed a series of resolutions against importation of British goods into the colonies, and set forth the grievances and the rights of the people in America; and grave thoughts of separation from England began to take possession of their minds. It was resolved that the people of Maryland join in an association with the other colonies to put an end to Commerce with Great Britain until certain acts were repealed, and the Convention of Maryland (which met again in Annapolis on the 21st of November after the adjournment of the Continental Congress) passed a resolution that "every member would, and every person in the province ought . . . to carry into execution the association agreed upon." Robert Goldsborough, although never in favor of separation from England, was one of the leading men in all measures tending to curb and resist her unjust exercises of her power. He was a member of every Maryland Convention, and one of the committee appointed on August, 17th, 1775, to prepare a "Declaration of Rights and a Form of Government for the State of Maryland" which was adopted. On the 14th of August, 1775, the important body known as "The Council of Safety" was constituted by the Convention, being at first composed of 16 members (eight from each shore), then seven, and then nine, which continued to be its number. Robert Goldsborough was elected one of the Eastern Shore members, Aug. 14, 1775, to serve until the next Convention.* This Council

* (Letter to Patrick Henry from Richard Henry Lee, pub. in *Va. Hist. Register*, i, 172.)

' Belle View, 20th August, 1776.

. . . I learn from Maryland that the Counties have excluded from the new Convention all those that have been famous for *Moderation*, as it is strangely called, and under this idea that Johnson, Gouldsborough, Stone and Tilghman are left out."

continued in authority until March, 1777, when it was dissolved, after organization of the State government. As member of each of these bodies (the Convention, the Continental Congress, and the Council of Safety) Robert Goldsborough seems to have held a prominent place among the men of whom it has been said: "Their intellectual character was not inferior to their moral courage, and the sagacity of their councils was consummate as the execution of their work."

After the organization of the government of the State of Maryland Robert Goldsborough was elected member of the State Senate for the term of five years. He took the qualifying oath on Feb. 8, 1777,⁷ was a member of important Committees, and present, whenever his health permitted, at sessions held during 1777, 1778, 1779, 1780, 1781. He was re-elected, but declined to serve; on Nov. 25th, 1784, "the President lays before the senate a letter from Robert Goldsborough, Esq. declining to accept an appointment in the senate," and on Dec. 4th, 1784, his successor, George Gale, was elected.⁸ He does not seem to have been present at the Maryland Convention of April 1788, Although his name appears in the list of delegates as given in one of the newspapers of the time:⁹

"Delegates chosen to serve in the Convention of this State which is to meet at Annapolis on the 21st inst. . . .

For Talbot County:

Jeremiah Banning, Col. Edward Lloyd, Hon. Robert Goldsborough, jun., Esq., and John Stevens, Esq.

For Dorchester County:

Hon. Robert Goldsborough, Sen., Esq., Nicholas Hammond, Daniel Sulivane, and James Shaw, Esqrs."

His active public life seems to have ended with his retirement from the State Senate, and his remaining four years were spent with his family at "The Point" in Cambridge.

⁷ *Votes and Proc. of the Senate, 1777.*

⁸ *Votes and Proc., 1784.*

⁹ *Maryland Journal, April 15, 1788.*

The following notice of his death was published in the *Maryland Journal*, Jan. 16, 1789, with incorrect date:

"Died at Cambridge on the 31st Ult.¹⁰ After a painful Illness Robert Goldsborough Esq. The Death of this distinguished Patriot will sensibly affect his numerous connexions & be sincerely regretted by every Friend to the late Revolution. He was early in Life advanced to the Station of Attorney General of Maryland, and held it many Years with great Reputation. He sat in the memorable Congress of 1775, and embarking his extensive Fortune and Influence in the Cause of his Country, remained steadfast and inflexible in his opposition throughout the Contest with Great Britain, nor did the Storms that often blackened over our Prospects at any Time shake his Courage.

"As he was honored in his Public he was also beloved in his private Relations; during a long and prosperous Career of Life his Family possessed in him a fond Parent and generous master. In his Friendships he was warm and sincere; and he had a Heart ever open to the Calls of Charity.

