

HALL OF RECORDS
7888
ANNAPOLIS, MARYLAND

RECEIVED
SEP 8 '67
HALL OF RECORDS

THE Glades Star

P. M.: Return Requested

— Published By —
THE GARRETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

VOL. 3, NO. 29

OAKLAND, MARYLAND

JUNE, 1967

Nominated For Silver Star

A red-haired 20-year-old Oakland soldier has been nominated for the Silver Star after he killed a Viet Cong with a knife used to skin rabbits when he was at home and saved a 13-ton armored carrier which he and others used to escape from a devastating ambush east of Saigon.

He is Spec. 5 Richard Friend who was in an eight-vehicle convoy from the U. S. 11th Armored Regiment. The Viet Cong caught and destroyed it in 15 minutes. Of the 48 Americans, 16 were killed, 29 wounded and four of the vehicles smashed. Twenty-one Viet Cong bodies were found.

Friend's exploits were told in an Associated Press story by Peter Arnett.

Mrs. Alta Genevieve (Reck-art) Friend, mother of the young GI, said her son arrived in Saigon on March 26 this year.

Mrs. Friend said her son was an avid rabbit hunter and often tramped in the woodlands of Garrett County. She said he liked the Army but was not sure he would make a career of military service.

A 1964 graduate of Southern High School at Oakland, Sp. 5



S/5 Richard Friend

Friend enlisted January 12, 1965.

The soldier's father, Arnold B. Friend, was killed in a crash of a private plane at Deep Creek Lake in 1963.

He has two brothers, Darvin Friend and Michael Lee Friend, and a sister, Mrs. Annis Colaw.

According to Mr. Arnett's story:

Riding in a jeep, Sp. 5 Friend, a bulldozer driver from Oakland, Md., heard the shout "Ambush! Ambush" over the

GARRETT COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

OFFICERS FOR 1967-1968

President...Paul T. Calderwood
Vice Pres.Walter W. Price
Secretary....Mrs. W. W. Grant
Asst. Secy.....Edith Brock
Corresponding Secy.

Mrs. Paul T. Calderwood
TreasurerGeorge K. Littman
Mg. Editor....Wilbur W. Close
EditorRobert B. Garrett

Contributing Editors

Felix G. Robinson, Viola Broadwater, Ross C. Durst, Charles A. Jones, Caleb Winslow, E. Ray Jones, William Martin Friend, Iret Ashby, Merle D. Frantz, Harold H. Harned.

Board of Directors

Paul B. Naylor, Dennis T. Rasche, J. J. Walker, William D. Casteel, Mrs. Vernie Smouse, Mrs. William E. Naylor, Mrs. Charles Briner, Harry C. Edwards, Mrs. Ralph Beachley.



THE GLADES STAR

Published quarterly by the Society at Oakland, Md. Entered as second-class matter March 12, 1942, at the Postoffice at Oakland, Maryland, under the Act of August 24, 1912.

PRINTED by Sincell Publishing Co., Inc., Oakland, Maryland. FOR SALE by the secretary and at the Ruth Enlow Library. Single copy, 50 cents.

MEMBERSHIP: All persons interested in the Garrett County area are eligible.

The membership fee of \$2.00, renewable annually, entitles the member to four issues of this quarterly bulletin, The Glades Star. Life membership \$20.00.

If your address has changed recently, or is soon to be changed, please write or call the Secretary, Mrs. W. W. Grant, Sr., 115 N. Second St., Oakland, Md., 21550, phone 334-2492. She reminds members that annual dues are now payable.

Romance Cost Maryland Governor The Presidency

By Leonora Wood

The Savage River section is not only rich in historic and industrial appeal, but has been the scene of some of the strangest and most dramatic episodes of the eighteenth century.

It was in the fastness of these rugged mountains that Francis Thomas, second Governor of Maryland to be elected by the people, sought retirement after more than half a century, 1823-1876, of distinguished political service. And it was left for "Maryland's Hermit Governor", as Thomas came to be known, to supply one of the most sensational chapters in the political evolution of Maryland, as well as one of America's most sensational romances—a romance which, it is believed, cost Thomas the Presidency of the United States.

Up to a few years ago, passengers on the west-bound trains of the Baltimore and Ohio railway, when about halfway up the seventeen-mile grade, one mile from Frankville, Maryland, and nine miles from Piedmont, West Virginia, could look across the ravine on the right and see an old weatherbeaten house, surrounded by barns. This, they may have been surprised to learn, had been the mountain home of Maryland's self-exiled Governor.

But this mountain refuge never became an object of special interest to the people of the State, and these mountains, which seem to delight in holding fast to their secrets,

have secluded, weathered and mellowed into hazy memories, the long and eventful career of one of the ablest, most eloquent and most eccentric sons of Maryland.

Thomas made his first appearance before the public in 1823, when he was nominated by the Democratic party in Frederick County, for the House of Delegates. He was elected, and at once became an ardent leader in the movement for a greater degree of popular rule than the original Constitution of Maryland then permitted. His eloquence and earnestness made a strong impression, and helped greatly in establishing the "Glorious Nineteen" or the movement which resulted in the election of the State senators by the people instead of by senatorial electors. His political ascendancy was rapid, and in 1841 he was elected Governor of Maryland, to succeed William Grayson.

Weds Governor's Daughter

It was during Governor Thomas' residence in Washington as a member of the House of Delegates, that he met Sallie Campbell McDowell, the beautiful young daughter of Governor McDowell of Virginia and, despite the fact that she was then a school girl of 15, he fell passionately in love with her. The courtship continued and they were married on June 8, 1841, seven months prior to his inauguration as Governor. To the protest made by some of his friends that there was a dangerous difference between the ages of Governor Thomas and his bride, he had replied that

"It is ridiculous. There is no such fearful inequality between 42 and 20 years. My love is not the transient affection of a youthful admirer, but the deep-seated devotion of the only love of a man fixed in his principles and fervent and constant in all his attachments."