"But alas! the Hand of Fate has snatched him from us; and that Heart full of generous Patriotism and manly Virtue is compressed into a Clod of the Valley."

At "Myrtle Grove" there is an old Diary or Farm Journal, in which day by day for many years the state of the weather and family events, were written down at the day's close, by William Goldsborough¹¹ of "Haylands" (whose brother, Howes, married the eldest daughter of Robert and Sarah Goldsborough). From it are the following extracts:

"1787, Tuesday, first of May . . . at seven o'clock this morning Mrs. R. Goldsborough of Dorset died, at my brother, H. G.'s House. . . ."

"Wednesday, 2d . . . carried the corps to Cambridge, where it was interred same day in the Church yard." "Tuesday 23d

¹⁰ The Diary shows this to be a wrong date. He died Dec. 22, and was buried on the 26th.

¹¹ Son of Robert Goldsborough of "Myrtle Grove," Talbot Co.

Dec., 1788 . . . today I heard of my Cousin Robt. Goldsborough's death (of Dorchester County) a Gentleman respected by all good men. . . . Night, the above Report is contradicted by intelligence from Cambridge. . . .

"Thursday, 25th, Christmas Day. . . . We have today certain accounts of Mr. Goldsborough's Death. He died Monday last between 8 and 9 o'clock at night. "Friday, 26th, cloudy morning and not cold. My worthy good friend Mr. Goldsborough of Cambridge is this day interred in the Church yard of Cambridge—none of his Relations on the north of Choptank were at his funeral (the River being frozen over) except my Brother Howes and his family who have been over in Dorset three weeks." . . .

The graves of Robert and Sarah Goldsborough are not now to be seen in the church-yard in Cambridge (where four generations of their descendants are lying) and are probably under the present church, which is larger than the old building and is known to extend over many graves the stones of which were crushed and destroyed when the old church was burned.

As has been already said, Robert Goldsborough was married while at The Temple, in London. The following notice was published at the time.¹²

"A List of Marriages for the Year 1755

Mar. 27. Rob. Goldsborough of the Middle Temple, Esq.;—
to Miss Sally Yerbury. 5000£.

Sarah Yerbury was a daughter of Richard Yerbury of London, who died in 1754, leaving besides Sarah a daughter, Rachel, wife of Thomas Watson, and an only son Richard, married, but childless. Her father left a large estate (in Wiltshire and London) and it is through Sarah Yerbury that the claim arises to "The Yerbury Fortune" still hoped for by some of her descendants.

¹² *Gentleman's Magazine*, London, Vol. 25, p. 138.

Robert Goldsborough left nine children; Rebecca, Sarah, Elizabeth, Charles, William, Robert, Richard, Rachael, and Howes.

Sarah, Robert, and Howes left no descendants. The six children of Robert and Sarah (Yerbury) Goldsborough who have descendants are as follows:

Rebecca (Mrs. Howes Goldsborough.)

Elizabeth (Mrs. James Sykes.)

Charles, of "Horn's Point," whose daughter Sarah Yerbury Goldsborough married Governor Charles Goldsborough of "Shoal Creek" (thus re-uniting those estates, and blending in one the lines of Robert and his half-brother Charles). William, who moved from Dorchester to Frederick County, ancestor of that large branch of the family known as "The Frederick Goldsboroughs.

Richard, ancestor of the Goldsboroughs of "Springfield," near Cambridge, the Robinsons of Louisville, etc.

Rachael (Mrs. Horatio Ridout) who left one son.

Of the thirty-seven grandchildren of Robert and Sarah (Yerbury) Goldsborough, one was a Ridout, four were named Sykes, and thirty-two were Goldsboroughs.

Robert Goldsborough's wife having died the year before him, his large estate was divided among their nine children—Charles, the eldest living son, receiving "Horn's Point"; and Robert, the next son, the dwelling place now known as "The Point."