Mr. Thomas was now basking in the light of a brilliant political career. He had been in public office since boyhood, and now, as Governor of the State, had almost dictatorial power over the Democratic party—then the dominant political party of Maryland—and there were many indications that he would succeed to the Presidency of the United States.

Happiness Short Lived

Mrs. Thomas was a great favorite in social circles, and admirably fitted to fill the high position to which she seemed destined. But her happiness as the wife of Governor Thomas was short lived. While he had a strong and vigorous intellect, it became more and more apparent that his mind was ill balanced. He was insanely jealous and suspicious, without the slightest cause. A young gentleman, a cousin of Mrs. Thomas, came on a visit to Montevue shortly after the wedding, and this started the trouble. Mrs. Thomas and her cousin were young, perhaps a bit frivolous, and the Governor would fly into rages over their jokes and laughter. He accused them of jesting and jeering at him—and even went so far as to demand that Mrs. Thomas lock herself in her room when he left the house. Things went

from bad to worse until Mrs. Thomas' father was compelled to intervene and, before the end of the Governor's term, he took his daughter to his home in Virginia.

A few days later, Governor Thomas published a pamphlet of some fifty pages which shocked and amazed the people of Maryland and Virginia, and was regarded by the members of Congress as evidence of a deranged mind.

In this pamphlet, a copy of which was laid upon the desk of each senator and representative, the Governor gave his version of his family troubles without any sense of decent reserve. And after tirading at length regarding Mrs. Thomas' lack of proper decorum, he closed with "an earnest hope, notwithstanding all that has passed, for her acquittal. Moreover, if she was not and is not now, I will rejoice with joy unspeakable, when she has become all she can become; all that my glowing fancy painted her."

The quarrel with his wife, and the hostility between him and his father-in-law, Governor McDowell, defeated him in the National Democratic Convention, which was held in Baltimore in 1844, and at which Thomas' friends hoped to see him nominated for the Presidency. It also defeated him in the race for Congress which he made against William Hamilton. After this last defeat Thomas went into retirement, from which he emerged seven years later to speak in advocacy of the election of Stephen A. Douglas, in 1860.

Becomes Republican Dictator

After Lincoln's election, Mr. Thomas embraced the cause of the North against the South, even went so far as to recruit a body of 3,000 soldiers in Frederick and Washington Counties. His zeal for the cause of the Federacy again brought him before the eyes of the public and, after an absence of 20 years, he was again elected to Congress in 1861, and was continuously reelected for several terms—his last term ending March 3, 1869. During the War period he had thus become the dictator of the Republican party in Western Maryland. As a reward for services to the administration, President Grant, in 1870, appointed him Collector of Internal Revenue for the District of Maryland, and two years later sent him as Minister to Peru, which office he held until 1875, when he resigned.

Retires To Hermitage

In Peru, Thomas had become interested in Alpaca sheep, and brought a number to Maryland, hoping to propagate them. Upon his return to Maryland, he retired to his hermitage in the fastness of the Allegheny mountains. Here he had formally purchased a tract of land containing about 2,000 acres, intending to go into an extensive lumber business. He had built quite an extensive system of tram way for getting the logs down to the tracks of the Baltimore and Ohio Railway. But, like every other business enterprise he had undertaken, the lumber business yielded him little profit.

While in Peru, he had caught

the idea that his mountain farm would be well adapted to sheep raising, and he entered into this venture with the same enthusiasm that had marked his political career. For more than a year Maryland's once famous political leader buried himself in this wild region, emerging only occasionally to attend to necessary business matters.

Killed By Train

Then suddenly, on January 23, 1876, the country was shocked by notice of his death. While crossing the railroad track, about a mile east of Frankville Station, he was struck by an engine and instantly killed. Workers on his farm were summoned, and his body taken in charge by them and conveyed to his home.

As soon as intelligence of his death reached the outside world, the Baltimore and Ohio Railroad Company tendered a special train to be taken to Frankville and convey his body to Cumberland—and in the gentlemen's reading room in the north wing of the Queen City Hotel, the mortal remains of Francis Thomas lay in state. Hundreds of those who had known him and honored him passed by his bier, now recalling his many admirable qualities, and thinking charitably of the eccentricities which had cast their shadow across an otherwise successful life.

(Reprinted from the Mineral Daily News, Keyser, W. Va., November 5, 1936.)

Only one person, a Negro, has been legally executed in Garrett County.

Oakland Wires In 1883 Sent via Terra Alta

A number of records of 1883 and 1884 of the Baltimore and Ohio Telegraph company have been found by John Murphy, operator, recently transferred from the Oakland office to Terra Alta, and a number of interesting things relating to Oakland discovered.

Many of the messages sent through the Terra Alta office, then known as Cranberry, W. Va., are private ones sent by a number of Oakland people, but others were news dispatches, sent to the Baltimore American concerning Garrett county elections, etc.

That the messages were sent through Cranberry, W. Va., disproves the thought that Oakland had not been without a telegraph office since the Baltimore and Ohio tracks were laid in 1852 until the closing of the office a few weeks ago. All messages from Oakland at that time were sent through the Baltimore and Ohio Telegraph Co. at Cranberry. There was no such organization known as the Western Union.

A dispatch sent in to the Baltimore American on November 7, 1883, concerning an election carried the following names: Republican candidates: A. F. Speicher and H. Wheeler Combs, house of delegates; W. P. Townshend, State's Attorney; David Wilson, county commissioner; D. Harrison Friend, Nathan Casteel, David Michaels, judges of the Orphans' court; Daniel Chisholm, county surveyor.