Robert Goldsborough, Junior, to whom his father's dwelling place "The Point" was thus devised, was drowned about two years after coming into possession, and (being unmarried) his brothers and sisters became his heirs. At different dates their holdings were made over to their brother William, who on July 30th, 1797, sold "The Point" with its beautiful old garden to Mr. James Steele.

Robert Goldsborough, Junior, is said to have been more like his father in mind and character than were the other sons. His

life of fine promise ended suddenly, when he was about twenty-five years of age. (*Maryland Journal*, Sept. 14, 1790.)

"Annapolis, Sept. 9. On Sunday the 5th instant as Mr. Robert Goldsborough, jun., of Cambridge, was crossing the bay from Kent Island to this place, the boat was unfortunately overset by a violent gust of wind off Tally's Point, and he with a Mr. Eaton, a gentleman from Ireland, perished in the waves. The two boatmen by clinging to the masts escaped the dreadful fate the others met with.

Mr. Goldsborough was in the twenty-fourth year of his age, a young Gentleman of whom very flattering expectations were entertained. The benevolence and sincerity of his heart were unbounded; indeed, he was every way an amiable character, and all who knew him must heave a sigh of regret at his untimely death.¹³

TO THE MEMORY OF ROBERT GOLDSBOROUGH

(By CHARLOTTE HESSELIUS.)

"Whoe'er thou art that readst these lines

ponder—be wise—

And boast not of to-morrow,

Does fond Hope & gay desire animate thy breast,

Is thy cheek flushed with youthful bloom?

So was his—who's name Friendship inscribes

With sorrow on the Urn.

His age scarce twenty-four

Snatched by the hand of Fate in one sad hour

From all that Earth could give.

The Greedy waves

Tenacious of their prize embraced him in

their wat'ry bosom

His guardian Angel

Unable to control the dire event

Lets fall his torch—and weeps—

¹³ *Maryland Journal*, 14 Sept., 1790.

The flame though languid is not quite Extinguished
He lives in the hearts of his friends
And ere long
The lamp of his life shall be rekindled
And glow with increasing Lustre
Forever
And
Ever."

THE GREAT SEAL OF MARYLAND.

CLAYTON C. HALL.

(Note upon the recently acquired replica.*)

The recent discovery of a replica of the present Great Seal of Maryland offered for sale in London, and its subsequent recovery for the State of Maryland, bring to light a singular situation which suggests questions the answers to which must be largely based upon conjectures, helped out by some personal recollections as to the circumstances attending the designing and engraving of the new Great Seal authorized by Joint Resolution No. 5 of the General Assembly at the session of 1876.

It was during last Summer that Dr. Jacob H. Hollander noticed this Seal, which is made of bronze, in the shop of a London dealer, Messrs. Spink & Son, Ltd., 17 and 18 Picadilly, and observing that it bore a Maryland device, he put the dealer in correspondence with Mr. Cohen, former President of the Society. It was promptly recognized, from a wax impression sent over for inspection, that the Seal was a replica of the Great Seal, no discrepancies whatever being discernible as the result of careful comparison with impressions of the latter.

Correspondence disclosed the fact that this bronze Seal had

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SEAFARING IN TIME OF WAR, 1756-1763.

HELEN WEST RIDGELY

After much assorting and sifting of documents preserved at "Hampton," the home built by one of the "Seafarers" later in life, we have been able to piece out a narrative, which may be of interest to Marylanders of the present day. A peep, now and then, into the pages of the *Maryland Gazette*, has also helped to elucidate matters and the two vellum-covered Port of Entry Records at the Maryland Historical Society, begun in the year 1756, add a quota of authority not to be ignored.

A letter with the following address, speaks for itself:

A Monsieur Cha^s Ridgely,
Prisonnier de Guerre
à Carhaix.

Dax, April ye 25th, 1757.

Dear Charles:

This day I received yours of the 10th Instant, and I am very sorry you are so unfortunate as to be taken by the french, which is no small matter; but do not bewail your misfortune, as its the fortune of war, we must submit and bare it with patience. Do not be cast Down, but look forward for the release, it will come never Dispare. As we are so unfortunate